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The NASUWT International Solidarity Award recognises the bravery and commitment of individuals around the world who work tirelessly to promote human rights and to defend the rights of teachers. The Award highlights and celebrates the commitment of individuals to trade union values of solidarity, equality and democracy, and challenging violence, injustice, bigotry and hatred.

The 2018 Award will be presented at the NASUWT Annual Conference.

Guiding Principles:
- Defending human rights
- Defending trade union rights of teachers
- Working for quality education
- Demonstrating values of solidarity, equality and democracy
- Challenging violence, injustice, bigotry and hatred
- Working in countries outside the UK

To find out more and to nominate, visit [www.nasuwt.org.uk/ISAward](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/ISAward)
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International Solidarity Award for
BAHRAIN TEACHERS’ LEADER

The President of the Bahrain Teachers’ Association (BTA), Mahdi Abu Dheeb, was made the recipient of the 2017 NASUWT International Solidarity Award in recognition of his commitment to fighting for the rights of teachers and for quality education in Bahrain.

The International Solidarity Award, presented by the NASUWT, is given annually in recognition of the efforts of trade unions and trade unionists across the globe to protect teachers’ rights.

The award was presented to Mr Abu Dheeb at the NASUWT Annual Conference in Manchester.

Mr Abu Dheeb was released last year after being imprisoned in 2011 by the Bahraini authorities for simply exercising his right to freedom of assembly and demanding reforms to Bahrain’s educational system.

While in prison, Mr Abu Dheeb was subjected to repeated abuse and torture.

The NASUWT worked closely with the BTA and other partners, including Amnesty International and Education International, to press for Mahdi’s release and to call on the Bahraini authorities to respect human and trade union rights. Dr Patrick Roach, Deputy General Secretary of the NASUWT, said:

“Mahdi has faced years of repression, violence and the loss of his liberty simply for standing up for the rights of teachers and challenging the ruling orthodoxy.

“His story is a stark reminder that trade unionists around the world continue to be targeted in their fight for freedom of expression, social justice and human rights.

“Despite all that he has suffered, he continues to bravely defend human and trade union rights. His courage and determination is an inspiration.

“The NASUWT is continuing to work with the BTA to ensure that the rights of teachers and children from all backgrounds in Bahrain are respected equally and that trade unions are able to represent their members without fear of attack or repression.

“We are delighted to offer Mahdi our continued solidarity by presenting him with this award.”
Immediately upon landing back in Bahrain, both Mahdi and Jalila were detained at the airport and subjected to extensive questioning, before being placed under house arrest. They continue to be subjected to harassment and detention.

At the same time, the government’s crackdown on freedom of speech and association for the wider trade union movement continues, with members of the General Bahraini Federation of Trade Unions (GBFTU) banned, without explanation, from travelling to join colleagues from 186 other nations at the annual global conference of the International Labour Organization in Geneva. As recently as May, Amnesty International released a statement expressing its “concern that Bahrain was now heading towards total suppression of human rights.”

Responding to the escalating developments, the NASUWT has written to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office urging the UK Government to urgently raise the cases of Mahdi and Jalila, and that of the GBFTU, with the Bahraini state. NASUWT General Secretary Chris Keates has been lobbying the Foreign Office in the UK to use its influence to call on the authorities in Bahrain to monitor human rights. Ms Keates said: “We remain concerned by reports we have received of an escalation of action leading to the suppression of freedom of speech and freedom of association. “There are growing concerns...regarding the recent escalation by the government of Bahrain of action against human and trade union rights activists.”

The Foreign Office has agreed to meet with a senior delegation from the NASUWT to discuss the Union’s concerns.
Pressure over jailing of Iranian teachers’ leader

The NASUWT has condemned the six-year prison sentence given to Esmail Abdi, General Secretary of the Iranian Teachers’ Trade Association (ITTA-Tehran).

Mr Abdi was sentenced for charges including “assembling and colluding against national security”, which are completely spurious and unjust.

Chris Keates, General Secretary of the NASUWT, condemned his imprisonment and has been calling on the British government to raise his case with the Iranian authorities.

