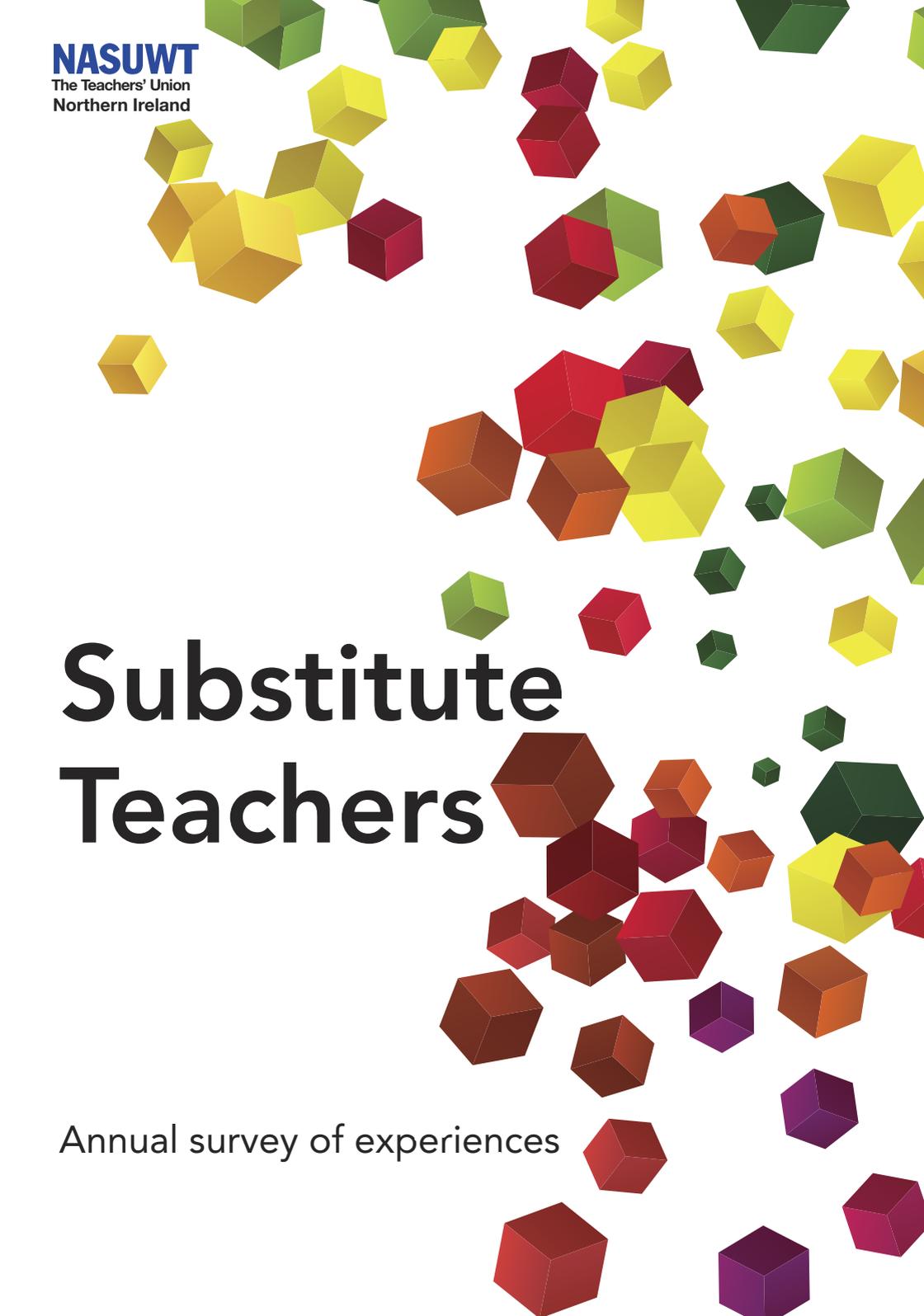


Substitute Teachers

Annual survey of experiences



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INTRODUCTION

The NASUWT's annual survey of substitute teachers in Northern Ireland was undertaken between June and September 2019.

A total of 221 substitute teachers responded to the survey.

