

CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

Know Your Hours: Protecting Directed Time (England)

Introduction

This toolkit has been developed to support NASUWT Workplace Representatives in protecting members' contractual rights and wellbeing in relation to directed time and working hours.

Working hours are essential in order to help schools and teachers plan so that the school day is effectively managed and teachers are able to achieve a satisfactory balance between work and home.

NASUWT recognises that excessive workload and the misuse of directed time have a serious impact on teacher wellbeing, teacher retention, the quality of education. Ensuring that directed time is properly recorded and managed is essential for ensuring that teachers can achieve a satisfactory work/life balance between the time required to do their job and the time to pursue interests outside work.

Not all teachers are covered by the same contractual provisions. The 1,265-hours annual directed time limit applies to teachers employed under the **School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD)** in maintained schools and the overwhelming majority of academies. Other schools and colleges may operate under different agreements, but the principle of reasonable working hours, working limits and proper workload management still applies everywhere.

This toolkit provides the guidance, tools and campaign resources you need to assess, challenge and improve directed time practices in your workplace.



Why this issue matters

- **Teacher wellbeing:** When directed time is not properly managed, teachers frequently work well beyond their contractual hours. This leads to exhaustion, stress and burnout, particularly when staff are expected to attend meetings, duties or events without these being accounted for in directed time calendars.
- **Workload and professional autonomy:** NASUWT emphasises the importance of transparency and respect for teachers' time. Directed time calendars help staff understand what counts as directed activity and protect against excessive demands that infringe on the ability to achieve a satisfactory work/life balance.
- **Contractual and legal protections:** Under the STPCD, a teacher cannot be required to work more than 1,265 hours over 195 days per year, as directed by the headteacher. Teachers in Scotland, Northern Ireland and independent or further education sectors may have different contractual frameworks, but employers everywhere are expected to ensure reasonable workloads and adhere to the working limits set out in the Working Time Regulations 1998, as well as provide adequate rest breaks under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Toolkit components

This pack includes:

- 1 **Campaign actions:** Practical steps to help workplace reps identify, raise and resolve directed time issues.
- 2 **Evidence collection tools:** Ways to record and demonstrate breaches of directed time or excessive workload.
- 3 **Legal and contractual guidance:** References and frameworks for different UK jurisdictions.
- 4 **Template materials for reps:** Letters, posters and social media resources to build awareness and engagement.

How to use this toolkit

The toolkit is designed to be flexible, allowing you to tailor actions and materials to your specific workplace. Whether you're raising initial concerns with leadership or escalating unresolved issues to regional or national levels, these resources will guide you at every stage.

Thank you for your commitment to improving working conditions for all NASUWT members.

Let's make a difference – starting now.

Campaign actions:

Step-by-step strategy for reps

Step 1: Assess the current situation

Identify whether members' directed time is excessive or improperly recorded. Ask for the directed time calendar, check whether it exceeds 1,265 hours where applicable, and gather member feedback. Details of what should and should not be included can be found [here](#).

Step 2: Raise awareness among staff

Ensure every teacher understands their contractual entitlements. Share campaign materials, display posters and encourage members to log hours.

Step 3: Engage school or college leadership

Secure a fair, transparent and compliant approach to directed time. Present evidence, recommend practical steps and request consultation.

Step 4: Leverage NASUWT support

Contact your Local Association or National Executive Member in the first instance or, if necessary, your NASUWT Regional Centre for advice, legal support or escalation.

Step 5: Celebrate and share success

Recognise and publicise good practice using NASUWT communications and campaign hashtags.

Evidence collection tools:

Keep records of directed time activities such as meetings, duties, parent evenings and cover. Use staff surveys and NASUWT audit tools, including the [Directed Time Calculator](#) to total directed hours and confirm compliance.

Legal guidance:

For teachers employed under the STPCD – which applies to all maintained schools and to the overwhelming majority of academies and free schools that follow national terms and conditions – the rules on directed time are legally binding contractual provisions.

Teachers have the right to direct teachers' work for up to 1,265 hours per academic year, spread over no more than 195 days, of which:

- 190 days are for teaching pupils; and
- up to five days are for non-teaching duties such as INSET or training.

These 1,265 hours must include all time when teachers are required to be on the school premises or engaged in duties at the direction of the headteacher – for example:

- teaching lessons or supervision;
- registration, assemblies and duties;
- meetings (departmental, staff, parent consultations etc.);
- professional development days (INSET); and
- other activities directed by the headteacher.