In a letter to Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, Ms Keates said: “The charges are unjust and contravene various Human Rights Conventions, including those protecting freedom of expression and association, as well as the right of unions to be consulted on education policies.”

She called on Mr Johnson to urge Tehran to drop the charges and secure his “immediate and unconditional release” and also to respect the human rights of teachers in Iran, including the right to freedom of association and membership of trade unions.

It has been reported that Mr Abdi is being detained in harsh conditions in the notorious Evin Prison and he is being denied communications with his family and his lawyer.

The NASUWT has serious concerns about his safety and wellbeing.

Mr Abdi has protested against his imprisonment by taking part in a hunger strike.

The jailing of Mr Abdi comes at a time when the hard-line policies of the Islamic regime in Iran have led to a full-blown crisis for the country’s educational system and teachers’ living conditions. Many students from low-income families are practically banned from accessing education. It is believed that up to three and a half million students from disadvantaged backgrounds are unable to attend school.

Teachers have been taking part in nationwide protests, showing their opposition to the regime and the damage being done to the education system.

The NASUWT is standing in solidarity with the International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI) to protest this unjust jail sentence.

Working together and with the support of Education International (EI), the Union will continue to call for Esmail’s release.
Visits by NASUWT officials and elected officers have been made as part of a concerted campaign of support and solidarity to teachers and other public sector workers.

The Union has been providing an international presence in court cases involving 32 members of KESK and Egitim Sen who face trumped-up charges of having links to or aiding terrorist organisations.

Turkey has been in a state of emergency since the failed coup on 15 July last year and tens of thousands of education staff and other public sector workers have been dismissed from their jobs or arrested.

The NASUWT has been at the forefront of international efforts to assist Egitim Sen, donating to the Education International Global Solidarity Fund which aims to support the union in helping the thousands of teachers who have been affected.

Fred Brown told the Congress: “The NASUWT is outraged by the attacks on teachers and those whose lives have been devoted to civil rights, democracy and building a just and fair society.

“We pledge to continue to stand with you as you persist with your just endeavour to overcome current difficulties, not least attempts to...intimidate teachers and other public sector workers and to deny teachers the right to organise independent and democratic trade unions, free from interference.”

Mr Brown said words of condemnation were not enough, however, and the NASUWT was committed to action. It would continue to lobby the UK Government to press President Erdogan over human rights. Alongside Education International, the NASUWT is appealing to the Turkish government to cease all repressive actions against teachers and education personnel and to guarantee quality education for all.

NASUWT President Fred Brown [right] and International Officer Abdullah Muhsin both attended Egitim Sen’s 10th Annual Congress in July where Mr Brown condemned the attacks on teachers and the dismissal of thousands of teachers and education workers.

He said the efforts of Egitim Sen were playing a “vital role” in providing relief for teachers, their families and their communities who were suffering from unjustifiable repression.
The NASUWT has been cementing its links with one of the leading Australian teachers’ unions.

NASUWT visit to Australia strengthens Union ties

NASUWT National Official Jennifer Moses [above] attended the Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) inaugural Women and Leadership conference in Canberra, held in March.

Ms Moses spoke on behalf of the NASUWT on the importance of having more women in leadership positions in unions and in schools and colleges.

She also spoke in a panel debate, discussing what the NASUWT believes is needed socially, politically and personally to champion women in trade unions, in education and in wider society.

The Conference, which took place during the week of International Women’s Day, examined the theme of “Be bold for change”.

This was the first conference for women for the IEUA and was attended by 100 women from various IEUA branches across Australia.

The NASUWT has a longstanding and productive working relationship with the IEUA and shares a number of principles on trade union rights, social justice and equality rights.

At the NASUWT’s Annual Conference in April this year, the IEUA’s Assistant Federal Secretary Christine Cooper spoke out against workplace sexism at a fringe event entitled “Still a bit of banter? – tackling sexual harassment in the workplace”.

