

Report of the SNCT Support Group Meeting 7 May 2025

The SNCT Support Group meets as required between meetings of the SNCT. A meeting was held on 7 May 2025 and was chaired by Des Morris, Joint Chair, SNCT Teachers' Side.

The main items are noted below for the full SNCT.

1. Pay Claim 2025/26

The Chair invited COSLA and Scottish Government to provide an update.

COSLA Joint Secretary reported that an Extended Joint Chairs was set for 14 May 2025. The position remained that 3% was the maximum affordable for councils, however, COSLA Leaders were aware of the offers in other parts of the public sector.

Scottish Government reported that they were working to reach an offer that could be made and that they were aware of the mandate from COSLA Leaders and of the Teachers' Side position.

The Chair commented that it was approaching two months since the first offer was rejected and that the time available for reaching a settlement prior to the settlement date of 1 August 2025 was decreasing. The Chair reported that the Teachers' Side expected a revised and significantly improved offer to be tabled at or before Extended Joint Chairs on 14 May 2025. The Chair advised that there would be a special meeting of the EIS Salaries Committee on 8 May at which pay would be one of the two main items discussed.

2. Reduction in Class Contact Time.

The Chair invited Scottish Government and COSLA to provide an update.

Scottish Government reported there were ongoing discussions between COSLA and Scottish Government on the scoping work. Teachers' Side had been sent the updated Terms of Reference. The aim was still to complete this work in the next month or so.

COSLA Joint Secretary reported that COSLA Leaders had asked for a report no later than July. COSLA advised that they were working with ADES on national modelling which had to take account of local circumstances and that drafts were coming together.

The Chair advised that there had been correspondence with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and also with the First Minister, culminating in the letter from the First

Minister on 1 April 2025. The Chair acknowledged receipt of the slightly amended Terms of Reference.

The Chair advised that he required to share the Terms of Reference with Teachers' Side and their respective committees in order to facilitate meaningful discussion on the Teachers' Side and that as the document had been shared in confidence, he was making a formal request to COSLA and Scottish Government to agree that the document could be shared.

The Chair noted the Joint Chairs taking place on 12 May 2025 and while he had hoped for a meeting sooner, the Chair advised that two specific matters would be raised by the Teachers' Side. The first was the reference in the Terms of Reference to the establishment of an SNCT sub-group. The Chair advised that this would be formally requested at Joint Chairs. The second issue concerned the reference to the findings of the scoping and modelling being finalised and presented to COSLA Leaders, Ministers and SNCT by the end of June, at the latest. In order to facilitate the presentation of the findings to SNCT a formal request by the Teachers' Side, under paragraph 8.3 Part 1 Appendix 1.1 of the SNCT Handbook, would be made for a special meeting of the SNCT to be convened in June.

The Chair advised that there would be a special meeting of the EIS Salaries Committee on 8 May at which reduction in class contact time would be one of the two main items discussed.

COSLA and Scottish Government indicated that they did not see a difficulty with sharing the Terms of Reference but that both would check and confirm the position at the meeting of Joint Chairs.

3. ASN Working Group

The Chair reported that this group had met on 24 April 2025 and that there had been a lengthy but valuable discussion about the issues. Three main areas were discussed. The first was that the Teachers' Side position was that there should be a class size maximum of 6, explaining the reasoning for this, which had been set out in the paper considered by the group. There was also a discussion around current definitions, which had been around for 40+ years, and which were significantly outdated and not referenced anywhere in current legislation. The difficulty in producing new definitions was acknowledged and the idea of looking at whether definitions could be framed alongside legislation was discussed. The final matter discussed concerned nomenclature applied to provision which was now wider than simply special schools and units, e.g. ASL units, ASL schools or enhanced provision. It was expected that this work would carry over into next session though it was agreed the group would aim to meet again in June. It was agreed that the Teachers' Side would endeavour to produce a proposed tentative first draft of a revised appendix 2.9.

COSLA Joint Secretary agreed that the discussion was useful and acknowledged the value of input from the group members with expertise in this area.

4. Job Sizing Review Group

The Chair reported that this group had met on 23 April and had agreed that a number of recommendations could be submitted to SNCT for consideration. It had been agreed that a report would be drafted by T Gray to be shared with group members

prior to submission to SNCT on 14 May 2025. The group would meet again in June to consider remaining matters.

5. Pay and Leave Specification Group

Teachers' Side Joint Secretary reported that there had been two meetings of this group. At the last meeting a report from the small sub-group had been considered. It had also been agreed that the union side payroll and pensions specialists would join the small sub-group. The small sub-group would meet in May, in advance of the next meeting of the technical group on 24 June 2025.

6. Trainee Educational Psychologists

Support Group considered a paper submitted by Employers' Side which raised the issue of point 0 on the Educational Psychologists pay scale. It was noted that this point was no longer required. It was noted that there was also a need to include a reference to the arrangements for payment of student Educational Psychologists moving into the third year of the programme. It was agreed that Joint Secretaries would prepare an SNCT circular on this matter.

7. Disciplinary Framework

Support Group considered a paper submitted by Employers' Side which raised the issue of the disciplinary framework set out within the SNCT Handbook. The paper proposed a review of the framework based on a concern that the framework no longer aligned with the ACAS Code of Practice.

Teachers' Side noted that the ACAS code had changed in 2015 and this did not appear to have caused difficulties with locally agreed disciplinary procedures up to now. Teachers' Side further commented that this change did not mean that the framework was breaching the ACAS Code, which was considered to be minimum standard that an employer should be working to in handling disciplinary matters. The Teachers' Side did not consider that the framework breaches the ACAS Code by setting out better provision than those contained within the ACAS Code.

Teachers' Side was clear that it did not see any need to review the framework. It was noted that Employers' Side would consider whether it would wish to bring back a further paper on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Bain (Employers' Side)
Stuart Brown (Teachers' Panel)
David Leitch (Scottish Government)

Joint Secretaries