

Tuesday 16 April – Breakout sessions

Boycotting the Inspectors: industrial Action in Northern Ireland

NEU in Northern Ireland have been taking solid and disciplined industrial action continuously since 2013. The professional issues at the heart of the industrial action, such as Assessment and Inspection, have “cut with the grain” with the experience of teachers’ lives, notably the negative experience of teaching in a fraught, low-trust, high accountability, results-driven and data-driven environment. While the industrial actions taken in Northern Ireland is nothing new or different, what is different is the way in which action has been tailored, to allow teachers to “take back control” of their professional lives and environment.

English and Welsh delegates operating under the strictures of the 2016 Trade Union Act (the TU Act does not apply in Northern Ireland) may benefit from an understanding of the Northern Ireland experience - where school-level balloting has produced high ballot turn-out, and where actions determined at school level have empowered teachers to act, and to improve the quality of their working lives. Small acts, taken over a long time-period, can change irrevocably the culture within the school. This session will be of general interest to NEU members UK-wide.

The independent sector

The break-out session is an important opportunity for lead independent sector activists to talk to colleagues facing similar issues, discuss key areas, determine priorities, and to inform the NEU response. The session will include and member discussion of conference motions from a sector perspective and an overview of sector by John Richardson, NEU National Official for the independent sector. All interested parties, including branch and district representatives and staff very welcome.

Leadership: Leading transformational change in schools and colleges

This break-out session is an important and valuable opportunity for leadership activists and members alike to engage and network with colleagues facing leadership challenges. Members will be able to discuss key areas of concern, determine priorities to inform the National Education Union response.

The session will include a brief presentation on what really is ethical leadership and the importance of keeping middle and senior leader voices retained and heard within the National Education Union. The final part of the session, facilitated by Steve Cooper National Official for Leadership members, will be a general Q&A member discussion of conference motions and what leadership members want from their union. All interested parties, including branch and district representatives and staff are very welcome to attend.

Support staff

The Support Staff breakout session is open to all members but is particularly targeted at support staff members of the Union.

The session will be divided into two parts:

Alison Tarrant, the Director of the School Library Association (SLA), will talk and answers questions about the *SLA and the Great School Libraries Campaign (GSLC)* (30 minutes).

Then leading NEU support staff activists will run a slot on *NEU Horizons: Get in and Get Active, and Where Next?* (60 mins)

Post 16: Common Causes: Sixth Form Colleges and FE Colleges

This session will be led by the new post 16 lead member, Jean Evanson, and active reps from Sixth Form and FE colleges who will be invited to introduce key issues for their sector. We hope to be joined by Daniel Zeichner, Labour MP for Cambridge, who introduced the cross-party debate in Westminster on post 16 funding and the implications of cuts in the sector. The session will explore how NEU will be a game changer in post 16 education and training.

Supply Teachers Network

The officers and members of the well-established NUT Supply Teacher Network will be pleased to meet members and explain its role, the issues that led to its formation, what has been achieved so far, and the challenges we hope to tackle going forward as the NEU.

The break-out session is an important opportunity for supply members to talk to colleagues facing similar issues, discuss key areas, determine priorities, and to inform the NEU response. Come and meet us - all interested parties, including branch, district representatives and staff are very welcome.

For the Global Good? Putting the Public Back in Education

From academisation in the UK to low-fee private schools in the Global South, the world of education is changing – and not for the better. With commercialisation and privatisation on the rise, the private sector is seeing education as a market and finding ways to exploit this opportunity at every turn. This session will show how the UK Government has supported this trend both domestically and internationally and explore how unions and civil society can, and do, fight back.

SEND Funding

SEND provision has been facing increasing challenges, as growing need combined with harsh government cuts have led to excessive waiting times for specialist support and diagnosis, cuts in TAs and a subsequent increase in teacher workload. But the NEU has won significant victories, including £350m of additional SEND funding. This session will highlight our successes and current campaign activities as we keep SEND funding at the top of our campaign agenda.