Speaking at the event, NASUWT members heard about research highlighting the extent of sexism and sexual harassment in UK workplaces, including schools, and what the NASUWT and other unions are doing to tackle the problem.
Anti-union laws repealed after union campaign

A teachers’ union in Canada which has successfully fought off anti-labour rights laws provides “a beacon to the rest of the world”, the NASUWT has said.

The NASUWT congratulated the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF) for securing the repeal of anti-labour rights laws, seen as a major victory in the fight against anti-trade union laws.

Members of the CTF successfully spearheaded an extensive national campaign to fight the legislation, known as C-377 and C-525. Teacher organisations were among the various groups targeted by the Bills which had been pushed through with little debate and no consultation.

If implemented, this legislation would have undermined the ability of unions to advocate for workers and make it more difficult for workers in federally regulated workplaces to join a union.

“This is wonderful news for democracy and human rights,” said CTF President Heather Smith [right].

“We applaud the Liberal government for living up to its electoral promise by repealing these anti-labour and undemocratic laws.”

Congratulating the CTF on its achievement, Patrick Roach, NASUWT Deputy General Secretary, said:

“The CTF’s success represents a major achievement in securing respect for workers’ rights and human rights and will provide a beacon to the rest of the world.

“It sends an important message to teachers and the trade union movement around the world that determined campaigning can ensure that our values are protected and translated into policy and practice.

“Indeed, as rights of teachers, other workers and their unions are under attack here in the UK, we especially welcome the CTF’s achievements.”

The NASUWT has been supporting a new education resource in the UK which has been developed to explore issues of historical and contemporary slavery.

‘Stolen Lives’ is a new creative project which uses music, songs, words, images, film and animation to raise awareness of modern-day slavery, human trafficking and trans-global child labour issues. The project, which is being promoted to schools, uses music and images to promote awareness of modern-day slavery and the need to combat it in all its forms.

Nineteenth-century abolitionists were well aware of the power of music to persuade and inform using anti-slavery songs to help build opinion against slavery, particularly in the USA.

Images were also used to build a powerful case against slavery.

Stolen Lives is a collection of 17 songs and narratives designed to have multiple uses and are suitable for children aged 11-14 and 14-16.

To access the resources, visit www.stolenlives.co.uk.
Education International (EI) is providing money to teacher unions around the world for projects aimed at supporting teachers to provide quality education for refugee children.

In 2015, around 12,000 refugees, including many unaccompanied children, arrived in the state of Bremen. Since then, more refugees have settled in the state, combined with migrant children from poorer EU countries whose families have been attracted by better paid work and relatively affordable housing.

The response of the Bremen state government to the pressures on the education system has been to expand teacher numbers, including by outsourcing jobs.

However, after pressure from the unions, including the NASUWT’s partners in the GEW teaching union, almost 100 teachers have been brought back in-house this summer.

Teachers spoke of their immense pride in their pupils’ progress but also of the challenges they face. Asked what the school management and the state government could do to help her in delivering quality education, the answer of Sibel Sari, a teacher in Bremerhaven, was stark: “Double staffing in the classroom.”

The GEW is working on a project, supported by EI, called Teachers Organising for Quality Education for Refugees. Nick Strauss, a branch executive member of the GEW, said: “Teacher voices need to be heard and governments need to take action if we are to ensure we are providing a quality education for all young people.”

To read the full article, go to www.nasuwt.org.uk/international
Schools welcome refugees

The NASUWT and community-organising charity Citizens UK have joined forces to promote a new accreditation scheme for schools that welcomes refugees.

The new Refugee Welcome Schools scheme will recognise schools that have made a commitment to welcome refugees. Schools in London, Birmingham and Cardiff are taking part initially, with the aim of being accredited as Refugee Welcome Schools.

Schools taking part in the scheme will each develop a Refugee Welcome Plan to make sure those seeking sanctuary in their school and the wider community experience a warm and generous welcome.

Chris Keates, General Secretary of the NASUWT, said: “Schools and colleges are at the heart of the community and have a huge role to play in ensuring young refugees, and their families, are welcomed and integrated into the UK.

“Ensuring children and young people who are fleeing war and persecution are given access to high-quality education and opportunities is critically important if their future potential is to be realised.

