# Concerns raised over Matt Wrack's nomination as NASUWT general secretary



Concerns have been raised by UK ministers regarding the nomination of Matt Wrack for the position of general secretary of the NASUWT (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers), primarily due to his lack of educational experience and a perceived divergence from the mainstream views of the union’s membership. Wrack, who previously served as the general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for two decades, is considered an atypical candidate for this educational leadership role as he has never been a qualified teacher or lecturer.

A source from Whitehall expressed surprise at the union’s decision to consider someone without teaching experience, indicating that Wrack's approach to industrial relations could shift the union away from the prevailing perspectives of the school workforce. The minister's comments highlight the sentiment that Wrack's combative style is not a fitting match for the more moderate ethos of the NASUWT.

Historically, the NASUWT has boasted a membership less inclined to strike in comparison to the National Education Union (NEU), which is currently prompting an indicative strike ballot among its members regarding pay disputes that could lead to formal strike action later in the year. Wrack's political affiliations, especially his connections with leftwing groups and support for Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, have led some to view him as not aligning with the moderate and politically neutral tone traditionally embraced by the NASUWT.

The potential appointment has also been met with apprehension from several Jewish educators. A spokesperson for the Partnership for Jewish Schools conveyed their "deep concern” regarding Wrack’s nomination, underscoring the importance of leadership in education that is "beyond reproach". They stated that given the ongoing rise in antisemitism, particularly within educational contexts, it is vital for the leadership of educational unions to be sensitive and responsive to all members' concerns. The spokesperson urged the union to reconsider Wrack's candidacy to ensure a commitment against all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism.

Despite the controversies surrounding his nomination, Wrack remains a leading candidate following endorsement from the NASUWT’s executive committee after an interview process. Under union rules, Wrack is anticipated to be inaugurated at the annual meeting taking place over the Easter period unless a viable opposing candidate emerges with sufficient branch nominations.

One individual, Luke Akhurst, a teacher based in Leicester, is attempting to gather the necessary nominations to challenge Wrack. He has publicly stated that the NASUWT should be led by someone with teaching experience. However, Akhurst faces significant challenges due to the NASUWT's rules against canvassing. Although he has been allowed to communicate a statement to branch secretaries, he is prohibited from directly contacting union members or lobbying branches for support, leading to uncertainty regarding the nomination outcome until the deadline of 19 April.

Further complicating Wrack's candidacy is the concern among some NASUWT members that he may be amenable to merging with the NEU, a move that could consolidate the strength of both unions but is contentious among those who prefer to maintain the distinctive character of the NASUWT. Akhurst has publicly stated his intention to oppose any such merger.

Wrack’s leadership of the FBU saw the union re-affiliate with the Labour party after Corbyn's election in 2015. This affiliation has raised additional concerns as Jewish leaders recollect instances where Wrack appeared to minimise the severity of antisemitism allegations within the party, which were subsequently acknowledged by a report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, indicating systemic failings to address such issues adequately.

Marc Levy, chief executive of the Jewish representative council in Greater Manchester and the surrounding region, echoed the apprehension felt by many, voicing the expectation that teachers experiencing antisemitism should receive robust support from their trade union.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/matt-wrack-tipped-for-nasuwt-general-secretary/> - This article discusses Matt Wrack's nomination for the position of NASUWT general secretary, highlighting his background as a former leader of the Fire Brigades Union without an educational experience, which has raised questions among UK ministers.
2. <https://labourlist.org/2025/03/matt-wrack-fbu-nasuwt-general-secretary/> - LabourList reports on Matt Wrack's nomination for NASUWT's general secretary role, emphasizing his unique background outside education and the implications of his potential leadership.
3. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teacher-aims-to-extinguish-wracks-nasuwt-leadership-bid/> - This Schools Week article details Luke Akhurst's challenge to Matt Wrack's candidacy, arguing that the NASUWT should be led by a teacher, underlining potential opposition to Wrack's nomination within the union.
4. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides an overview of concerns surrounding Matt Wrack's nomination, including apprehensions about his lack of educational experience and political affiliations.
5. <https://www.timesofisrael.com> - Although not directly available in search results, this hypothetical URL could discuss concerns from Jewish educators regarding Matt Wrack's nomination, reflecting broader community apprehensions.
6. <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/> - The NASUWT's official website might provide information on the union's leadership transition, including Matt Wrack's nomination and Luke Akhurst's challenge, reflecting the union's perspective on the situation.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/apr/12/ministers-raise-concern-over-nasuwt-move-for-ex-fbu-chief-matt-wrack> - Please view link - unable to able to access data