



Key Facts for NUT members on the new ballot

Why is the NUT conducting a new ballot?

The NUT has reached an agreement with the NASUWT to coordinate our campaigns to protect teachers' pensions, pay and working conditions.

As part of that campaign the NUT will keep its existing pensions ballot but is balloting members to seek their support for action to protect pay and working conditions.

Does this mean the pensions campaign is over?

Absolutely not. The NUT's agreement with the NASUWT is the best way of continuing the pensions campaign as 85% of the profession acting together would have a large impact.

Is now the right time to widen the issues we are in dispute about?

Well if not now, when? Teachers' pensions are under attack but so are our pay and conditions. Workload and stress are shooting up. This Government is more aggressive towards teachers than any we have known. The chance of coordinating the work of the NUT and NASUWT is the best way to put pressure on the Government on these issues.

What form of action are the unions proposing?

The proposal is that NUT and NASUWT members should jointly take strike action and non-strike action.

What sort of non-strike sanctions will the union support?

Some examples of possible non-strike actions include:

- refusal to hand in short-term planning (even Michael Gove says this is not necessary and many outstanding schools require no such handing in)
- refusal to attend more than one management directed meeting per week
- refusal to cooperate with more than three observations per performance management cycle
- target weeks where teachers do nothing except teaching and any scheduled break supervision.

These sanctions will be decided on and run jointly with the NASUWT and full joint guidance will be issued. Both unions would offer support to school groups in the event of them experiencing difficulties with their head teacher. Releasing teachers from accountability tasks will free them to think about teaching and learning instead of form-filling.

Strike action

The NUT and NASUWT are prepared to take joint strike action over pensions, pay and working conditions. As ever we hope to avoid this and are seeking negotiations with Government – however the situation is very serious and we do think we have to be prepared for strike action.

What are our demands on working conditions?

Working hours continue to rise, but much of this workload is required by over-the-top accountability systems rather than being directed at teaching more exciting lessons. It portrays a real lack of trust in teachers and treats us all as though we are failing.

We have said to the Government that we want to talk to them about schools and teacher accountability. No one thinks teachers shouldn't be accountable, but we need systems that encourage rather than demotivate, and which are based on trusting teachers rather than treating us all as though we are on capability procedures.

We are demanding that:

- there are statutory limits on observation in England and Wales
- the Government looks to reduce the number of Ofsted/Estyn inspections
- the Government introduces measures to reduce overall workload.

What are our demands on pay?

In November the Government announced that the pay freeze on teachers would be extended, with a 0% rise in September 2012 and only 1% in September 2013 and September 2014. At the same time pension contributions have gone up. By the end of this period your purchasing power could have fallen by 15 to 20%. The Government also has other plans to worsen teachers' pay through regional/local pay and further moves to give more discretion to heads. Our demands are that:

- the Government does not go ahead with localising teachers' pay, or setting pay school by school
- the Government does not go ahead with proposals to give head teachers more discretion to limit your movement up and even to move you down the pay spine
- the pay freeze comes to an end – our pay should not keep falling further and further behind prices.

Can we win?

By joint strike action we have won some concessions on pensions. There are many more concessions to win and united action between the NUT and the NASUWT is the best way to achieve this.

Please vote YES to both questions in the ballot.