

**IMMEDIATE**

**Wednesday 23 February 2005**

**NASUWT'S RESPONSE TO THE PUBLICATION OF  
THE WHITE PAPER ON 14-19 EDUCATION**

Commenting on the publication of the Government's White Paper, **Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT**, the largest union representing teachers and headteachers throughout the UK, said:

"The proposals in the White Paper address critically important matters and NASUWT will wish to give them the same detailed and careful evaluation, which we afforded to the Tomlinson Report, before rushing to judge their merits or otherwise.

"The principles on which the proposals are based of tackling disaffection and disengagement, and increasing educational opportunities for every youngster are ones to which NASUWT subscribes wholeheartedly.

"Teachers are all united on the need to tackle these issues but, as NASUWT's detailed consultations with members on the Tomlinson Report revealed, there is vigorous debate within the profession on the most effective way of achieving this. Consequently, the response to the Secretary of State's announcement is likely to be mixed.

"The Secretary of State recognises and places emphasis on the fact that the key to tackling disaffection is curriculum flexibility and securing parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning. This is in fact the real challenge of the whole exercise.

"NASUWT considered the Tomlinson proposal for an overarching diploma, which validated and accredited all courses in the same way, had the potential to deliver this and therefore the fact that it has not been discounted entirely as a longer term strategy is welcome.

"Whilst teachers' professional opinions on curriculum content and strategies for validating and accrediting learning may be diverse, they will undoubtedly be united in their concerns about the organisational implications of the proposals. It will be essential to clarify at an early stage what collaboration with the FE sector, a common thread throughout the White Paper, will mean in practice.

"How the Government deals with the discrepancies between teachers' and lecturers' pay and conditions of service and the logistics and implications of sharing staff and students could well be a deciding factor in determining the profession's response to these proposals."

**ENDS**

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**National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers**