



June 13th 2025

Workload Consultative Ballot – Guide to Action Short of Strike

In the consultative ballot on workload, running from 6th June to 28th August 2025, EIS members will be asked if they are willing to take two different forms of industrial action:

1. Strike action.
2. Action Short of Strike (ASOS).

Although a statutory ballot of members would be required by law prior to any industrial action being taken, it is essential that EIS members demonstrate their resolve to take action at this stage, to make it more likely to bring this dispute on workload to an acceptable conclusion sooner rather than later.

What is Action Short of Strike?

Action Short of Strike (ASOS) encompasses any industrial action, aside from strike action. ASOS allows members of a trade union to put pressure on their employer to pursue a trade dispute as it allows trade union members to lawfully breach their contracts (e.g. refusing to engage in specified contractual duties).

What would ASOS look like?

Any Action Short of Strike (ASOS) would consist of the following:

- *Non-compliance with HMIE inspection related activities, including inspection visits¹.*
- *Refusal to administer, implement or process any aspect of SNSAs (Scottish National Standardised Assessments).*
- *Refusal to administer, implement or process any aspect of any Local Authority-determined standardised assessment.*
- *Refusal to administer, implement or process any aspect of standardised assessment determined at school level.*
- *Non-compliance with Local Authority quality assurance procedures (e.g. authority inspections, "learning visits" or other equivalents).*

What Would Happen if I am Asked to Carry Out Duties Covered by an ASOS mandate?

You would ask for a written instruction from the person making the request. You would refuse to carry out the request and pass on the written request to your Local Association Secretary for any further action if it is necessary.

Why am I being asked if I am willing to take Action Short of Strike?

The EIS is clear that the Scottish Government and COSLA must resolve the SNCT workload dispute on reducing weekly class contact time to 21 hours, in a manner that begins to address unsustainable levels of teacher workload – by allocating the full 1.5 hours that would be saved from class contact to increase weekly "preparation and correction" time to a minimum of 9 hours per week.

In over four years since the Scottish Government manifesto commitment to reduce class contact time to 21 hours, there has been no tangible progress (link to story so far doc). In this time, the levels of workload endured by Scottish teachers have remained unhealthy and unsustainable (link to workload briefing).

While tens of thousands of teachers are working an excessive number of hours per week in large part due to under-staffing, thousands of other teachers are unable to secure permanent employment.

EIS members are therefore asked to indicate their willingness to stand up for a reduction in workload, in the interests of health, safety and wellbeing at work, security of employment for those who do not have it, and quality education for children and young people, **by voting in this consultative ballot for strike action and ASOS.**

What are the next steps?

At this stage, EIS members are being asked to vote in a consultative ballot to indicate their willingness to take both strike action and Action Short of Strike. A further statutory ballot would require to be undertaken before either form of industrial action could be taken.

The strongest possible turnout in this ballot gives the best possible opportunity to avoid a further escalation to a statutory ballot.

A resounding YES vote, to both Strike Action and Action Short of Strike, will send the strongest possible message to COSLA and the Scottish Government that they must act to address workload, and that an agreement must be reached to end this dispute.