



To: Local authorities, Multi Academy Trusts and Headteachers

21 April 2021

Dear Colleagues

We know that, as ethical leaders or employers, you understand the importance of addressing workload as a priority for your staff.

Excessive workload is not just a health and safety concern - it is detrimental to the education that our students deserve and is the most commonly cited reason for teachers leaving the profession.

By addressing directed working hours, we will begin effectively to tackle the issue of overall workload. Those working in education should know, in advance, their working time patterns for the academic year, both in terms of the school or college calendar and their individual directed time commitments.

In most cases, there are contractual limits on directed working hours such as the 1,265 hours limit for classroom teachers covered by School Teachers' Pay & Conditions Document. But, as we know, consultation and agreement on working hours is good practice for all staff, whatever their roles.

If you have not already adopted the practice of consulting with staff on working time, we urge you to make an agreement on working patterns for the coming academic year as a priority this term. For teachers, a published school or college calendar and an individual calendar are both standard practice and reasonable to expect. Outlining where and how time is allocated will help everyone keep their workload manageable.

We have sent all our National Education Union workplace representatives and district and branch officers our guidance and materials on directed time. These are available at:

[www.neu.org.uk/directedtime](http://www.neu.org.uk/directedtime)

Our members look forward to working with you collaboratively to ensure working time is reasonable and manageable, in the interests of staff and students.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary W. Bousted".

**Mary Bousted**  
Joint General Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Courtney".

**Kevin Courtney**  
Joint General Secretary