# Headteachers call for the right to exit multi-academy trusts at NAHT conference



Delegates at the annual conference of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) in Harrogate on Saturday voiced significant concerns regarding the current state of academies in the UK educational landscape. The assembly agreed on a motion advocating for schools that have transitioned to multi-academy trusts to be granted the option to revert to local authority (LA) control if demanded by their circumstances.

The motion was prompted by the experiences of some schools that have felt dissatisfaction with their academy status. Proposer Alasdair Black, a delegate from Coventry, described his journey through academisation as “dreadful”. He likened the existing arrangement to “a marriage without the prospect of divorce”, noting that headteachers currently lack the choice to reconsider their status. "This is purely about giving schools a choice. Whether they take it or not, that’s up to them," he remarked.

Delegates highlighted a perceived disconnect in the current education system. Rubina Darr from Birmingham asserted that if schools were permitted to return to local authority control, they would do so "in a heartbeat." She voiced concerns over the broader implications of academisation, suggesting the system had been intentionally weakened, while questioning the motivations behind the push for academy status. “The only attraction for academisation I think is the big CEO salary,” she stated.

The NAHT’s motion urges the government to establish a procedure allowing schools either to switch to another trust or to revert back to local authority oversight. Criticism of the current model was voiced by several delegates, including Debra Walker from Sunderland, who countered the negative portrayal of academy leaders, arguing that such characterisation does not reflect the entirety of the system. She emphasised the need to avoid “demonisation” of the successes and efforts of many academies.

In support of the motion, Toni Dolan from Barnsley underscored the necessity for headteachers to have the power to assess whether their current trust is functioning appropriately. She insisted that they should be able to seek a transfer to a different trust or request to return to local authority governance if it serves their school better.

Angi Gibson, the incoming president of the NAHT, reflected the union's position by stating that they advocate for whatever structure best benefits schools and their students, rather than favouring one particular model.

The discussions at the NAHT conference echo a similar sentiment recently expressed at the National Education Union (NEU) annual conference, where delegates voted in favour of a motion calling for schools to be allowed to revert to local authority control. This movement indicates a growing concern within the educational community regarding the current framework of academisation and reflects a push for more options in school governance that can potentially enhance student outcomes.

As the Government’s Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill progresses, it mandates that academies adhere to the national curriculum and follow the same core pay and conditions framework. However, it notably lacks a provision enabling schools to revert to local authority management, a gap that many in the educational sector are calling to address.

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

## Bibliography

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