Once these hours have been used, teachers cannot be required to undertake any further directed duties. Any additional work teachers do – such as planning, marking and preparation – is undertaken at their own professional discretion, not at the employer's direction. NASUWT is campaigning for an end to the open-ended nature of the teachers' contract where such provisions apply.

Directed time calendars

Each school should maintain and share an annual directed time calendar showing how the 1,265 hours are allocated across the academic year.

This calendar should:

- be shared with staff at the start of each academic year (preferably during the summer term prior to its introduction);
- provide a clear breakdown of directed activities (teaching, meetings, duties etc.);
- allow sufficient time for lunch and rest breaks, as part of directed time; and
- be reviewed with the NASUWT Representative or staff body before being finalised.

Failure to provide a directed time calendar or exceeding the 1,265-hours limit could constitute a breach of contract and could be challenged by the Union.

Directed time calendars are especially important for part-time teachers in order for them to know the pro rata basis of the 1,265 hours over 195 days that a full-time teacher could be expected to work. Part-time teachers should receive their own personalised directed time calendar and cannot be directed to work on days they wouldn't normally attend work.

Breaks and workload management

The STPCD also requires headteachers to have regard to teachers' work/life balance and to ensure their duties can reasonably be performed within the school day.

In addition, the STPCD specifies that teachers are entitled to a daily break of a reasonable length either between school sessions or between the hours of 12 noon and 2pm. During this time, they cannot be directed to undertake any work.

The Union advocates for a standardised 60-minute timetabled lunch break for all teachers in order to permit them to share an adequate break between school sessions with other members of staff.

NASUWT maintains that break times must not be eroded by duties or meetings – teachers must have a genuine opportunity to rest, eat and recharge during the day.

Leadership responsibility

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that directed time is managed fairly and in accordance with contractual requirements. This includes:

- keeping accurate directed time records;
- consulting with staff on how directed time is distributed; and
- reviewing allocations to avoid excessive workload or inequality between staff groups.

Governors are ultimately accountable for ensuring that the headteacher complies with the STPCD and all statutory duties relating to teacher contracts.

Whilst the STPCD provisions regarding directed time do not apply to headteachers, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers or teachers on the pay range for leading practitioners, they are still entitled to an adequate work/life balance.

Enforcement and NASUWT support

Where directed time is excessive or not recorded transparently:

- NASUWT Representatives should first request an immediate review of the directed time calendar.
- If this is not resolved locally, the issue should be reported to the relevant Local Association or National Executive Member or, if necessary, to the NASUWT Regional Centre for advice and escalation.

NASUWT may also seek to involve the employer or local authority and initiate formal dispute procedures or legal action to enforce compliance.

Detailed guidance can be found on the [NASUWT website](#).

Template materials for reps

For communication and advocacy

Letter to leadership

Subject: Review of Directed Time Calendar

Dear *[Headteacher/Principal]*

As the NASUWT Workplace Representative, I am writing on behalf of members to request a review of the directed time calendar for [School/College Name]. Under the relevant contractual provisions, teachers should not be required to exceed their directed time entitlement. For schools covered by the STPCD, this is 1,265 hours across 195 days. For other institutions, the same principles of fairness and reasonable workload apply.

Members have raised concerns about workload pressures and activities taking place outside the agreed directed time. I would welcome a meeting to review the current arrangements and agree steps to ensure compliance and transparency.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

NASUWT Workplace Representative

Further template letters can be found [here](#).

Social media

You could write a social media post [example post text], or make a quick video, explaining why [campaign issue] is important to you as a teacher. Don't forget to tag **@nasuwt**, use the **#teacherlife** hashtag, and make sure you add links to resources in the comment section, rather than in the post.

Conclusion

This toolkit is designed to help NASUWT Workplace Representatives protect members' rights and wellbeing by ensuring fair, transparent and contractually compliant management of directed time.

Even where different contractual frameworks apply, the core message remains the same:

Respect teachers' time. Protect their wellbeing. Enforce their rights.

Know your hours. Work your hours. Take a break.

Know Your Hours: Protecting Directed Time (England)

Know Your Hours. Work Your Hours. Take a Break.

- Directed time is part of your contract.
- Your time matters – it must be recorded, fair, and respected.
- Protect your wellbeing. Know your rights.

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