

Report of the SNCT Support Group Meeting 25 January 2024

The SNCT Support Group meets as required between meetings of the SNCT. A meeting was held on 25 January 2024 and was chaired by Des Morris, Joint Chair, SNCT Teachers' Panel.

The main actions items are noted below for the full SNCT.

1. Career Pathways Review - Sabbaticals

The SNCT Support Group reviewed the arrangements for Sabbaticals and agreed not to make any changes to the current arrangements.

2. Career Pathways Review – Lead Teachers

The Teachers' Panel representatives expressed disappointment that, at the time of the December 2023 Scottish Summary Statistics, there were only 7 Lead Teachers employed in Scotland. In response, Scottish Government expressed the view that it was for local councils to recruit these posts and that it was never the intention of Scottish Government to fund this initiative. COSLA responded that councils would continue to recruit these posts based on the job descriptions outlined in the SNCT Handbook.

3. Drama and Music to be included in those subjects identified as practical subjects as part of the SNCT Handbook Appendix 2.9.

The SNCT Teachers' Panel spoke on the issue of Drama and highlighted 4 main arguments in favour of designating Drama a practical subject. The main issues highlighted were health and safety arguments, delivery of the curriculum, pupil attainment and teacher workload. The SNCT Teachers' Panel would continue to consult teacher members on this issue and bring back a fuller paper for consideration at a future meeting of the SNCT Support Group.

4. Management Time

The issue of defined management time for promoted post-holders was discussed. Both COSLA and Scottish Government provided a response to the starter paper amending paragraph 2.13 of the SNCT Handbook which has been presented at the previous meeting by the Teachers' Side. The view of the employers was that there

was no need to make changes to the provisions already contained within the SNCT Handbook. Class contact time and management time can only be determined locally at school and council level. Scottish Government concurred with COSLA's position. In response, the Teachers' Panel argued that the current provisions in paragraph 2.13 of the SNCT Handbook were insufficient. Following discussion, the Teachers' Panel agreed to re-work its proposals. The meeting agreed to remit the matter to Joint Secretaries for further discussion and agreement.

5. Maternity, Paternity and Adoptive Leave/Pay Arrangements

At the previous meeting, COSLA had agreed to provide a paper outlining the legal position and the ramifications of decoupling the timing of days/weeks taken as Parental Leave. This paper had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The paper highlighted that paternity leave arrangements are determined by UK law and accordingly the SNCT does not have the ability to apply them more flexibly. However, the paper also alerted members of the SNCT Support Group to the draft Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which will introduce changes to statutory paternity leave including that:

- employees can choose to take either two non-consecutive weeks' paternity leave, or a single period of either one or two weeks;
- the period in which paternity leave must be taken is extended to 52 weeks after the birth or adoption placement (previously it was 56 days); and
- notice of entitlement to take paternity leave must be given in or before the 15th week before the expected week of birth, followed by at least 28 days' notice of each period of leave.

The meeting noted that these Regulations will apply where the expected week of birth, the expected date of placement for adoption, or the expected date of entry into Great Britain for adoption is on or after 6 April 2024.

The Joint Secretaries were given powers to monitor developments in this area and to bring forward proposed changes to the SNCT Handbook for approval by the SNCT.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Bain (Employers' Side)
Stuart Brown (Teachers' Panel)
Stephanie Walsh (Scottish Government)

Joint Secretaries