

March 2019

**General Secretary: Chris Keates (Ms)**

**Strictly private and confidential**

Dear Member

## **NATIONAL ACTION BALLOT**

### **PAY, WORKLOAD, PUPIL INDISCIPLINE AND OTHER ADVERSE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

On 5th March 2019, the NASUWT lodged its formal trade dispute with the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney ([www.nasuwt.org.uk/scotlanddisputeletter1](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/scotlanddisputeletter1)) making clear that teachers' concerns were not just about pay, but that they were equally, if not more, about excessive workload, pupil indiscipline and other adverse management practices, such as bullying and harassment.

On 8th March, a letter was issued by John Swinney ([www.nasuwt.org.uk/scotlanddisputeletter2](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/scotlanddisputeletter2)) to the Chair of the SNCT Joint Chairs, making further proposals in relation to pay but also, for the first time, referencing a number of other issues which had not previously featured at all in the discussions, including workload and teacher wellbeing. It is clear that the NASUWT's trade dispute letter of 5th March had made the Minister sit up and take notice of the extent of the concerns of teachers.

On pay, the Minister's letter offers to add a further 1% to the current offer but it would only be payable from April 2019 instead, and the Minister makes clear that this will have to be funded from the existing Education and Skills budget.

The Minister also offers an independent review of pay and conditions of service. No timescales are given for this and no detail of how it would be conducted, or by whom it would be provided. Furthermore, it is clear that the review will not include the mechanism for negotiating pay and conditions, as the Minister confirms that the SNCT, which has presided over and been instrumental in the decline in teachers' pay and conditions over the last decade, would remain the forum for pay and conditions.

On workload, the Minister makes reference to reducing 'unnecessary' workload and proposes joint activity to assist in reducing 'unnecessary' workload through the roll-out of the empowerment agenda. This is a classic 'jam tomorrow' approach which does nothing to alleviate the excessive workload which is currently blighting teachers' lives.

Teachers are all too familiar with the Government's national initiatives on teachers' workload and the strategies and recommendations which have emerged from them. They also know that these strategies and recommendations have largely been ignored by schools and employers because they have no statutory basis.

The evidence that teachers' workload is excessive is irrefutable. The drivers of excessive workload are clear.

Government action, not words, is urgently needed and there is no sign in the Minister's letter of any intention to compel schools or employers to address the workload crisis.

On pupil indiscipline, which 87% of teachers say is a widespread problem across schools and over three quarters say is a problem in their own school, the Minister's letter is completely silent. Yet teachers across the country are going to work each day experiencing stress, anxiety and physical and mental injury as a result of the growing unacceptable culture in schools that makes being physically or verbally abused all part of the job.

**Please turn over**

Teachers on a daily basis are being denied their legal entitlement to a safe working environment. The continuing failure by the Government and employers to act on this is unacceptable.

A range of other issues are referenced by the Minister in his letter, in an all too obvious attempt to cobble together a package of proposals which are superficially attractive but lack substance.

The Minister proposes: two additional inset days for 2019/20 to support professional learning; to work in partnership to develop a new programme of professional learning focused on teachers' health and wellbeing to build 'teacher resilience' and agency; a Teacher Innovation Fund to provide opportunities for individual teachers to apply for funding to support career development; and to work to extend the reach of the Teacher Leadership Programme.

These proposals have emerged out of the blue. There has been no discussion on these. There is no detail, no timescale and no funding identified.

Teachers are leaving the profession now. Potential recruits are being deterred from coming into teaching now. Teachers need tangible change now.

It should also be remembered that the proposals in the Minister's letter have not even been discussed with, let alone agreed by, COSLA, which represents the employers, and we understand COSLA is not due to meet for a further two weeks.

### **The NASUWT Ballot continues**

On Friday 8th and Monday 11th March, the NASUWT issued notice to employers of the intention to ballot members in the schools which had registered with the NASUWT to be included in the ballot.

The NASUWT National Action Committee met on 12th March to review the Minister's latest offer and could see no compelling reason in what the Minister has said to merit the withdrawal of the Union's action strategy, which is based on evidence and feedback from members, and which will empower teachers to make an immediate difference to their daily working lives.

The NASUWT will not, therefore, be suspending or withdrawing its ballot.

According to our records, your school is still not registered to participate in the ballot. It is not too late to be involved, but contact must be made immediately with the NASUWT Scotland Centre on 0131 226 8480 or e-mail: [rc-scotland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk](mailto:rc-scotland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk).

Thank you for your continuing support for the NASUWT.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Chris Keates (Ms)  
**General Secretary**



*demands*

*a* **NEW**  
**Deal** *for teachers*