

To: **Directors of Education in Scotland
(ADES)**

04 May 2011

Dear Colleague

SNCT Teachers' Deal relating to the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS)

I feel it important to bring to your attention some significant concerns which GTC Scotland (GTCS) has about that part of the SNCT teachers' deal which relates to the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS). If agreement is reached, an allocation of 18.5 hours teaching time (0.82 FTE) to the TIS would mean that beginning teachers would have just **four** hours per week more than experienced teachers to complete all that is expected of them in the Induction Year. We believe that this allocation would make it very difficult for GTCS to endorse the completion of the Standard for Full Registration (SfR) within one school year.

We are, of course, discussing these matters very closely with Government at present and we are confident that that any final protocol agreed within SNCT will allow us to find a suitable way forward. As you will be planning your own provision for next year, however, I would suggest that, in order to avoid any potential difficulty for the next cohort of probationers, you consider very carefully your plans for the Teacher Induction Scheme within your authority area. Our considered view is:

- that there should be a firm commitment to a minimum of **one full day (or equivalent) relief from class** at the outset of the school year for all those entering the Induction Scheme in August 2011;
- that this figure (0.8 FTE) might be varied later in the session, but not normally before Easter, for capable new teachers who would benefit from further opportunities to develop their potential and to gain additional skills. This variation would however follow full discussion with the individual probationer about his/her needs and would be endorsed by the relevant manager within the local authority.
- that the teaching time expected of individual teachers about whom cause for concern has been expressed should be maintained at no more than 0.8 FTE;
- that any agreement to vary current arrangements for the SfR would apply for session 2011/2012; and
- that any current probationers teachers who are asked to undertake an extension of probation in session 2011/2012 would do so under current arrangements (ie with a teaching allocation of 0.7 FTE).

letter to directors re TIS - 4 May 2011



I regret having to bring this matter to your attention at this time. However, as you may know, we have in recent months consistently shared with both Government and with ADES officers our view that an SNCT decision to vary the agreement on the hours required for teaching on TIS would have significant implications for teacher professionalism and for the Standard for Full Registration. In private discussions, we have sought to be as flexible as possible, while keeping professionalism as our key guideline and stating that "GTC Scotland may require to be convinced that increased time allocations would allow probationers sufficient time to attain the Standard for Full Registration." Despite many pressures, we have tried to avoid making any public comment which might be unhelpful to negotiations.

In discussion with government (and ADES) colleagues, we agreed that the original suggestion of an allocation of **0.9 FTE** teaching time for probationer teachers was inappropriate, in that it put the whole integrity of the Teacher Induction Scheme at risk. However, recognising that the compelling financial circumstances facing Councils might require an increase from the current 0.7FTE provision, we agreed on the need for **appropriate** time to deliver the Teacher Induction Scheme. The proposal to grant beginning teachers just four additional hours was, however, clearly beyond any flexibility which GTC Scotland might consider to be appropriate.

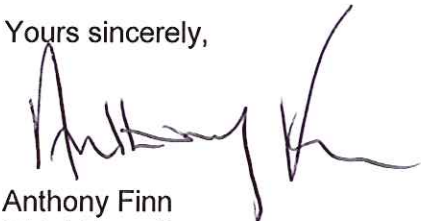
In 2001, GTCS was only convinced that the previous 2 year probation scheme could reduce to one year because of the quality of support to be offered by the new TIS. By contrast, teachers currently completing probation outwith the Induction Scheme (on the Flexible route) have a reduced level of support and require 270 days of satisfactory service to complete their probation.

Our concern in GTC Scotland is to ensure that high standards of teacher education and professionalism are maintained and improved. While we recognise the serious difficulties facing both Government and local authorities, our ultimate concern must be to ensure the quality of the teaching profession and the integrity of the TIS, a scheme highly rated across the world and, of course, deemed "world class" by OECD because of its clear focus on promoting high standards for probationers. It is important not to lose sight of how this success has been secured; and we need look no further than the Donaldson Report for a clear statement of the advantages of TIS for new teachers and, above all, for pupils. For example, in his report, Graham Donaldson asserted that "evidence and research suggests that investing time for professional development, reflection and learning with experienced teachers within the induction year is a critical factor in its success" and he then argued that savings, while needed, should not be at the expense of building much-needed quality in our future teaching force. GTC Scotland strongly supports these principles.

An allocation of four hours per week is unlikely to allow Scotland to retain an induction scheme which is viable, offering new teachers appropriate time and experiences to reflect on their strengths and to learn about and understand the key elements required of a reflective practitioner by the SfR (see Appendix).

We are, of course, keen to engage in further discussion which might resolve some of our concerns and allow us to find a suitable way forward; and I therefore look forward to further discussion on these matters. However, I did feel it appropriate to share these issues with you at present and would be happy to discuss this matter further with you.

Yours sincerely,



Anthony Finn
Chief Executive

If calling please ask for: Fiona J Hands on Direct Dial 0131 314 6027

See attached appendix

Appendix: Allocation of time for the Teacher Induction Scheme

New teachers need time and support to fulfil the expectations of the Induction Year.

The time allocation should allow opportunities for authorities to bring teachers together to share experiences and learn from them. In addition, it is clear that a beginning teacher, with all the pressures associated with induction into a new profession, requires time to:

- develop the skills of a teacher and an understanding of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy;
- have access to a range of appropriate experiences which would assist them to reflect and develop sufficient understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, allowing time to:
 - hold regular meetings with their supporter;
 - seek advice and guidance from key colleagues;
 - meet regularly with their fellow probationers;
 - maintain a record of professional development;
 - identify and record appropriate critical incidents and evidence to use as a focus of discussion with supporters;
 - engage, where possible, in research relating to their practice and to the impact of that practice on pupil learning;
 - experience and understand the context of teaching (other schools and sectors; Additional Support Needs; policy frameworks etc);
 - gain a sufficiently detailed understanding of what is required to meet specific elements of the Standard in respect of, for example, Professional Knowledge & Understanding, Professional Skills & Abilities and Professional Values & Personal Commitment.

Anthony Finn

May 2011