

Report of the SNCT Support Group Meeting 7 May 2026

The SNCT Support Group meets as required between meetings of the SNCT. A meeting was held on 7 May 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 reported that the Joint Secretaries had met on 22 April 2026 and reviewed the Consumer Price Index figures. It was noted that the inflation rate over the agreed reference period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 was 3.45% and that the reopener clause was therefore not triggered.

2. Reduction in Class Contact Time

It was noted that the agreement was now in place. The Teachers' Side Joint Chair stated that there must be no delay in the implementation of the agreement, noting that there was a great amount of work to be done some of which could be overtaken quickly.

The Teachers' Side Joint Secretary reported that this had been discussed at Joint Secretaries who had agreed to work on identifying workstreams, for example workforce planning, that could be taken forward in specific working groups. This was noted.

In addition, the Teachers' Side Joint Secretary reported that it was agreed that Joint Secretaries would draft any required amendments to the SNCT Handbook as necessary. This was also noted.

The COSLA Joint Secretary added that Joint Secretaries had reflected on the fact that while primary implementation was first it was necessary to commence the work required to ensure that there was no delay in implementing changes for secondary.

Scottish Government reiterated support for the comments from Teachers' Side and COSLA.

Teachers' Side Joint Chair noted that changes to primary were effective from next year and secondary from the year after adding that it was correct to have the necessary changes agreed as soon as possible to ensure that they were ready to go when needed. Specific reference was made to Part 2, Sections 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9

of the SNCT Handbook. Teachers' Side was keen that this work be undertaken before the summer break and, if necessary, a special meeting of the full SNCT could be convened to agree the resulting circulars.

COSLA Joint Secretary confirmed that she was happy to have discussion on this at Joint Secretaries', adding that while there was a range of provisions within the SNCT Handbook that would require review some changes were specific and perhaps simpler.

Scottish Government agreed that some of the changes as described by the Teachers' Side Joint Chair would be quick while other changes would take a bit longer to work through, however the detailed work could be discussed at Joint Secretaries.

3. Teachers' Panel Resolutions

It was noted that the resolution related to class size and staff ratios in ASN settings would be considered by the ASN Working Group.

It was noted that the resolutions concerning work related stress and amber or red weather warnings would be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Joint Secretaries.

It was noted that on the resolution related to teachers' terms and conditions there was no specific follow up, however this matter is underpinned by other work currently underway.

It was noted that the resolutions related to Lead Teachers and Neonatal Care Leave were covered in letters of advice from the Joint Secretaries which would be issued shortly.

The Teachers' Side Joint Chair confirmed that the resolution on maternity provisions had not been presented at Support Group as the Teachers' Side intended to undertake further work on this issue. There was not an identified timescale for this.

4. Miscarriage Special Leave

Teachers' Side Joint Chair acknowledged that this matter had been discussed at Joint Secretaries. COSLA Joint Secretary confirmed that benchmarking on this issue had been undertaken by COSLA and that this would be shared with Joint Secretaries.

The Teachers' Side Joint Chair advised that Teachers' Side was very keen to move forward and shared the current practice in his own local authority which now recognised that miscarriage was a bereavement and that special leave was more appropriate than expecting employees to resort to sickness absence.

The Teachers' Side Joint Chair made reference to the Miscarriage Association's Pregnancy Loss Pledge which many employers were signed up to, including a large number of councils in Scotland. In signing up to the pledge employers are committing to meet a pregnancy loss standard and are agreeing to, among other things, encourage a supportive work environment and to showing empathy and understanding to people experiencing pregnancy loss.

The Teachers' Side Joint Chair advised that Teachers' Side saw two ways of

advancing this issue. The first could be to specifically make this a devolved matter while requiring councils to implement a policy which included pregnancy loss as special leave. The second was to continue to pursue a national agreement.

The Teachers' Side Joint Chair confirmed that Teachers' Side was happy to draft wording as Teachers' Side was very keen to progress this with the intention of implementing a change next session.

