



Email to Sec-OF-STATE.PS@education.gov.uk

The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

6th March 2023

Dear Gillian,

We write regarding the current impasse over industrial action that is preventing us all from making any progress with urgent dispute resolution negotiations that our members, the government and, most importantly, children need to see completed.

For the purposes of this letter, we do not feel that any analysis of the respective positions of all the parties has any utility whatsoever. As such we hope that this approach is seen as it is intended, a genuine effort to break the deadlock and facilitate negotiations without the need for anyone to have to alter their current public positions.

In the absence of any alternative proposal from you that will create confidence between all parties, we propose that we invite ACAS to convene a day of conciliation talks. The normal way that ACAS operate is that we would not even meet in the same room, the unions being in one room and the department in another. It is well understood that everything that happens under the auspices of ACAS is, and remains, private and confidential unless and until the parties agree otherwise. This would enable all parties to attend talks without publicly altering their position but would allow consideration of what the government may be minded to offer formally at any subsequent talks and consideration of how the unions may respond. As we say, this will happen in camera and a safe environment.

It is our hope that with expanded knowledge and understanding between the parties, an acceptable position will be achieved for formal talks to begin again. We now have a short period before the next wave of action that we believe should be exploited in an effort to find solutions.

We think this is worthy of sincere consideration and we await your urgent reply.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Whiteman
General Secretary NAHT

Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary NASUWT

Mary Boustead
Joint General Secretary NEU

Kevin Courtney
Joint General Secretary NEU

Geoff Barton
General Secretary ASCL