

Report of the SNCT Support Group Meeting 10 February 2026

The SNCT Support Group meets as required between meetings of the SNCT. A meeting was held on 10 February 2026 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, reopener clause

It was noted that the circular detailing the reopener clause had been issued. The Chair proposed that SNCT Joint Secretaries should meet and consider the inflation figures at the appropriate time and report to the SNCT Joint Chairs if the criteria for the reopener clause was met. Any of the Joint Chairs could then request that a meeting of the Extended Joint Chairs be convened. This was agreed.

2. Reduction in Class Contact Time

It was noted that the SNCT RCCT Sub-group had met the previous week. The Chair reported that the Teachers' Side was formulating a response to the Scottish Government paper, which had been shared the day before the sub-group met, and the COSLA position as outlined verbally at the meeting, which had subsequently been provided in writing.

3. Teachers' Panel Resolutions

The Teachers' Side presented seven resolutions to the Support Group and sought initial responses from Scottish Government and COSLA.

Class Size and Adult to Pupil Ratios in ASL/Special Schools and Units

The Teachers' Side presented the above resolution which called for a maximum class size of 6 in these settings and an adult to pupil ratio of 1 to 2 explaining that, as had been expressed at the ASN Working Group, the children and young people placed in special schools and units were now only those pupils with the most complex needs. The Chair proposed that this matter could be remitted to the ASN Working Group for consideration.

Scottish Government stated that they would need to consider this further before they

could officially respond but had no objection to the proposal that the matter be considered by the ASN Working Group.

COSLA commented that there would be considerable costs associated with implementing this resolution and also difficulties with the learning estate but confirmed they were happy for the ASN Working Group to consider this matter further.

It was agreed that this would be passed to the ASN Working Group for further consideration.

Work Related Stress

The Teachers' Side presented the above resolution which called for work related stress to be explicitly listed in Part 2, Section 6, paragraph 6.20 as a work related illness/injury. It was Teachers' Side position that work related stress was already covered and that this was to make the issue explicit. Information about successful employment tribunal proceedings was shared with Support Group. The Chair proposed that this matter could initially be taken forward by SNCT Joint Secretaries.

It was agreed that the case law would be shared with COSLA and Scottish Government.

COSLA commented that employment tribunal decisions were individual decisions which did not normally apply across the board.

Teachers' Side Joint Secretary stated that it seemed clear that Teachers' Side position that work related stress was already covered was being borne out by case law and that the additional stress being faced by individuals in having to pursue legal cases was unreasonable, adding that it was much more costly for employers to defend litigation than to accept that work related stress was a work related injury/illness and to clarify this in the SNCT Handbook.

It was agreed that the matter could be considered further by the SNCT Joint Secretaries.

Amber/Red Weather Warnings

The Teachers' Side presented the above resolution which called for SNCT agreement on the action to be taken where an Amber or Red Weather Warning was issued by the Met Office

In presenting this the Teachers' Side was clear that there was a difference between these levels of warnings citing that Red Weather Warnings were issued where dangerous weather was expected that was very likely to cause a risk to life and the advice was to avoid travelling. In these cases, it seemed clear that schools should be closed and for this reason an SNCT agreement on action to be taken in the event of a Red Weather Warning should be achievable.

The position related to an Amber Weather Warning was a little more complex and the Teachers' Side was proposing that LNCTs should be reaching agreement on what should happen when such a warning was issued.

Teachers' Side proposed that initial discussion on this matter could take place at SNCT Joint Secretaires.

Scottish Government advised that they had nothing in particular to add on this topic but were happy to have the matter discussed further by SNCT Joint Secretaries.

COSLA commented that it was their view that this should be a matter for LNCTs and not SNCT but agreed with the proposal that the matter be discussed further at SNCT Joint Secretaries.

It was agreed that the matter could be considered further by the SNCT Joint Secretaries.

Maternity Pay

The Teachers' Side made it clear that a wide range of improvements to family leave provisions were required and this matter required further consideration by the Teachers' Side who had previously agreed to jointly undertake research. The Chair advised that Teachers' Side wanted more than was set out in this resolution and wished to refer the resolution back to the Teachers' Panel for further consideration.

COSLA advised that any improvements to these provisions would entail considerable cost.

Scottish Government had nothing to add.

The Chair commented that previously the Scottish Government had stated that it was in support of improvements to maternity leave. Scottish Government confirmed that it was the case that the Cabinet Secretary remained keen to look at improvements and that the Scottish Government was keen to engage further with this work.

Lead Teachers

The Teachers' Side presented the above resolution which called for greater promotion of these roles.

After discussion, it was agreed that a Joint Secretaries letter of advice reminding councils of these posts could be drafted for consideration at a future meeting of the SNCT Joint Secretaries.

Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act

The Teachers' Side presented the above resolution which called for inclusion of the relevant parts of this legislation into the SNCT Handbook.