Nature of work

Substitute teachers were asked why they carried out substitute teaching work. The top five reasons cited by substitute teachers were:

- 70% reported that they had not been able to find suitable part-time or permanent work;
- 6% stated that it was because they wanted to have greater flexibility over what they did;
- 2% were motivated to become a substitute teacher because they felt they were not valued as a professional in the school where they previously worked;
- 1% stated that they were concerned about the workload in schools; and
- 1% reported that the school where they had previously worked had failed to address their concerns about student behaviour.

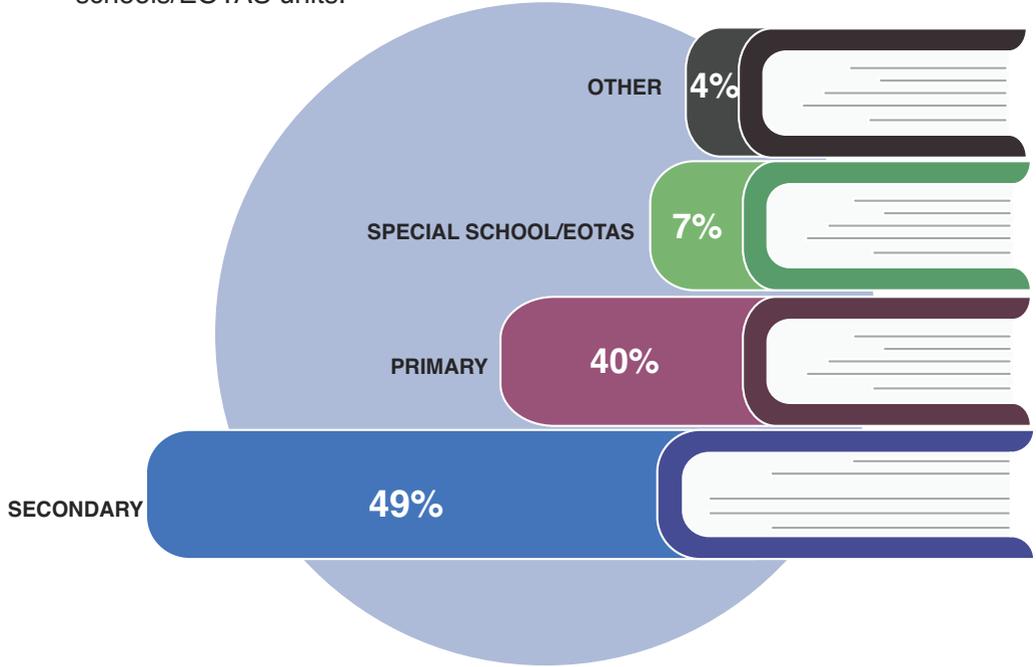
I haven't had any offers for substitute cover work.

I can't be guaranteed to work even one day per week.

Access to work

Substitute teachers were asked where and when they were able to obtain work and whether they face any difficulties in doing so.

Two fifths (40%) of substitute teachers who responded to the survey stated that the majority of their substitute work in the last 12 months took place in primary schools. Just under half (49%) stated that the majority of their work was in secondary schools. 7% of substitute teachers reported that the majority of their substitute work in the last 12 months took place in special schools/EOTAS units.



Just over half (51%) of substitute teachers stated that they experienced some problems obtaining work. Of this, just over one in 20 (6%) reported that they usually have problems finding work.

Just under a third (32%) of substitute teachers reported that there had been a decline in the work available to them in the last 12 months.

When substitute teachers were asked how many days on average they wanted to work a week, in the last 12 months, 7% said they worked one day a week, 8% two days a week, and a fifth (20%) three days a week.

11% of substitute teachers in the survey said they wanted to work four days a week and well over half (54%) stated that they wanted to work five days a week.

Under one in ten (8%) substitute teachers in the survey said they regularly work four days each week and just over a fifth (21%) stated that they regularly work five days each week.

Well over two fifths (45%) of substitute teachers stated that the majority of their work was daily substitute work, whereas less than one in 20 (4%) reported that they undertook weekly substitute work. 3% worked on a monthly basis, one in 20 (5%) on a termly basis and over two fifths (43%) on a longer term basis in excess of a term.

