

Valued Worker Scheme – advice for NASUWT Representatives

At the heart of the Valued Worker Scheme (VWS) is collaboration between employers and employees through their trade unions – the NASUWT for teaching staff, and GMB, UNISON and Unite for support staff.

The VWS promotes the adoption of policies and practices that demonstrate employers' commitment to treating all employees fairly, equitably and with dignity through the adoption of six principles, which can be found on the website at: www.nasuwt.org.uk/ValuedWorkerScheme.

It must be stressed that employers signing up to the VWS should not be expected to be fully compliant with all the principles initially, but will be expected to outline their priorities for the year ahead in working towards them.

Although full compliance is not expected, the employer will need to act in a way compatible with working towards the principles in its day-to-day activities. Again, it is not expected that this will be in place at day one, just that progress is being made, and if the objective(s) is being met, then the day-to-day level of compliance should also improve. If this is not the case (for example, where an agreed policy is in place but the employer acts outwith the policy), then this should be discussed through the normal consultation and negotiation machinery.

Usually, the first steps to an employer joining the VWS will be NASUWT Representative(s) identifying an employer, be that an individual school, or a multi-academy trust or local authority, as a suitable candidate for the Scheme, although it is entirely feasible that an employer could contact their local NASUWT Representative to initiate the process.

Workplace Representatives should speak to their Local Association Secretary if they wish their employer to be considered for the VWS. The Local Secretary should then discuss this with their National Executive Member (NEM) to ensure they have no objections. This should then be discussed with local GMB, UNISON and Unite representatives. If agreement is reached that the employer appears suitable, then the Scheme should either be placed on the agenda of an upcoming Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) (or equivalent), or a joint letter be sent from the unions.

The Scheme should then be introduced to the employer, using the materials available on the website, which include information for employers.

To join the Scheme, the employer should identify one of the principles that they will work towards over an agreed time period, usually one year, and agree with the trade union representatives the objective(s) to be met, what activities will be undertaken and what success criteria will be applied.

An initial objective may be, for example, to ensure that effective mechanisms for consultation and negotiation with trade unions are set up, if these do not already exist.

At the end of the period, there should be a review and if the objective has been met, the cycle should begin again with a different principle.

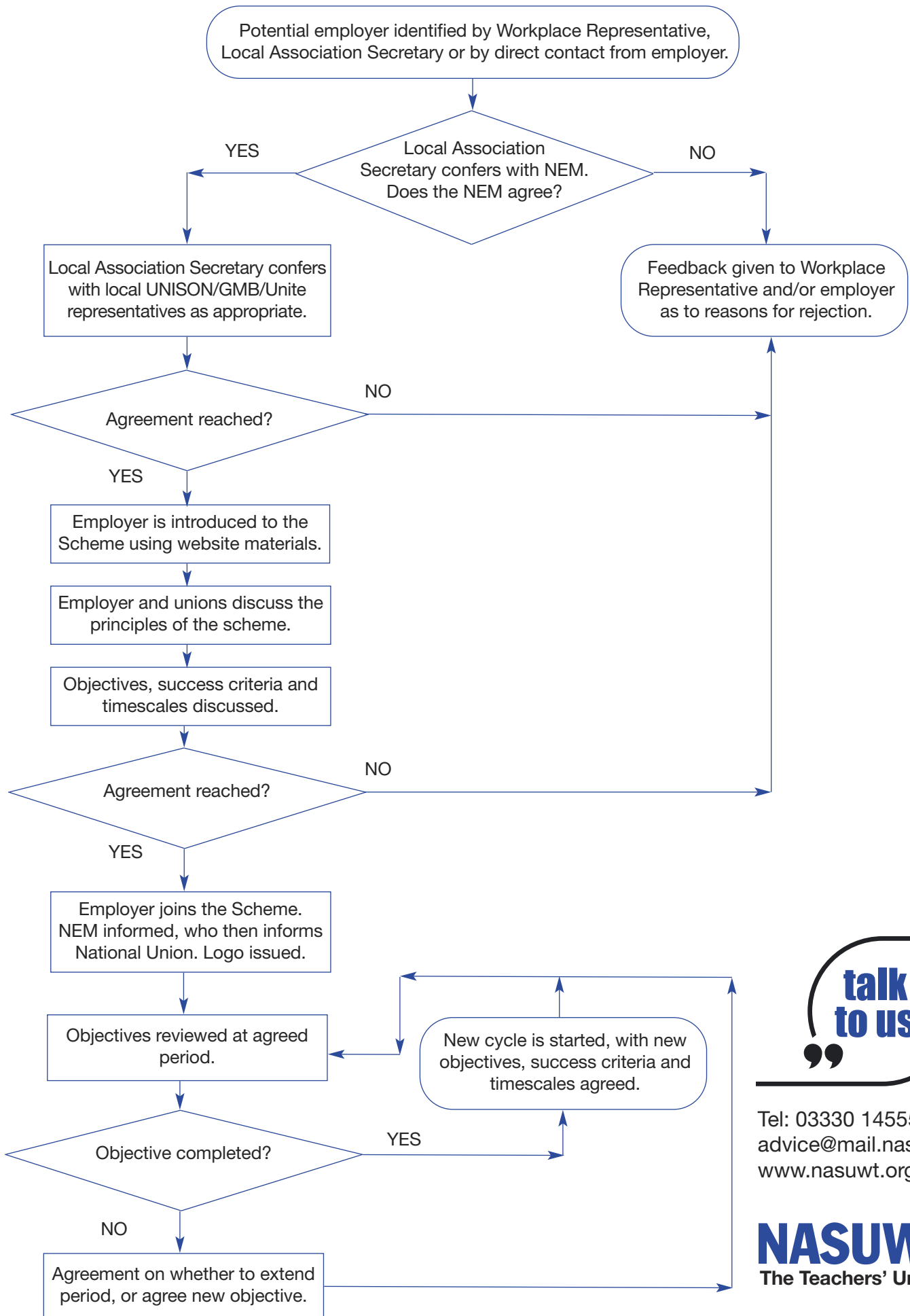
Once the employer has made the necessary steps to join the VWS, the NEM should be informed and they should then notify the National Union in order that the employer can be included on the list and the logo sent to the employer. A flowchart is provided overleaf for ease of reference.

Alongside this specific objective(s), any new policies or initiatives should be consistent with the VWS principles, i.e. there should not be any detriment, and opportunities to work towards the principles should be utilised wherever possible.

Further information on the sign-up process, and, where required, the revocation process, can be found at: www.nasuwt.org.uk/ValuedWorkerSchemeInfoForReps.

See flowchart overleaf

Briefing



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