“This scheme will help achieve this by ensuring teachers, and the wider school community, are able to offer the warmest possible welcome within an environment where their presence enriches the educational environment for all.”

Jonathan Cox, Deputy Director of Citizens UK, said: “Citizens UK has been calling for the UK Government to play its part in resettling refugees from Syria, and welcome the most vulnerable, since 2014. Our member institutions, including schools, have told us that they want to help; this scheme is a practical way to help support school communities as they prepare to welcome refugees.

“The UK’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis means that at least 20,000 refugees from that conflict will arrive here between now and 2020. Many will be resettled in communities that have never hosted refugees before.

“Every single resettled refugee will have a connection to a school, as only families are eligible for the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. This means that schools become crucial places of welcome, orientation and integration for refugee families.”

Accredited Refugee Welcome Schools will be encouraged to display their accreditation certificate prominently and will gain access to the Refugee Welcome Schools network and additional resources.

Teachers interested in finding out more should contact refugee.welcomeschools@citizensuk.org
NASUWT lobbying helped secure further progress on women’s economic empowerment and commitments from world leaders.

The 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) committed world leaders to address the gender pay gap and to improve the status of women in the workplace and promote access to decent work for women.

The CSW is dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. Its purpose is to evaluate progress on gender equality and to set global standards to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide.

Representatives from national governments, together with trade unions, United Nations (UN) bodies and NGOs were in attendance. However, the UK Government refused to participate.

NASUWT Ex-President Kathy Wallis and National Official (Equality and Training) Jennifer Moses were present as the Union’s representatives and were also part of the Education International (EI) delegation, representing over 32 million teachers worldwide.

The NASUWT played a full part in disseminating the key message that unions are central to women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work. Following the meeting, the NASUWT continues to ensure that the role and participation of trade unions and the rights and empowerment of women and girls is paramount in the development of the Sustainable Development Goals through lobbying and campaign work within EI and ETUCE.

Colombia bomb attack on teachers’ union “intolerable”

The NASUWT has condemned a bomb attack on the offices of the Colombian teachers’ union FECODE, describing it as a “grievous act of violence”.

General Secretary Chris Keates said the attack in Bogota was “intolerable” and praised FECODE for its “inspirational courage” in the face of intimidation.

“...while we are thankful that there was no loss of life, the fact that FECODE has been subjected to such a grievous act of violence is entirely intolerable...”

No-one was injured when an explosive detonated outside the FECODE head office but the blast caused substantial damage.

It coincided with a call by the union for national strike action to try and improve pay and working conditions for Colombia’s teachers. In a letter to Carlos Rivas, President of FECODE, Chris Keates said: “We were profoundly concerned to learn of the recent attack on FECODE’s offices in Bogota.

“While we are thankful that there was no loss of life, the fact that FECODE has been subjected to such a grievous act of violence is entirely intolerable.”

Ms Keates said FECODE had earned the “admiration and respect of the global teacher trade union movement for the inspirational courage and fortitude of its members, despite the extreme intimidation faced by members”. She added: “It is no surprise that FECODE has made clear that it will not be deterred from pursuing its objectives for Colombia’s teachers and learners by last week’s events.

“The NASUWT will continue to stand by its friends in FECODE and is ready to provide any support and assistance you might require.”
The NASUWT played host to an international round table discussion at its Annual Conference in Manchester with unions from around the world.

The meeting was facilitated by NASUWT Deputy General Secretary Dr Patrick Roach, who shared information and ideas with a range of education trade unionists.

The delegates looked particularly at the issue of securing workers’ rights and how confident unions could be in the current global structures to meet the challenges faced by members.

Dr Roach highlighted the attacks on living standards and the rights of teachers and their professional status and entitlements as a result of government policies and the growing commercialisation of education.

The meeting heard contributions from countries including France, USA, Iraq, Uganda, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kurdistan, Australia, Bermuda, Cyprus, Portugal, Germany and Bahrain. Susan Flocken, Director of the ETUCE, was also present for the discussion.

