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Date: 25/08/2026

MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY

Mairi McAllan MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture & Gaelic
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Mairi,

NASUWT Big Question Survey

In advance of us sharing these results in a Press Release next week, I thought it would be helpful to highlight with you some of the key findings from the annual NASUWT Big Question Survey of members.

Our Big Question survey has been running for over 10 years and, whilst UK-wide, the data shared here is Scotland-specific and was captured just before the school summer holidays.

It demonstrates that the top two concerns of our members in Scotland continue to be Pupil Behaviour (cited by 85% as a concern) and Workload (74%).

With reference to the former, nearly three-quarters (74%) of our members reported being verbally abused by a pupil in the past year and nearly a quarter (23%) have been physically assaulted. These figures are up on the previous year where 73% had experienced verbal abuse and 20% physical assault.

Just 22% of those who had experienced abuse said they felt their school dealt with it in a satisfactory manner, compared to 21% in 2025. The lack of progress in both bringing down levels of abuse and violence against teachers and in schools responding effectively when incidents do occur must be a priority for this Parliament.

We fully support the National Action Plan on Relationships and Behaviour, published in 2024, as a key tool for helping to address poor pupil behaviour but it is clear that many schools and local authorities have simply left this on the shelf to gather dust. One lever which you could use to help would be to require local authorities to submit to you evidence of what they have done to embed the Action Plan (for example, the number of their schools which have reviewed their behaviour policies and incorporated the requirements of the Action Plan into these).

On workload, teachers responding to our survey reported a sharp increase in their typical working hours per week, from an average of 41 hours per week in 2025 to an average of 53 hours in 2026, and this is before most of them have even begun to engage with proposed curricular improvements.

Data and assessment requirements, admin and clerical tasks and pastoral care continue to be the biggest three drivers of this excessive workload and I would urge you, as suggested in our NASUWT Education Manifesto for the Scottish elections, to return to the 2015 national

Tackling Bureaucracy report and address why the key workload drivers in it have not been properly addressed by most employers.

The crisis in Additional Support Needs continues to concern our members and our Scotland Executive Council delegates, our most senior elected activists, are keen to see the unity of purpose shown by all political parties at our hustings event earlier this year when asked about ASN to lead to swift and practical help for both teachers and their pupils. The work underway to reform special needs provision in England will generate over £900 million in Barnett Consequentials for Scotland. It is essential that this is ring-fenced for spending on ASN to help address current shortfalls in staffing and resourcing.

Lastly, for now, I will share the sobering statistic that 64% of members in our survey suggested that they had seriously considered leaving the teaching profession in the previous 12 months. This shows that quick and effective action to address their concerns is essential if we are to retain experienced staff and make teaching a profession which attracts the best and brightest graduates in future.

I look forward to meeting you in a few weeks to explore these matters in more depth.

Best Wishes,
Mike Corbett
National Official (Scotland)