

NASUWT ANNUAL CONFERENCE 19th - 22nd April 2019 ICC, BELFAST WATERFRONT, NORTHERN IRELAND

The Annual National Conference determines the future policies of the NASUWT. The Motions for Conference were submitted by Local Associations and the National Executive Committee during the Autumn Term and 58 Motions were voted on by individual members in a postal ballot or on-line and the top 20 motions were debated at Conference over the Easter weekend.



Over a thousand Delegates from Local Associations across the UK attended Conference. There were five Delegates from the Wirral Association Local Executive Committee: **Anne Rycroft, Mick Robinson, Jackie Webb, David Hepworth and Kirsten Jacques**, who attended all the Sessions of Conference over the weekend. Belfast was a very welcoming City and the International Conference Centre at the Waterfront, pictured

left, was an ideal setting for the NASUWT Annual Conference. The Conference marked the start of NASUWT's centenary celebrations, commemorating 100 years since the union was formed.

The first six balloted motions were placed on the Agenda as set business by the Standing Orders Committee when it met on 4 March 2019. The remaining 14 motions were debated, following debate of set business in each session, in the order in which they were balloted.

The issues of most concern to NASUWT members were:

1. Age Discrimination and Teachers Working Longer (which had 61% support in the ballot),
2. Teachers' Mental Health (60%),
3. Pupil Indiscipline and Abuse (53%),
4. Data and Assessment in Schools (52%),
5. Valuing Teachers (48%) and
6. Pension Reform (40%).

The other motions were: Education Funding and Austerity (38%), Bullying and Adverse Management Practices (37%), Performance Management and Teacher Retention (37%), CPD and Time Off For Training (34%), Reinstating a National Pay Framework (30%), Funding For an Inclusive Education System (29%), Staff Wellbeing OFSTED Inspector (29%), Pay for Additional Responsibilities (28%), National Pay Framework (26%), Qualifications Reform (22%), Extended School Days (22%), Education Rights and Entitlements (21%), Rights at Work (21%) and Teachers Without a Permanent Classroom Base (20%). The full wording of the motions can be found on the Wirral NASUWT website.

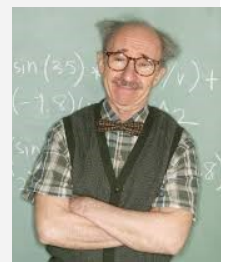


'UNREALISTIC' PENSION AGE CONDEMNED

One of the best Public Sessions of Conference was the final one on Sunday afternoon when the **Pension Reform** motion was debated. Young teachers who have student debts were saying they can't afford the increases of more than 40% in the Teacher Contributions and many are opting out of the scheme. The increase in the retirement age for teachers from 60 to 65 then 68 and the equalisation of Teachers' and State Pension ages was condemned as completely unrealistic in a climate where teachers are burning out after only a few years in the job.

Representatives at the Conference condemned government reforms to the Teachers' Pension Scheme which have left teachers paying more and working longer to get less in retirement. Teaching is now a highly challenging profession at whatever age. The failure of governments to tackle effectively cuts to pay, excessive workload and pupil indiscipline has piled on even more pressure and made the increases in the retirement age all the more unrealistic and unacceptable. Ministers wring their hands and wonder why there is a teacher supply crisis. They need look no further than the policies they have inflicted on the teaching profession, that have made it a less attractive proposition for young people, for the answer.

Locally we need to be vigilant of schools making redundancies because of budget problems following the increases in Employers' Contributions to Teachers' Pensions which have already been fully funded.



"I did tell them that I'm only 38 and I can't go on till I'm 68"

UPSKIRTING IS DEGRADING AND COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE

The **NASUWT-The Teachers' Union** has welcomed the guilty verdict against a pupil who took covert upskirt photos of two NASUWT members at a school in Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. The pupil, who was aged 14 and 15 at the time he captured the footage of two female teachers at Enniskillen Royal Grammar School in 2015 and 2016, has been found guilty on all counts of committing an act of a lewd, obscene and disgusting nature and outraging public decency.



The **NASUWT** pressed for the Public Prosecution Service to take action against the pupil and has been representing and supporting the members involved since the incidents came to light. **NASUWT** members have had to endure not only the violation of knowing that a pupil took intimate images of them while they were teaching, but also several years of anxious delay before this case could be brought to court. It was only due to the persistence of the **NASUWT** and the strength and resolve of the members that it did so at all. We very much welcome the verdict which will hopefully provide the teachers with a sense of closure and allow them to move on from these distressing events. It also sends out a clear message to pupils that engaging in such degrading behaviour is completely unacceptable.

The verdict sends a clear message to teachers that they do not have to put up with sexual harassment or abuse in the workplace. Where teachers are experiencing such abuse they can know that the **NASUWT** will act to protect their right to work in safety. Legislation has failed to keep up with the advent of mobile technology and it is clear new powers are needed to create an offence of upskirting, which would bring Northern Ireland into line with the laws in England and Scotland.