How to win and use the NEU's Trans Educators' Toolkit and model workplace policy

This workshop will explore the contents of the NEU's ground-breaking new Trans Educators' Toolkit and outline the steps you can take to winning a Trans-inclusive workplace.

Pay Progression and Appeals

This session will look at the support members and reps need to assert the rights of members denied progression. In particular, we will use examples of good practice to focus on how to persuade members to appeal against adverse pay progression decisions and how to collectivise these issues.

School Direct: National Challenge, Local Opportunities

Since the 2016/17 academic year new teachers on School-Based Initial Teacher Training routes have made up approximately half of all trainee teachers working towards QTS.

This session will allow delegates to reflect on why School Direct trainees' recruitment into the union is a national priority for the NEU, and what the union is doing nationally to tackle it. Delegates will learn what they can do as local activists and hear practical success stories from around the country where NEU members are reaching, engaging, and mobilising these hard to reach and often neglected new teachers.

Work after Brexit

Under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, the UK government has wide-ranging powers to modify retained EU laws after Brexit. We know that important protections under the Working Time Regulations, health and safety legislation and TUPE regulations – to name but a few - are on the hit-list of many Tory backbenchers. The purpose of this breakout session is to consider the employment rights issues that trade unionists should be monitoring now and after Brexit, with reference to educational professionals.

Fighting Inequality and Racism

An interactive session where we explore the Union's anti-racism work and priorities. Hearing from lay members, policy officers and high-profile speakers- this will introduce current work around decolonising, our anti-racism charter and inaugural mentorship scheme. It will also attempt to look towards the future and cement an agenda for changing- through our work as a Union- wider society.

The mental health crisis in our schools – how do we best support students and staff?

A mental health crisis is engulfing our schools, affecting staff and students alike. Workload is higher than ever and mental health services for children and young people are being cut to the bone, with unacceptable waiting times for treatment. How should the NEU respond? This breakout session will explore the major issues impacting the mental health of staff and students and how we can best address them.

Bargaining for Equality

This session will explore ways of practical implementation of NEU policies on equalities at school level, exploring ways that educators can regain a voice into what is taught and how it is taught.

Tackling teacher workload

The session will cover:

- An update on the workload campaign
- An update on the work that has been going on at the programme of talks to reduce teacher workload. This will detail the steps taking by the DfE (e.g. workload survey), the Workload Advisory Group and Ofsted to tackle workload issues.
- A member's experience about how they have reduced workload in their school (potentially from our leadership section).

The National Education Service – Shaping a New Vision for Education

This policy breakout session will hear from a panel of high-profile and expert speakers on their views for how the National Education Service will shape a new education system that breaks with the consensus of the last 30 years that has resulted in the privatisation, marketisation and fragmentation of education in England. It will cover the early years, post-16, SEND, the role of local authorities in education, and ending privatisation and fragmentation among other topics.

“Progress 8: The Misuse of Data for Secondary Accountability”

In this session we will examine Progress 8, the factors which affect a school or student's score and how, therefore, it is a measure which is not fit for purpose.

We will also consider the wider impact Progress 8 is having in terms of a student's school experience, targets which are derived from it for both teachers and students and the effects it is having on staff pay and workload.

Finally, we'll look at how similar issues have been campaigned upon in Primary and consider what the next steps could be in Secondary.

Fighting Academisation

This session will hear from representatives from some of the recent and ongoing campaigns against academisation including campaigners at Barclay School (Stevenage); Mackie Hill Junior and Infants School (Crigglestone); The Joan Roan School (Greenwich); William Torbitt Primary School (Ilford) which successfully overturned its academy order; and other speakers including Alasdair Smith, Anti Academies Alliance. It will consider lessons to learn from anti-academy campaigns and discuss tactics for fighting to win and ensuring we keep our schools within their local authority.