

Update on progress on the NASUWT National Trade Dispute with the Government

WORKLOAD

The NASUWT is engaged in a National Trade Dispute with the Government over pay, **workload**, ineffective management of pupil indiscipline and other adverse management practices affecting the health and welfare of members.

Following a lawful national ballot, NASUWT members in schools across Scotland have been engaged in national industrial action in furtherance of this dispute.

This briefing note provides members with an update on the progress the NASUWT has been able to make in its representations to and discussions with the Government on **workload**, as a result of the action, NASUWT members have taken in furtherance of this aspect of the national trade dispute.

The extent of the problem and why national action on workload is necessary

80% of teachers in Scotland say that **workload is their biggest concern about their job.**

Teachers say that the key drivers of workload are:

- marking and assessment policies;
- clerical and administrative tasks; and
- curriculum and qualification changes.

3/4 of teachers report that **excessive workload is having an adverse impact on their mental and physical health and wellbeing.**

The NASUWT trade dispute and action has sent a strong message to the Government and employers that the time for talking about workload has passed and that action must be taken which makes an immediate and tangible difference to teachers' daily working lives.



The NASUWT's proposals on tackling workload

- 1 All Government guidance on teachers' workload** should be made statutory so that schools and employers must implement it; for example, the recommendations from the Curriculum for Excellence Working Group on bureaucracy. While guidance has no statutory force, schools and employers fail to take this seriously.

The Government's response

Whilst Ministers remain reluctant to introducing new legislation, there has definitely been a change in attitude from outright rejection of this proposal to recognising that if things do not change, such actions may be necessary.

- 2 All education strategies emanating from the Government and employers should be workload impact assessed before they are issued and implemented.**

The Government's response

The Government has stated that in developing its policies, with the NASUWT and other teacher organisations, issues such as workload are considered as part of the process. The Government is committed to working with us on the development of policies in the future.

This provides the NASUWT with the opportunity to press in these discussions for formal workload impact assessments and we will be doing so.

- 3 Teachers' pay and conditions should be statutory and a mechanism introduced to ensure compliance at school level.**

The Government's response

The Government and COSLA have raised the same concerns as the NASUWT about the current structure of the SNCT Teachers' Panel. The Panel is where issues affecting conditions of service are raised.

The NASUWT believes that the Teachers' Panel has failed to serve the interests of teachers and if progress is to be made in ensuring teachers' conditions of service are improved and implemented in full, there needs to be change within the SNCT.

It is welcome that the Government and the Employers now share our concerns.

- 4 Reinstate the SNCT Handbook Annex E/Appendix 2.6**, which relates to teachers not routinely undertaking administrative and clerical tasks as since its removal teachers report increased burdens from these tasks.

The Government's response.

The Government has noted that this is an ongoing concern for the NASUWT but has no plans to reinstate Annex E, as it is encompassed in the SNCT Handbook as part 2, paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6.

It is clear to the NASUWT that if the reference in the SNCT Handbook was working then teachers would not be reporting a rise in the burdens of administrative and clerical tasks.

The NASUWT will continue to pursue the strengthening of this provision and in the meantime will take action in schools where teachers are being burdened with these tasks.

- 5 Undertake an annual diary survey of teachers' working hours and collect robust data to assist monitoring teachers' workload and working hours.**

The Government's response

The NASUWT now has a seat on the Enabling Teacher Agency Advisory Group, which is taking forward work on teacher agency. The Government has also presented a paper on workload to the SNCT.

Whilst this is welcome, it does not alleviate the burdens teachers are facing on a daily basis and is no substitute for the robust data which is needed to ensure that the strategies being considered are appropriate.

Whilst the Government is not collecting data, the NASUWT is and will use this in the working party to ensure that the concerns of teachers are addressed.

6 Include in the inspection framework a requirement to inspect the processes that schools and employers have in place to manage workload effectively.

The Government's response

The Government has committed to discuss this in more detail with Education Scotland and has also reaffirmed that as part of the school inspections, HM inspectors will discuss tackling unnecessary bureaucracy, if it has been raised as an issue.

NASUWT members need to ensure that they are regularly raising with their headteachers their concerns about excessive workload and bureaucratic burdens.

7 Introduce a system of workload challenger schools and local authorities should commit to leading good practice at school level, including adopting workload challenger commitments.

The Government's response

The Government thinks this is a good idea and is happy to discuss this in more detail with COSLA.

The NASUWT will also be discussing this suggestion directly with COSLA.

8 Review of the provision of support staff in schools, in class and in administrative roles, to support teachers.

The Government's response

The Government has stated that it is investing an additional £15m this year to enhance capacity in education authorities and schools to respond effectively to the individual needs of children and young people.

Approximately, 1,000 extra pupil support assistant are expected to be recruited to work with ASN pupils.

The NASUWT will be reviewing the impact of this on teachers workload to see if this assists them in meeting the needs of the pupils they teach, whilst alleviating some of the workload burdens.

9 Audit and upgrade IT systems across schools.

The Government's response

The Government states that it is working with authorities across the country to support the implementation of the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy.

The NASUWT will be gathering evidence on the impact of this from members.

10 Review of the contractual provision of teachers to identify improvements to assist in the management of workload, e.g changes to the provisions to reduce the burdens of cover for absence.

The Government's response

The Government believes that this should be taken forward in the work being undertaken by the SNCT (see item 5 above).

The NASUWT will be pressing for improvements to the contractual provisions through this route, but believes that far more needs to be done.

PROGRESS MADE

Members should be proud of the fact that supported by the NASUWT, they have made a firm stand and commitment to end the endless talking about tackling workload and are actually doing something about it, by taking industrial action.

Whilst the initial responses from Government represent engagement with the Union on issues of concern, it is clear that there is still more to be done.

However, there can be no doubt that members' concerns are being taken seriously and more action than ever before has been taken by the Government to address teachers' concerns, since we lodged our trade dispute and conducted our lawful ballot for action.

In the NASUWT's recent meeting with John Swinney, Deputy First Minister, we reviewed progress to date and there was positive dialogue on the concerns we raised.

In recognition of this, the NASUWT stated that while the progress made was welcome it was not sufficient for the NASUWT to withdraw its dispute and action. The Minister was advised that the Union would not escalate action at this stage, providing that further progress was secured.

BUT THERE IS STILL MORE TO BE DONE



The current action and action instructions will continue.

They will maintain the pressure on the Government and employers, whilst empowering members to continue to use the action to improve the working practices in their own school and alleviate the burdens on them.

**All members can benefit from engaging in the current action.
It is not too late to be involved.**



**talk
to us**

**JOIN OUR
ACTION
ON WORKLOAD
NOW**

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