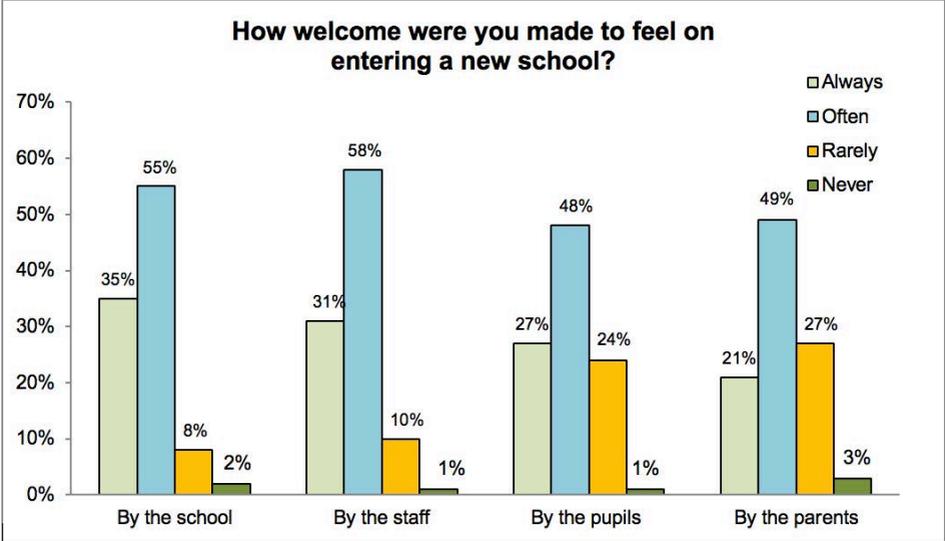
Welcome to work and access to facilities

Over a third (35%) of substitute teachers reported that they are always made to feel welcome *by the school* and well over half (55%) stated that they are often made to feel welcome when entering a school. However, 8% said that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the school and 2% stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the school.

When asked how welcome they are made to feel *by the staff* in the school, 31% reported that they are always made to feel welcome, and almost three fifths (58%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome by the staff when entering a school. One in ten (10%) reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the staff, and 1% stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the staff.

When asked how welcome they are made to feel *by the pupils* in the school, just over a quarter (27%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome, and just under half (48%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome when entering a school. Almost a quarter (24%) reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the pupils, and 1% stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the pupils.

In respect of being made to feel welcome *by the parents*, just over a fifth (21%) stated that they are always made to feel welcome, and almost half (49%) stated that they are often made to feel welcome by the parents. Over a quarter (27%) stated that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the parents, and 3% stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the parents.



Well over two fifths (45%) of substitute teachers reported that they do not feel that they are treated with respect and dignity.

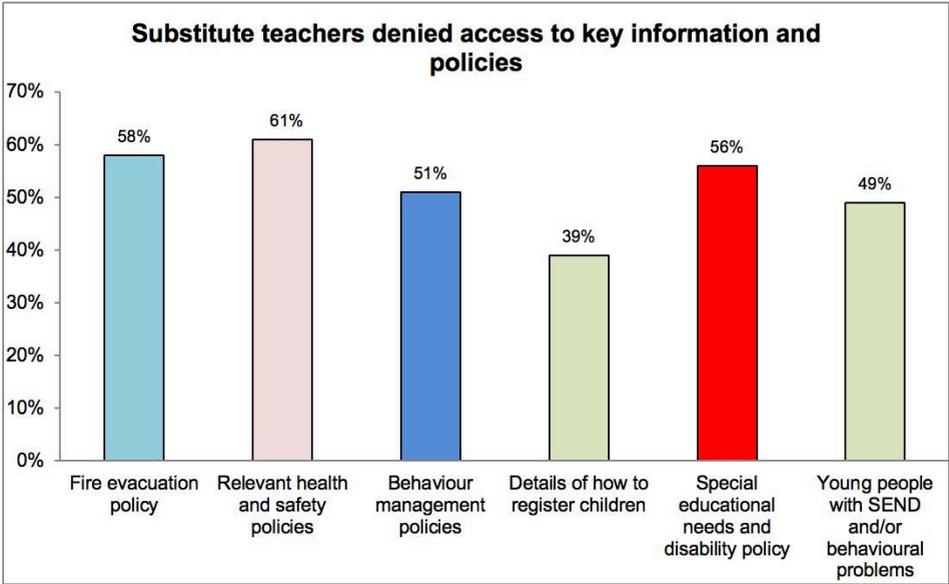
I have been verbally abused by senior staff members, made a joke of by permanent teachers and had children tell me I'm not a 'real' teacher because I don't have a job.