Commercialisation was a big concern of many of the delegates, and a number of them spoke of how war and repressive regimes were hitting the ability of teachers to deliver high-quality education.

The meeting also considered issues around the continued attacks on women and girls in many parts of the world, overcoming the politics of hate and extremism, working to lobby governments and international bodies and how Education International needed to adapt further to meet those challenges.

Speaking after the discussion, Dr Roach said: “All of the unions taking part said it was really important and useful for them to be able to speak in a setting such as that provided by the NASUWT.

“We were able to learn from others and share our own experiences about the huge challenges faced by education unions around the world as they seek to deliver quality education for all.”
Since the Referendum vote, there has been a significant increase in the number of EU citizens leaving the UK.

In 2016, 117,000 people from EU countries left the UK, an increase of 31,000 on the previous year.

Levels of recorded hate crimes have also increased significantly since the Referendum.

Feedback to the NASUWT shows that many teachers from EU countries are increasingly concerned about uncertainty caused by Brexit, and others feel that they are less welcome living in the UK.

The NASUWT was the first union to provide teachers with information and advice on the implications and consequences of Brexit.

Since 23 June 2016, the Union has listened carefully to concerns raised by teachers about Brexit, to ensure that members are supported and more confident about the future.

At the Union’s National Conference in April 2017, the NASUWT confirmed its policy priority to campaign to protect workers’ rights in the context of continuing Brexit uncertainty.

The NASUWT is concerned that Brexit could lead to tens of thousands of teachers from the EU leaving the UK, putting further pressure on the education system.

The NASUWT is highly critical of the Government’s failure to:

- protect the rights of teachers from EU countries working in the UK and the rights of UK teachers working in EU countries;
- commit to guarantee that workers’ rights, including trade union rights, will be protected fully within any trade deals established with the UK; and
- protect investment in world-class education and other public services throughout the UK, the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Gibraltar.

The NASUWT is demanding that:

- the post-Brexit framework for workers’ rights must include the right to security of employment together with entitlements to decent working conditions, pay and pensions for all;
- UK governments and administrations end the failed and wasteful policies of deregulation and market-driven reforms and ensure that public funding for education is used responsibly and appropriately, in the national interest, and to protect jobs and living standards;
- a campaign with members throughout the UK, the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Gibraltar, to advance the collective interests of all teachers and to prevent a race to the bottom in the wake of Brexit-driven regional and national devolution;
- in the negotiations with the EU, the implications for education are considered fully; and
- future trade agreements protect workers’ rights and deliver economic and social justice for all.

The NASUWT publication After Brexit can be accessed at www.nasuwt.org.uk/Brexit
World Bank urged to stop funding low-fee schools

Education unions from around the world, including the NASUWT, have called on the World Bank to stop investing in low-fee private schools. The 29 unions stated that the World Bank and other investors were increasing marginalisation and threatening democracy in many African countries.

US firm Bridge International Academies (BIA), which provides education for 100,000 pupils in low-fee schools across Africa, was also singled out. The coalition of unions said that the standard of education provided by BIA was “unacceptable and substandard”.

They added: “School buildings are often unsafe and poorly constructed, the majority of teachers are unqualified and poorly trained, and the curriculum is scripted and fails to address the realities of the classroom. It is hard to find any aspect of Bridge schools that resembles high-quality education.”

The call on the World Bank to stop investing in low-fee schools was made in a letter sent to its president Dr Jim Yong Kim.

“We believe that a high-quality public education must be recognized as a public good, and that the provision of education is a primary responsibility of governments, not corporations and entrepreneurs.

“The World Bank, in partnership with a group of opportunistic international investors, is undermining the foundation of public education and democracy in many African countries.

“Bridge makes education a commodity to be bought and sold, which threatens fledgling democracies, increases segregation and expands marginalization.”

BIA was also strongly criticised in a report by Education International which highlighted the fact that many poor families in Kenya were spending more than half their income on school fees.

In response to the letter, the Chief Executive Officer of IFC, part of the World Bank Group, Philippe Le Houérou, said the World Bank invested in BIA because of its “potential” to provide low-cost basic education on a large scale to children living in poverty. He said an impact evaluation of BIA and its effectiveness would be published in the future.