WIRRAL NASUWT REPRESENTATIVES ATTEND ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN BELFAST

Our representatives to the 2019 NASUWT Conference held in Belfast over the Easter weekend are pictured in the Waterfront Conference Centre Exhibition Hall from left to right: Mick Robinson (Assistant Secretary), Kirsten Jacques (Minuting Secretary), Jackie Webb (Hon. Treasurer), Anne Rycroft (Local Secretary) and Dave Hepworth (Membership Secretary).



This Conference was a particularly special one for the NASUWT as we celebrate 100 years of the NASUWT being the voice of teachers. The NAS held its first Conference in 1920 at Margate. The UWT held its first Conference in 1965 in London. The first NASUWT Conference was in 1975 in Brighton.

The Conference brought teachers together from eight countries in which the NASUWT organises, enabling them to share their experiences and debate the issues which are of concern to them in their working lives.

It is clear that although the education policies across the various nations and administrations may differ teachers and headteachers are facing the same challenges in particular low pay, pupil indiscipline, excessive workload and under-funding.

The NASUWT has a proud history of defending and protecting teachers in the face of turbulence and challenge and Conference reaffirmed our commitment to continue to do so.

TOO MANY TEACHERS FEAR SPEAKING OUT

Excessive levels of accountability in the teaching profession are often being used as a tool to control teachers and create a "climate of fear", **Dave Kitchen, NASUWT National President** said in his Address to Conference. Dave, an RE and PSHE teacher from Liverpool, said teachers were often afraid to speak out and were suffering from excessive stress, sometimes turning to medication to cope. He hit out at the increasing lack of regulation in the academy sector, which in some areas was having a "devastating effect". This was leading to excessive salaries, a lack of accountability and enormous sums being spent on education consultants. He told delegates: *"Too many teachers today are facing incredible levels of accountability, which has gone a long way to creating a climate of fear and is, in too many schools, being used as a tool to control teachers."*

The President said some schools "got it right" using empowering appraisal methods, paying teachers properly, providing high-quality CPD and helping teachers get a better work/life balance. "This is how it should be," he said. "This is what those NQTs starting in September were expecting and what new entrants to the profession should expect. Unfortunately what we are witnessing is teachers too fearful to speak out. We are seeing increases in teachers suffering from excessive stress and taking medication, teachers leaving the profession because they cannot take any more or are no longer finding teaching affordable."

Reflecting on his career Mr Kitchen said: "Something I did not experience when I started teaching was fear: fear of doing the wrong thing, fear that my pupils were not making sufficient progress, fear of being ill or of not completing all my tasks as a teacher." This had changed for teachers coming into the profession today, he suggested. Dave suggested the global education reform movement was pushing a narrative to try and blame teachers for the cause of society's ills. He said: "Public education is increasingly seen as the next major global market to be exploited by private capital at the expense of the pupils. Hence the overuse of performance tables in order to attract future consumers."

In a rallying cry to members the President said: "Members need to come together, as a union, if they are to win their fight, our fight for an education system which fulfils the aims and aspirations of the young and provides a valuable worthwhile job for teachers. We need more than ever to stand up to poor management practices, poor behaviour, a narrowing curriculum, cuts in support service for SEN pupils, poor pay and precarious contracts, cuts in pension benefits, or losing the pension altogether. We need to stand up so that children, all children, can have access to a truly inclusive educational experience in a safe environment which will allow them to flourish as the adults of tomorrow. We need to stand up so that all teachers can have a worthwhile and rewarding career in teaching with a pension at the end of it, so that there is an end to a climate of fear in all schools."



NATIONAL PAY FRAMEWORK IN TATTERS

The on-going erosion of the national pay framework and the failure of the Secretary of State to implement the recommendations of the 28th Report of the School Teachers' Review Body has left the national pay framework in tatters, the Annual Conference was told. The motion on the national pay framework was debated at the conference in Belfast, as a survey of NASUWT members found that 73% think potential recruits are being put off a career in teaching because of pay levels.

82% of teachers think teaching is not competitive with other professions in terms of pay, according to the Union's 2019 Big Question survey of members. A key contributory factor to the current recruitment and retention crisis is that teachers face a pay lottery with no guarantees about the pay award or pay progression they will receive, however hard they work, however well they perform or whatever the Review Body recommends. No other group of workers in public service have been treated so shabbily and unfairly.

Excessive freedoms and flexibilities given to schools and employers have led to a race to the bottom on teachers' pay. Discrimination and unfairness is rife. Instead of compounding the problem by arrogantly sweeping aside evidence based Review Body recommendations, the Secretary of State should restore the national pay framework, bringing back fairness and certainty of reward to which teachers are entitled.

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**MEMBER SUPPORT
ADVICE TEAM**

The dedicated number for all members to access help and advice. Calls are free from all landlines and mobile phone networks:

03330 145550

Members can also e-mail to:
advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk

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If any member would like to contribute to the **Wirral Association NASUWT NEWSLETTER**, please contact Mick Robinson. Mob: 07739422181 or E-mail: mickrobinson@nasuwt.net. Members are asked to share the **NEWSLETTER** with colleagues on your NASUWT Noticeboard.

Visit the Wirral NASUWT website
www.wirralassociationnasuwt.org