

Date: 15 April 2021

Our Ref: 210415/Drakeford M/PR/LB

Telephone: 0121 453 6150

Tel/Ffôn: 029 2054 6080

E-mail/E-bost: nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
Website/Gwefan: www.nasuwt.org.uk

Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS
First Minister of Wales
Welsh Government
5th Floor
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

General Secretary/Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol: **Dr Patrick Roach**

Email: Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@gov.wales

Dear First Minister,

Supporting Teachers

On behalf of members of the NASUWT, I write to thank you for your stated commitment to work with trade unions and social partners, including the NASUWT, to take forward plans for exiting the pandemic and securing the best outcomes for children, young people and their teachers.

Teachers have continued to demonstrate their commitment and dedication to children and young people. When schools closed, teachers kept going - designing, delivering, innovating and continuing to secure children's education in the most difficult and challenging of circumstances. We appreciate your appreciation for the efforts made by the profession, but we ask you to now go further.

The NASUWT is aware of the importance that the Welsh Government attaches to teacher quality and the challenge of teacher retention at a time when too many teachers are leaving the profession. Building the resilience of schools and the profession is important, and we would want you to recognise also that in order to do that, teachers need to be assured of the essential working conditions that enable them to develop and thrive.

The NASUWT agrees that support for teachers is critically important if we are to secure an education recovery that works for all children. However, teachers' commitment and resilience have been tested to the limit over the last year. The profession and our pupils have already been through a great deal, and many teachers are running on empty, with serious impacts for their mental health and wellbeing. 81% of teachers report they have experienced an increase in workplace stress over the past year and almost half said the job has affected their physical health. One-third of teachers have had to seek medical help to deal with the detrimental impacts on their health and wellbeing as a result of the pandemic and adverse employer practices. In this context, there should be no presumption that the profession can simply be expected to soldier on.

Alongside the Welsh Government's plans for easing lockdown restrictions, we want to see the Government's Control Plan, not just for the next few months, but also for exiting the pandemic and securing the longer term recovery which will secure the teacher quality you have called for in the Education in Wales: Our National Mission and investing in Excellence: Our national workforce development plan.

The NASUWT, therefore, believes that the Government should come forward with a plan for a teacher-led education recovery and renewal that will commit to:

- i. Recruiting more teachers and support staff and other children's service professionals to meet the education, pastoral and care needs of children and young people.
- ii. Retaining and recognising teachers who have dedicated their lives to the job supported by pay and conditions of service that reward teachers as highly skilled professionals.
- iii. Ending excessive workload and letting teachers teach.
- iv. Reducing class size.
- v. Ending the long working hours of teachers and removing other factors which continue to drain teaching quality.
- vi. Guaranteeing the right for every teacher to have time for professional development as a contractual entitlement throughout their careers.
- vii. Providing a substantial pay award for teachers to end the real terms decline in teachers' pay over the last decade whilst providing appropriate support and financial and other assistance, including compensation, to those teachers whose health has been adversely impacted as a result of the pandemic.
- viii. Strengthening regulation and returning schools to full local government control over employment and appointment matters.
- ix. Robustly enforcing the employment, health and safety and equalities rights of teachers and hold school and college employers properly to account.

I am sure that we will both agree that we should aspire to be the best country for children to grow up in and that teachers are central to that goal. We trust that you will agree that any impediments to securing this ambition must be addressed.

The NASUWT asks you to work with us to bring forward a plan for education renewal, creating the best conditions that will enable teachers to secure children's learning and development by creating the conditions that let teachers teach.

I look forward to the opportunity discuss further with you our proposals for education recovery and renewal that will enable teacher quality once again to flourish.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary