# EIS to ballot members amid mounting frustration over broken class contact time pledge



A teaching union is gearing up to consult its members regarding potential industrial action, driven by escalating concerns over class contact time and workload pressures affecting educators in Scotland. The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) announced on Friday its intention to launch a consultative ballot among its members following the declaration of a formal dispute with the Scottish Government three months ago.

At the heart of the contention is a promise made by the Scottish Government in 2021 to reduce the maximum class contact time for teachers to 21 hours per week, a commitment designed to address the escalating workload faced by educators. The EIS contends that, despite this pledge, neither the government nor local authorities have put forth any meaningful proposals to fulfil this important promise. “Four years ago, ahead of the last Scottish Parliament election, the current Scottish Government made a series of significant manifesto pledges on education,” remarked EIS General Secretary Andrea Bradley. She emphasised that the slow pace of progress has exacerbated challenges faced by teachers, stating that they continue to struggle both professionally and personally as a direct consequence of the unfulfilled commitment.

The union's forthcoming ballot is set to be conducted during its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June, with plans to keep it open until after the summer break to ensure all members have an opportunity to voice their opinions. This consultative ballot serves as a warning to both the Scottish Government and COSLA, the umbrella body for local authorities, signalling the urgency of delivering on the critical manifesto promise. “Our members’ patience on this issue is now at an end,” Bradley remarked, expressing the collective frustration within the ranks of educators.

This sentiment is echoed by other stakeholders who share concerns about the dire implications of excessive workload on teachers. The EIS's salaries convener, Des Morris, articulated frustrations regarding the stagnation of discussions with both local authorities and the government. He lamented that despite attempts to spur action—such as the formal dispute declaration via the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT)—there has been insufficient engagement from the employers.

Urgency surrounds this matter, as both the EIS and various educational commentators highlight the critical need for progress on reducing teachers' class contact time. The Scottish Educational Journal has documented the detrimental impact that excessive workloads can have on teachers’ effectiveness and mental health. It aims to amplify calls for immediate action to adhere to the commitment established in the 2021 manifesto.

Moreover, Education Secretary Jenny Gilruth acknowledges the weight of this issue, stating that addressing class contact time is vital for alleviating workload pressures in the profession. However, she has pointed out that while the need for change is recognised, actual implementation may not materialise as swiftly as hoped. This slower-than-expected progression raises concerns about how effectively the Scottish Government can actually fulfil its educational commitments before the next Scottish Parliament election, which is less than a year away.

As the EIS prepares to engage its members in discussions regarding potential industrial action, the significance of adhering to the 2021 promise becomes increasingly clear. Teachers, who have patiently awaited progress, now stand at a pivotal junction where their working conditions—and ultimately the quality of education for students—hang in the balance. The time for action appears to be drawing near as stakeholders demand accountability and tangible outcomes from those in power.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: Source [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/union-to-ballot-teachers-over-class-contact-time-dispute-RLYNQNZ5YZMLXNIRANCDQBL7OE/)
2. Paragraph 2: Source [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/union-to-ballot-teachers-over-class-contact-time-dispute-RLYNQNZ5YZMLXNIRANCDQBL7OE/), [[4]](https://sej.org.uk/feb2025/main-feature-2/)
3. Paragraph 3: Source [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/union-to-ballot-teachers-over-class-contact-time-dispute-RLYNQNZ5YZMLXNIRANCDQBL7OE/)
4. Paragraph 4: Source [[2]](https://www.eis.org.uk/latest-news/disputeinevitable), [[6]](https://news.stv.tv/scotland/teachers-threaten-formal-dispute-over-unacceptable-class-contact-time)
5. Paragraph 5: Source [[3]](https://www.eis.org.uk/latest-news/classcontacttime), [[5]](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/cutting-teacher-class-contact-time-schools-workload-jenny-gilruth)
6. Paragraph 6: Source [[6]](https://news.stv.tv/scotland/teachers-threaten-formal-dispute-over-unacceptable-class-contact-time), [[7]](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/little-or-no-progress-class-contact-time-promise)
7. Paragraph 7: Source [[4]](https://sej.org.uk/feb2025/main-feature-2/)
8. Paragraph 8: Source [[5]](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/cutting-teacher-class-contact-time-schools-workload-jenny-gilruth), [[6]](https://news.stv.tv/scotland/teachers-threaten-formal-dispute-over-unacceptable-class-contact-time)
9. Paragraph 9: Source [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/union-to-ballot-teachers-over-class-contact-time-dispute-RLYNQNZ5YZMLXNIRANCDQBL7OE/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/union-to-ballot-teachers-over-class-contact-time-dispute-RLYNQNZ5YZMLXNIRANCDQBL7OE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.eis.org.uk/latest-news/disputeinevitable> - The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) has expressed growing concern over the lack of progress in implementing the Scottish Government's 2021 manifesto commitment to reduce teachers' class contact time to 21 hours per week. Despite previous assurances, no concrete proposals have been made by the Scottish Government or COSLA. The EIS has set a deadline of February 3, 2025, for a proposal to be presented, warning that failure to do so may lead to a formal dispute. EIS General Secretary Andrea Bradley emphasized the urgency of addressing teachers' workload issues.
3. <https://www.eis.org.uk/latest-news/classcontacttime> - The EIS has reiterated the urgency of addressing the reduction in teachers' class contact time, highlighting the lack of progress despite the Scottish Government's 2021 manifesto pledge. With a deadline approaching, the EIS warns that without concrete proposals by February 3, 2025, a formal dispute may be declared. EIS General Secretary Andrea Bradley criticized the slow pace of implementation, emphasizing the need for tangible progress to alleviate teachers' workload pressures.
4. <https://sej.org.uk/feb2025/main-feature-2/> - The Scottish Educational Journal (SEJ) discusses the pressing issue of teachers' workload in Scotland, focusing on the unfulfilled promise to reduce class contact time. Despite the Scottish Government's 2021 pledge to decrease class contact time to 21 hours per week, there has been little progress. The SEJ highlights the impact of excessive workload on teachers and calls for immediate action to honor the commitment and improve working conditions.
5. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/cutting-teacher-class-contact-time-schools-workload-jenny-gilruth> - Education Secretary Jenny Gilruth acknowledges the importance of reducing teachers' class contact time to address workload issues. Despite the Scottish Government's 2021 manifesto pledge to decrease class contact time by 90 minutes per week, progress has been slow. Gilruth emphasizes the need for more time for teachers to tackle challenges such as behavior and attendance but indicates that the reduction may not be implemented this year.
6. <https://news.stv.tv/scotland/teachers-threaten-formal-dispute-over-unacceptable-class-contact-time> - Teachers in Scotland have threatened to declare a formal dispute with the Scottish Government over the failure to reduce class contact time. The Teachers' Panel of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) criticizes the government's lack of progress in fulfilling its 2021 manifesto commitment to decrease class contact time by 90 minutes to a maximum of 21 hours per week. The panel emphasizes the impact of high class contact time on teachers' workload and calls for immediate action.
7. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/little-or-no-progress-class-contact-time-promise> - The Teachers' Panel of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) has criticized the Scottish Government for making 'little or no progress' on the 2021 promise to reduce teachers' class-contact time by 90 minutes per week. The panel calls for clarity on the implementation plan and emphasizes the need for additional non-contact time to be allocated for preparation and correction of student work to alleviate teachers' workload pressures.