



NUT News

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OVERSEAS TEACHERS A NEW PROTOCOL

Overseas teachers and their countries of origin are to be protected by a new recruitment protocol agreed at a conference of Commonwealth countries, held on 1 September 2004, at the NUT's training centre, Stoke Rochford Hall.

RIGHTS, PROTECTION AND ENTITLEMENTS

The NUT hosted the Conference and helped broker an unprecedented agreement between 35 Commonwealth countries, including the UK. The agreement entitled, 'The Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol', addresses and balances:

- the right of teachers to migrate internationally on a temporary or permanent basis in furtherance of their careers;
- the need to protect the education systems of poor countries and prevent exploitation of scarce human resources;
- the entitlement of teachers recruited overseas to the full conditions of service and salaries applicable to teachers generally in the recruiting countries.

RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

The protocol was triggered by the activities of recruitment agencies targeting countries that can ill afford to lose highly qualified teachers, such as South Africa, Ghana, Jamaica and Barbados and by the poor conditions of employment a number of overseas trained teachers have experienced.

KEY POINTS

- Recruiting and source countries should agree on exceptional ways of mitigating the harmful impact of detrimental recruitment practices.
- There will be a complaints mechanism for host and source countries.
- Recruiting agencies will be subject to a quality assurance mechanism. Agencies which do not comply with quality standards will be removed from the list approved by the DfES.
- Recruited teachers shall 'enjoy employment conditions not less than those of nationals of similar status and occupying similar positions'.
- Recruited teachers shall be employed by schools or local education authorities. There should be proper induction and specific professional development for overseas trained teachers. Training should be available for those who wish to achieve UK qualified teacher status.

To secure the Commonwealth protocol, the NUT worked closely with teacher organisations from South Africa, India, the Caribbean, Canada and Australia and was supported by the NASUWT and the ATL.

NUT General Secretary, Steve Sinnott, said:

"The NUT is privileged to have played a critical role in reaching a ground-breaking agreement. The protocol will protect overseas teachers and their countries of origin from exploitation. It will benefit schools in England and Wales and in the Commonwealth countries that have endorsed it. It is a recognition that teacher shortage cannot be solved on the cheap and that overseas teachers should be properly treated."

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