Teachers' Side added that it was unreasonable to add to the anxiety and trauma faced by people experiencing pregnancy loss by expecting them to rely on sickness absence for time off to cope with their bereavement.

COSLA Joint Secretary thanked Teachers' Side for sharing this information and confirmed that she would discuss this further with advisers. COSLA Joint Secretary stated if we were taking any changes forward, the employers' preference would be for a national agreement adding that there was an issue with financial costs of any changes and that she would rather go to COSLA Leaders with a package of proposed changes than to take a piecemeal approach.

Scottish Government agreed that a package would be better adding that the Cabinet Secretary was supportive of improvements being made. Scottish Government also preferred national provision to local provision.

Teachers' Side Joint Secretary stated that while he understood why COSLA would prefer to look at a package to take to COSLA Leaders improvements could not be held up by things not yet proposed. He added that a linkage between this item and the next one would seem like a good package to take to COSLA Leaders.

5. Paid Leave for Fertility Treatment

Teachers' Side Chair noted that this had also been discussed at Joint Secretaries. COSLA Joint Secretary confirmed that benchmarking on this issue had been undertaken by COSLA and that this would be shared with Joint Secretaries.

Teachers' Side Joint Chair advised that it remained the intention to produce draft wording for this issue as a national provision for inclusion in the SNCT Handbook.

Scottish Government commented that this matter could be progressed with the previous issue as a package.

6. Supply Teachers' Pay

Teachers' Side Joint Secretary reported that there had been a good discussion on this issue at Joint Secretaries and that the establishment of a working group to discuss the wider issues had also been discussed.

COSLA Joint Secretary confirmed that the discussion had been helpful and that a working group would enable a wider discussion on issues around supply. She advised that a draft terms of reference would be considered at a future meeting of Joint Secretaries.

7. Additional Support Needs Working Group

The Teachers' Side Joint Chair advised that it was proving problematic to find a date

for the next meeting of this group and that a further doodle poll was underway to identify a suitable date.

8. Job Sizing Review Group

Teachers' Side Secretariat gave an update on the three outstanding matters which were budget responsibility bandings, main duties of Principal Teachers of Guidance and the issue of nursery hours and places. The papers on budget responsibility bandings and main duties were currently with COSLA advisers for consideration. The outstanding issue with nursery hours and places was linked to the time of year that nursery children could be counted. This would require further discussion as the indication from the employers at the last meeting of the Job Sizing Review Group that alternative dates could be considered was a new position.

COSLA Joint Secretary reported that the updated guidance, questionnaire and toolkit were now uploaded to the SNCT Handbook. Arrangements were being made to constitute the Job Sizing Co-ordinator User Group which had previously been agreed. Work was also underway to identify dates for future training for Job Sizing Co-ordinators, the intention being that new co-ordinators would have access to a two day training course while existing co-ordinators would undertake a one day training course.

9. Pay and Leave Specification Technical Group

COSLA Joint Secretary reported that a meeting of the subgroup looking at the detailed work took place on 30 April. The focus currently is on family leave and consistency of the calculations. Payroll specialists are working on these. The subgroup is hoping that the online national calculators for basic calculations on starters and leavers will be available from August. A further meeting of the subgroup is required to take place mid-May before a meeting of the Technical Group can be arranged. It is hoped that a decision on recommendations to SNCT can be made on family leave and promotion at the next meeting of the Technical Group. The subgroup is also working on interim guidance for Shared Parental Leave.

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

This was raised as a matter arising from the previous meeting and related to the update from Scottish Government that had been expected at the meeting of Support Group on 7 May.

Scottish Government advised that it was not in a position to give an update at this time however that this would be investigated and a written update would be sent.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne McLeod (Employers' Side)

Stuart Brown (Teachers' Panel)

David Leitch (Scottish Government)

Joint Secretaries