I really wish some schools would realise that I am a fellow professional and refer to me by name instead of 'the substitute'.

When asked about their most recent assignment, one in ten (10%) of substitute teachers stated that they do not always have access to staffrooms where they are available, a third (33%) stated that they do not always have access to food and drink facilities, and 8% said that they do not always have access to toilet/washroom facilities. A fifth (20%) reported that they do not always have access to car parking.



When questioned about their awareness of key information and policies used within schools, almost three fifths (58%) of substitute teachers reported that they are not given clear information on the school's fire evacuation policy, just over three fifths (61%) stated that they are not given clear information regarding relevant health and safety policies, and just over half (51%) are not given clear information of behaviour management policies, including who to contact. Almost two fifths (39%) of respondents stated that they are not given details on the way in which the school registers children and any relevant computer software used, well over half (56%) reported that they are not given information on the school's policy for dealing with children with special educational needs and disability (SEND), and just under half (49%) stated that they were not given information on the young people in school with SEND and/or behavioural problems.



When asked about their most recent assignment, 29% of substitute teachers reported that they did not have access to a designated person or contact.

As a daily substitute teacher, I was rarely briefed on the health & safety/ fire escape plans of the school. On several occasions, I entered and left the school quite anonymously, having only met with one teacher at the beginning of the day. I felt very undervalued as a daily substitute teacher and was keen to acquire a more ‘permanent’ role as quickly as possible.

Substitute teacher deployment

Well over four fifths (85%) of substitute teachers stated that they were expected to mark and assess work, but over a third (36%) stated that this was not made clear to them and that they were not paid to undertake the work.

55% of substitute teachers said that they were expected to attend meetings (during or after school), yet well over two fifths (44%) of those who did this stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Just over two thirds (67%) of substitute teachers said they were expected to undertake break duties, but well over two fifths (44%) of those who did this stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Just over two fifths (41%) of substitute teachers reported that they were expected to undertake lunchtime supervision, yet just over half (52%) stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

It is often expected that we will do directed time and meetings where and when the principal decides, as he will withdraw work if we don't do it.

Three quarters (75%) of substitute teachers said that they were expected to plan and prepare lessons, but over a third (35%) of those who did this stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Over three fifths (62%) of respondents were expected to write reports, but just under two fifths (38%) of those who did this stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

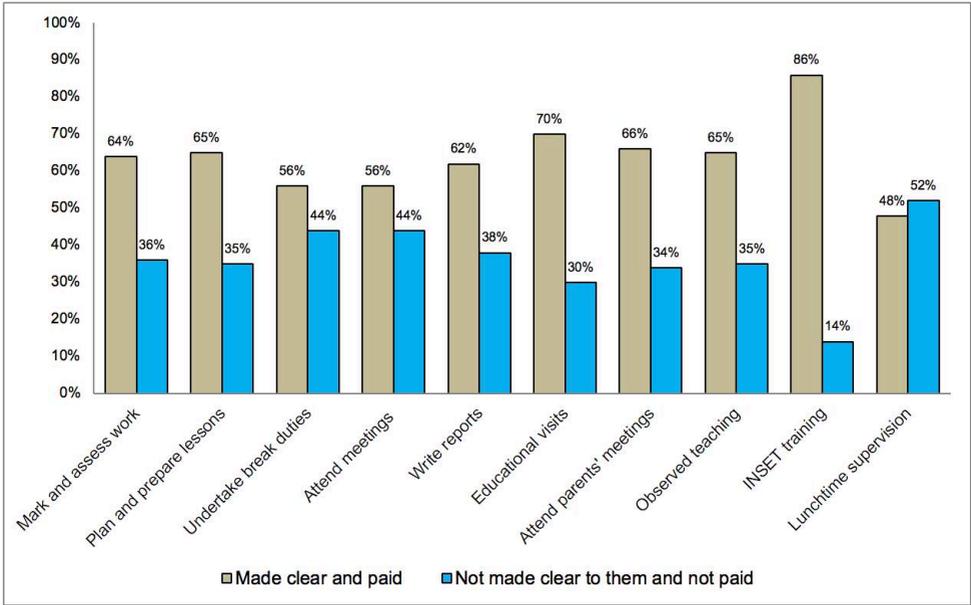
Just under three fifths (59%) of substitute teachers stated that they were expected to participate in educational visits. Of those who did this, 30% reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Over half (53%) stated that they were expected to attend parents' meetings, but just over a third (34%) who did this reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