The report by EI, Bridge vs Reality: A study of Bridge International Academies’ for-profit schooling in Kenya, can be found at www.ei-ie.org.

To read more on the UK Government’s spending on education in developing countries, go to www.nasuwt.org.uk/DFIDReview
The NASUWT joined delegates from other leading countries in education at a major three-day international teaching summit held in Edinburgh.

The 7th International Summit on the Teaching Profession (ISTP), hosted this year by the UK, included: the Minister of State for Schools, Nick Gibb [far right]; John Swinney, Scotland’s Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education; Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills at the OECD; and Fred Van Leeuwen, General Secretary of Education International.

The theme of the Summit was “Empowering and Enabling Teachers to Deliver Greater Equity and Improved Outcomes for All”.

Since its inaugural summit in New York City, the ISTP has become a major platform for an exchange of views on effective teaching policies and practices. The countries attending are the world’s top-ranked countries in education according to the OECD. Discussions focus on professional learning and development support for teachers and what governments and unions can do to support this aim. The NASUWT was represented in Edinburgh by National Official for Campaigns and Communications Gareth Young [above left], who took the opportunity to lobby ministers on behalf of teachers. The Summit resolved to commit governments across the OECD-participating nations to work with the profession on a series of measures.

### KEY UK COMMITMENTS FROM ISTP 2017

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<th>England</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>Wales</th>
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<td>Ensure that every pupil achieves their potential, regardless of their social background.</td>
<td>Jointly develop a programme for professional-association-led, equity-related CPD, including impact and evaluation.</td>
<td>Improve our national approach to professional learning – underpinned by developmental professional standards for teaching and leadership.</td>
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<td>Address workload concerns to raise the status and quality of the teaching profession so that the best and the brightest want to become teachers. Ensure that teaching is firmly grounded in high-quality research on what works to raise attainment.</td>
<td>Jointly consider ways of facilitating and incentivising deep professional learning.</td>
<td>Secure enhanced equity through strengthening wraparound pre-school provision, integrated with our closing the gap strategy in schools and settings.</td>
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<td>Jointly consider career pathways that reflect a range of options for teachers including increased collaboration, leadership development and strengthening the centre.</td>
<td>Improve our accountability measures through a more effective Assessment and Evaluation Framework.</td>
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Powerful messages of solidarity from within the global trade union movement have been sent to the UK following the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London which killed 35 people and left more than 160 injured. An image of union leaders and staff from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) holding a message saying “Stand United” was posted on its website and social media in the aftermath of the terror attacks.

The union condemned the “appalling attacks” and said they would not divide people, stressing that “unity will always defeat hate and intolerance.”

“We join in never allowing these appalling attacks to divide, break our spirit, or shake our belief that unity will always defeat hate and intolerance,” a statement said. Education International (EI) General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen also spoke of his “deep shock” at the attacks and highlighted the importance of the teaching profession in delivering education to “build a world that values life and peaceful coexistence”.

He added: “Inculcating humane and democratic values in new generations is the best defence against religious and other forms of ideological extremism.”

The French education union SNES-FSU said: “Our thoughts go to all the victims of this odious terrorist attack in London as well as to their families. When facing hatred and fanaticism, let us keep on promoting values such as fraternity, solidarity and democracy.”

Susan Flocken, Regional Co-ordinator for EI in Europe, said: “There are no words to express the deep sadness when children and young people who have all their life ahead of them are torn from the world, and for their family and friends to experience such a tragic event.”

The President of the Kurdistan Teachers Union (KTU), Abdulwahed Haji, and the President of the Iraqi Teachers’ Union (ITU), Abbas Sudani, condemned the Manchester bombing, saying:

“We know that Isis terror attacks are scoundrels, monstrous and painful, but must remain strong, undivided and steadfast in human solidarity to confront the evil poison of Isis ideology.”