COSLA indicated that this matter had been discussed at SNCT Joint Secretaries, and it had been agreed that inclusion of these provisions would be useful.

It was agreed that while there was not time to write an update to the relevant parts of the Family Leave provisions within the SNCT Handbook at this time a Joint Secretaries letter of advice highlighting the new provisions advising that, when time allowed, the SNCT Handbook would be amended, could be drafted for consideration at a future meeting of the SNCT Joint Secretaries.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

The Teachers' Side presented the above resolution which called for the need for improvements to teachers' terms and conditions as a vehicle for bringing more people into teaching and retaining them.

The Teachers' Side added that recruitment and retention was a crucial issue and that terms and conditions were important factors in dealing with both.

COSLA concurred that that this was an important issue and wanted to work together on this, however funding was a concern.

Scottish Government acknowledged the recruitment challenges.

Teachers' Side commented that there was an issue with workforce planning and that this seemed to be disjointed.

COSLA reiterated their serious concerns about local government funding setting out some of the difficulties.

Teachers' Side asked if these concerns could be shared in writing.

4. Position Statements from Employers and Scottish Government on Miscarriage Special Leave, Paid Leave for Fertility Treatment and Supply Teachers' Pay

The Chair referred to paragraphs 8.2 and 8.3 of the previous minute which concerned the provision of written position statements and sought an update.

Scottish Government confirmed that their position on the first two matters was as set out in the Cabinet Secretary's letter from before Christmas.

In relation to Supply Teacher's Pay, Scottish Government would like to have more of a look at this to fully understand what the ask is.

The Chair reminded the group that the ask was to have Supply Teachers paid the full rate for the job from day one of any engagement.

Scottish Government advised that they would need to liaise with local government on this issue.

The Chair advised that while a supportive comment on the first two items had been set out in the paper referred to, negotiating was for this group and not part of the remit of the SNCT RCCT Sub-group going on to comment that at present there was no clarity in the comments on the first two matters nor any specific references to what improvements may look like. The Chair added that the Teachers' Side was still seeking a written position on the first two matters and this would be useful in terms of taking forward negotiations. The communication so far was welcome but a bit more flesh on the bones was required.

Scottish Government acknowledged the request and advised that the mandate for negotiations came from ministers but that this would be taken back to ministers.

COSLA advised that their position had not changed. Capacity to undertake the work and funding remained the barriers. COSLA further reported that they had done quite a bit of work benchmarking across councils to assess current practice and that more consideration was required of those results before a report could be put to COSLA Leaders. Specifically, in relation to Supply, COSLA confirmed that their view was

that a fuller review of supply would be useful.

Teachers Side reminded the meeting that SNCT can form working groups to take forwards pieces of work and that it was critical that ministers understood the SNCT and its workings.

Scottish Government undertook to communicate that to ministers.

5. Additional Support Needs Working Group

It was noted that a date for the next meeting required to be organised. Joint Secretaries would progress this.

6. Job Sizing Review Group

It was noted that a Joint Secretaries letter of advice outlining the decisions made by SNCT was issued in October 2025. It had been intended that the changes would take place from the 1 February 2026 review point. This has now been revised to 1 April 2026, and this has been communicated via a further Joint Secretaries letter.

COSLA Joint Secretary reported that there were two outstanding matters still to be discussed. These were budget responsibility and bandings, and nursery hours and places. These would need to be discussed by the Job Sizing Review Group to finalise any recommendations (which can then be taken to SNCT on 4 March).

Following the letter of advice on job sizing, issued in October 2025, a small number of councils have expressed concern about the removal of the facility to allow guidance caseloads of over 200. Discussions on this matter have taken place with SNCT Joint Secretaries and COSLA advised that they intended to submit a paper to the Job Sizing Review Group on this.

7. Pay and Leave Specification Group

Meetings of the Technical Working Group and Subgroup took place in January 2026. Work on the national calculators and communications continues. Further work is required by the Subgroup on family leave before a decision can be made on the approach taken. The Technical Working Group also needs to decide on promotions. Further guidance is required on Shared Parental Leave, including updating the pay and leave specification and SNCT Handbook.

Further meetings of the Technical Working Group and Subgroups are to be held.

8. Change of Title from Instrumental Music Instructor to Instrumental Music Teacher

The Chair invited Scottish Government to update the meeting on this matter as a written update had not been received.

Scottish Government confirmed that a letter had not been sent adding that they had also committed to update if substantive progress was made. The surveys which had been mentioned previously had taken place and the Policy Team were now analysing the findings and were looking to set out a route map to progress this

matter.

Scottish Government agreed that they should be in a position to give an update by the date of the next Support Group meeting on 7 May 2026.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne McLeod (Employers' Side)

Stuart Brown (Teachers' Panel)

David Leitch (Scottish Government)

Joint Secretaries