

Update of SNCT Working Groups 25 June 2008

Conditions of Service Working Group

The Conditions of Service Working Group has met on a number of occasions since the last SNCT.

The Working Group has been progressing Career Breaks and Sabbaticals. The issue of paid sabbaticals has been provided for separately and a note from Scottish Government is appended to this paper. The Group has considered a policy on Career Breaks. Some of the detail of the policy has been complex and has required the Employers' Side and the Teachers' Side to seek separate legal advice. A draft has been finalised for the SNCT and is appended.

The Working Group has considered the working hours and annual leave arrangements of Educational Psychologists and Quality Improvement Officers. The Employers' Side tabled an offer to harmonise arrangements, with a 35 hour working week from 1 August 2008 and 40 days annual leave from 1 January 2009. The Teachers' Side sought implementation of both arrangements from 1 August 2009 in return to preservation of holiday arrangements for existing QIOs who enjoy 41 or 42 days annual leave and a 35 hour working week. This has been rejected by the Employers' Side. This item is separately provided for on the agenda.

The Working Group is also considering a number of other issues. These include the application of paragraph 6.20 of the Handbook relating to absences arising from workplace situations. This will require a further clarification of the role of Occupational Health in advising Councils on employees' health issues. The Working Group will also seek to set out advice on salary placement for former APTs/STs and Chartered Teachers who leave employment and return.

The Working Group has responsibility for two technical sub-groups. The first technical sub-group is dealing with salary issues and is processing a survey of Councils on leave payment arrangements for teachers who move across Councils. The second technical sub-group is reviewing job sizing. In the first instance all paperwork and the job sizing toolkit form is being considered. Thereafter, issues which require consideration by the SNCT will be presented to the Conditions of Service Working Group. This technical sub-group also is

looking at training of job sizing coordinators to support existing coordinators and to provide an induction for new coordinators.

Appendix: Sabbaticals

At its meeting on 26 November the SNCT asked the Conditions of Service working group to consider possible low cost options for teacher sabbaticals. Following further discussions with the Scottish Government it became immediately apparent that, in light of the new funding arrangements under the Concordat with local government, there are now very limited resources held centrally. It was therefore considered unlikely that any meaningful contribution could be made by Scottish Government to enable a formal scheme of sabbaticals for teachers.

The working group defined a sabbatical as “a period away from the normal working place to undertake activities connected with employment”. The group therefore considered that there already exist extensive CPD arrangements through the national CPD portal and international exchange programmes through Learning and Teaching Scotland. In addition VSO have now introduced a national funding arrangement to cover pension contributions for any teachers undertaking a period of VSO. The working group therefore considered that no further action was required regarding sabbaticals for teachers and that authorities should help promote the wide range of schemes already available. In addition it was agreed that links to the existing programmes would be put on the SNCT website.

Review of LNCTs Working Group

The Review of LNCTs Working Group has met on 3 occasions since the last SNCT meeting. The members of the working group organised and participated in the SNCT Event which was held on 12 March 2008 at Hampden Stadium. The report from the SNCT Event has been distributed to the delegates and to all LNCTs. LNCTs have been asked to ensure that the report is provided to all schools to help inform and assist discussion at establishment level. The report is also available on the SNCT website.

The SNCT Guidance on Working Time Arrangements and Development of the Cultural Climate was issued on 8 January 2008.

Teacher workload continues to be a priority for the Working Group and a letter has been sent to LNCTs requiring them to provide information on local initiatives (see attached). When responses have been received the Working Group will consider national advice to LNCTs on the management of workload.

The Working Group has also continued to oversee the development of the SNCT website.