**Between March and June this year, four attacks took place in London and Manchester.**

On 22 March, six people, including the attacker died and 50 were hurt when Khalid Masood mounted the pavement in a hired car and drove into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge. He then ran towards Parliament and stabbed a police officer to death before being shot dead.

On 22 May, suicide bomber Salman Abedi targeted young children when he blew himself up at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester killing 22 and injuring 59.

On 3 June, three men ran over people on London Bridge in a van before stabbing people in nearby Borough Market, leaving seven dead and 48 injured. They were shot dead by police minutes later.

On 19 June, a group of Muslim worshippers were hit when a van mounted the pavement and drove into them in Finsbury Park, London. Nine people were injured. A suspect is in police custody.

“...we join in never allowing these appalling attacks to divide, break our spirit, or shake our belief that unity will always defeat hate and intolerance...”
An NASUWT member has spoken of his “inspiring” visit to the USA as part of a project researching how disadvantaged groups fare in the education system.

Patrick Ryan, 48 [above right], NASUWT member and supply teacher from Telford in Shropshire, spent three weeks in the country as part of the Walter Hines Page Scholarship programme.

The programme offers the chance to visit the United States to teachers who wish to carry out research into the education system and to learn lessons about improving teaching and learning outcomes for pupils.

Mr Ryan, who teaches Business Studies and Economics, visited elementary, middle and high schools in areas including Boston, New York, New Jersey, Washington and Pennsylvania and found what he described as a fractured education system in which individual states have great power to decide how their children and young people are educated. This means children across the country will be taught quite differently and what they learn about issues such as America’s history, slavery, LGBT rights and the civil rights movement varies considerably.

He met with teachers, trade union officials and congressmen and senators on Capitol Hill and attended the national conference of the National Education Association (NEA) education union in Washington.

Mr Ryan is endeavouring to build on his US visit and create long-lasting student/staff connections to promote International Solidarity links. He said: “It was an amazing experience to work in schools in various states and see first-hand how the education system operates in America, which is totally different to the UK education system, and how it differs hugely from state to state.

“It was really interesting to see how schools, particularly in disadvantaged areas, often work with community and local support groups to meet the needs of the students. Programmes such as “Backpack Friday” help students by sending them home with a backpack of food and supplies.

“...Lots of students were saying they wanted to get into positions of power because they were of colour and they were hungry to get into that process and bring about change...

“It was also interesting that many of these disadvantaged schools embraced programmes such as the English Speaking Union and the creative arts to address the social divisions in society. Many also used restorative justice processes with their students to tackle the huge inequality often faced by the students.”

Mr Ryan met with NEA officials and members and described this as an “enlightening experience”. He was particularly inspired by his meetings with teachers and students in schools.

“The most inspiring thing was how passionate teachers and officials were about change.

“It was really inspiring to see how they wanted to make a difference. Many agreed the system was flawed but they wanted to work within the system and make a difference with these children.

“Lots of students were saying they wanted to get into positions of power because they were of colour and they were hungry to get into that process and bring about change.”
Countries across the world have adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years.

For the goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part: governments, the private sector, civil society and individuals.

To find out what you can do, visit www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction.
July 2014 – Esmail Abdi, a leader of the Iranian Tehran Teacher Trade Association, was arrested for trade union activities and to prevent his participation at the World Congress of Education International (EI) in Canada. The NASUWT secured the adoption by the EI Congress of an Emergency Resolution condemning the arrest.

In October 2016 – Esmail was sentenced to six years in prison on false charges. On 30 April 2017, Esmail began a hunger strike in protest at the continued repression of teachers and human rights defenders. In June 2017 Esmail was released on bail, but he and his family continued to be harassed. One month later, Esmail was arrested again following a further unjustified crackdown against trade unionists by Iranian government forces.

Freedom for imprisoned trade unionists and for those committed to education, human rights, equality, democracy, justice and peace

The NASUWT – The Teachers’ Union joins with Education International, Amnesty International and LabourStart in condemning the treatment of Esmail Abdi.

The NASUWT stands with the international community in campaigning for the Iranian government to lift all sanctions against trade unionists and to respect fundamental human and trade union rights and freedoms.