

## **EMBARGO**

12.00hrs

Thursday 1 July 2004

### **NASUWT response to publication of Clywch report**

Commenting on the Children's Commissioner for Wales' Report into the case of John Owen, **Chris Keates**, Acting General Secretary of NASUWT (the teachers' union with 223,500 members), said:

"It took tremendous courage for the pupils and teachers to report their suspicions of child abuse by John Owen at Ysgol Gyfun Rydfelen.

"The Report outlines the serious failings of Mid-Glamorgan LEA and the Welsh Joint Education Committee in not referring the matter appropriately to the police and social services. This failure is unacceptable. Children rely on such authorities to protect them from abuse in school.

"NASUWT will work with the Children's Commissioner for Wales on the recommendations in the Report which include a new procedure to improve the speed, independence and fairness of investigations into allegations of child abuse.

"NASUWT has long campaigned for a reduction in the length of investigations. As a result of our campaign to highlight teachers' vulnerability to false and malicious allegations, NASUWT is currently engaged in joint work with the Westminster Government on a critical case analysis to identify how all the procedures for investigation can be improved. This work will undoubtedly be very pertinent to the situation in Wales.

"There is no place in schools for those who abuse children. Therefore, I particularly welcome the Commissioner's view in his Report that he 'does not believe that trade unions or their members have any inclination whatsoever to protect child abusers.'

"NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to enter into the 'well-informed and fair debate so as to identify the appropriate balance between protecting teachers in their employment and children in their schools.'"

**ENDS**

**Press office: 020 7420 9670**

Chris Keates Acting GS  
Jerry Bartlett Acting DGS

Office: 0121 453 6150 Home: 0121 475 4016 Mobile: 07966 202403  
Office: 0121 453 6150 Home: 01562 742498 Mobile: 07966 202407