36% of substitute teachers stated that they were expected to be observed teaching. However, over a third (35%) of substitute teachers stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Just over half (52%) stated that they were expected to take part in in-service training (INSET), but 14% reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

28% of substitute teachers reported that they were expected to take part in performance review and staff development (PRSD).



Rates of pay

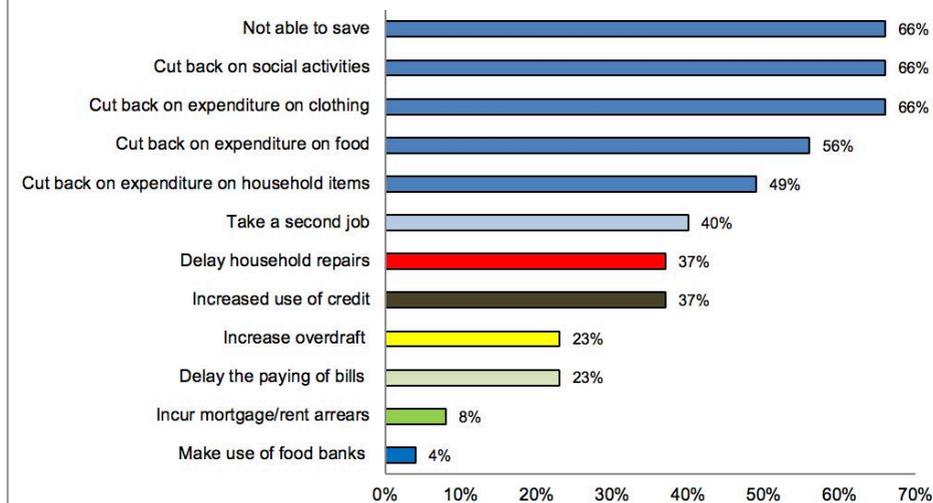
In respect of daily remuneration, substitute teachers were asked if they had been paid at the correct point on the teachers' pay scale for the work they had undertaken. Well over four fifths (85%) reported that they had been paid on the correct point on the teachers' pay scale, but 15% of substitute teachers stated that this was not the case.

While I always have had work, it's never permanent. I feel like I am given lots of roles to complete and I can't say no as it would affect future work. I have been unable to get a mortgage and it leaves me no stability for having more children.

Well over two fifths (45%) of substitute teachers reported that they had to claim Jobseeker's Allowance since becoming a substitute teacher, and just over one in ten (11%) reported that had to claim other state benefits.

Just under a quarter (23%) of substitute teachers reported that they had been offered roles that do not utilise their skills and knowledge as a teacher, and where they had been offered these roles, well over two fifths (45%) reported that these were offered at a lower rate of pay.

Financial situation over the last 12 months



Training and support

Well over four fifths (84%) of substitute teachers stated that in the last 12 months, they participated in PRSD in the schools at which they work.

My concern is that you are not asked to participate in PRSD if subbing, and schools will generally not facilitate this, so how can I progress up the scale?

My employment has been on a long-term basis while being paid as a substitute teacher. The period from mid-July to mid-October is the most difficult as it is often a struggle to make ends.

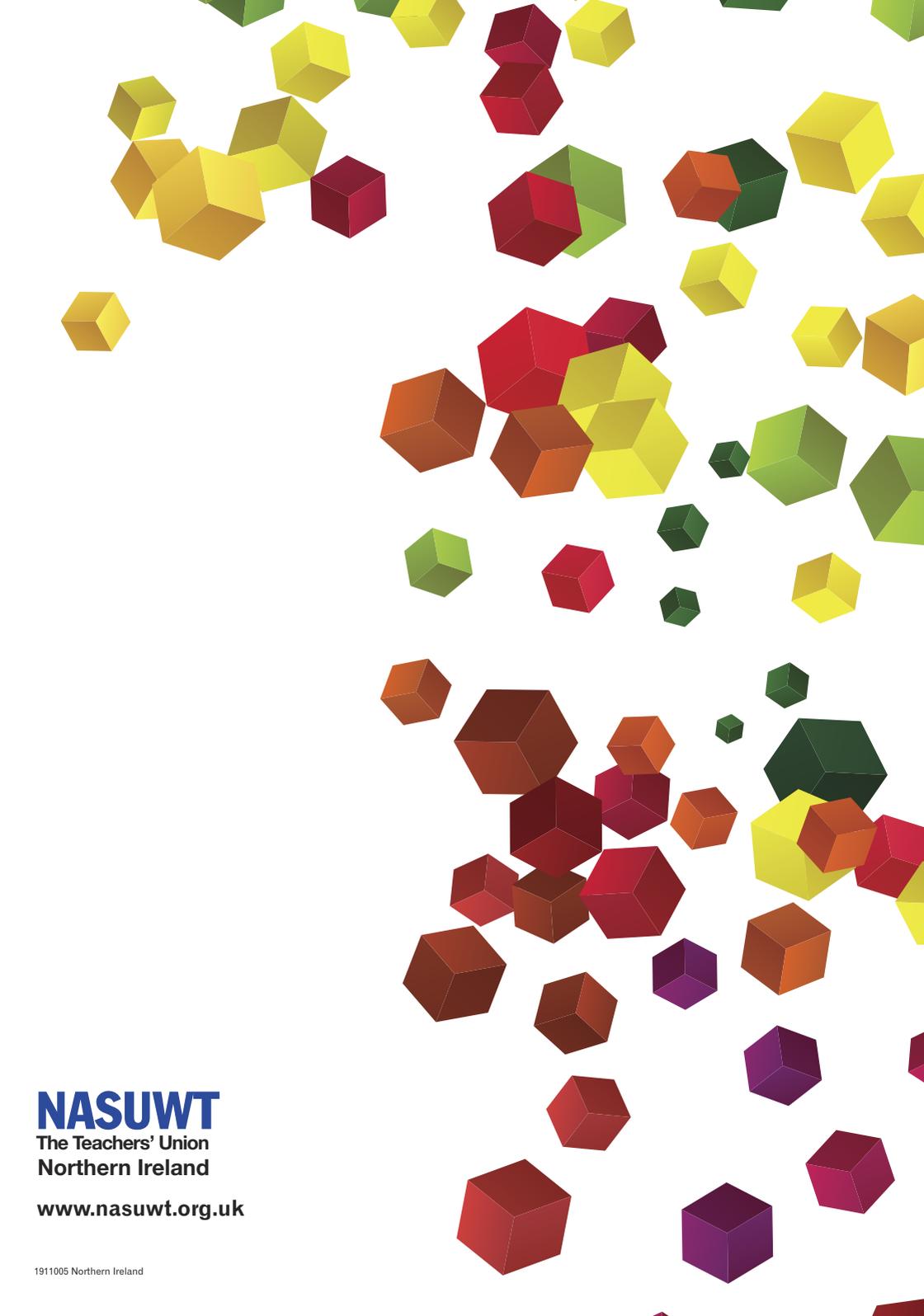
Truly feel unmotivated and undervalued as a young teacher in NI. I have worked increasingly hard since my teacher training days. Jobs are not given on merit. Very much a case of 'who you are'... subs are treated as second-class citizens.



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