

**Update of SNCT Working Groups
27 May 2009**

Report on the Conditions of Service Working Group

The Working Group has been dealing with a number of ongoing issues over the period since the last meeting of the SNCT.

1. **SNCT Appeals**

There has been a need to consider the operation of SNCT Appeals and, following initial work by the Joint Secretaries, a paper was considered by the Working Group. It was recognised that the current procedure could be set out more clearly, particularly in relation to the role of Joint Secretaries (Employers' Side and Teachers' Side) and in relation to timescales. A revised procedure is set out for the SNCT to consider.

2. **Practical Class Size**

Following consideration of this issue during the drafting of the SNCT Handbook the Working Group considered a paper from the Teachers' Side which sought to upgrade the language set out in the 1956 Code to bring the subjects into line with recognised SQA subjects. The Working Group approved this list for consideration by the SNCT. The Working Group will continue to consider a number of other subjects which may be arranged by Councils on a practical size basis but which are not covered by the 1956 Code.

3. **Accelerated Incremental Progression**

The Employer's Side brought forward concerns that the provisions in the SNCT Handbook relating to accelerated increment progress lack clarity. However, having surveyed practice across Councils, the Employers' Side has no specific proposals to bring forward at this stage. It was agreed to continue to discuss this item.

4. **Absence Due to Work Related Injury/Illness**

Following the issuing of the SNCT Handbook there has been discussion within the Working Group on the operation of Paragraphs 6.20 and 6.21 of the Handbook. This has been discussed with an

acceptance that there requires to be greater clarity particularly in relation to the role of Occupational Health in advising Councils. The Employer's Side's preference is to agree a circular and replacement paragraph whereas the Teachers' Side believes that guidance from the Joint Secretaries would suffice. Discussion is ongoing on these issues.

5. **Maternity Provisions**

The Working Group considered current provisions in light of changes to Statutory Maternity and Adoptive Leave. While SNCT provisions are compliant with the Regulations the Employers' Side stated a request that SNCT provisions are brought into line with statutory provision relating to qualifying service for statutory maternity pay. The Teachers' Side has stated that any negotiated change should also consider scheme improvements and has suggested a number of improvements. These are currently being considered by the Employers' Side.

6. **Leave Entitlement**

The Working Group has considered the implications of the European Court ruling in Stringer v HMRC for compensatory leave arrangements and payments for illness and maternity. This will be further discussed at future meetings.

7. **Technical Sub Group**

The Technical Sub Group has met on two occasions since the last meeting of the SNCT. It has now produced a draft report on the calculation of pay. The report was produced on the back of a survey of the pay calculation methods utilised by Councils and was considered at a recent meeting of the Conditions of Service Working Group. While the Conditions of Service Working Group is generally comfortable with the report's recommendations, it was agreed that a further scoping work should be carried out before Councils are advised of any changes.

The Sub Group has also suggested that further consideration be given to the idea of pursuing a 'club' transfer arrangement across all Councils in relation to the payment of accrued leave on termination of employment. The Conditions of Service Working Group has agreed to consider the implications of adopting such an approach.

8. **Job Sizing Sub Group**

The Job Sizing Sub Group provided a report to the Conditions of Service Working Group on a revised questionnaire and guidance notes. Two copies of the questionnaire were offered. In addition the Sub Group considered a number of wider issues relating to job sizing that require consideration by the SNCT. The Conditions of Service Working Group has tabled a shorter questionnaire and guidance notes

for consideration to the SNCT. These are in draft form. It was agreed that further work requires to be undertaken and that a small Group will take this forward. The Working Group will consider the wider issues raised. Additionally, the Joint Secretaries are considering training issues.

Report on SNCT Working Group, Review of LNCTs

The Review of LNCTs Working Group has met on one occasion since the last SNCT meeting. The group has now finalised a draft report (copy attached) which provides advice and shares best practice in relation to the management of workload.

This report has been drawn from the responses from 30 LNCTs on initiatives or ongoing work that they are undertaking in relation to managing teacher workload. The Joint Secretaries are continuing to offer support and advice to two authorities to help them deal with workload issues that they are currently facing.

The group would like to thank LNCTs for taking the time to provide the necessary information. SNCT is asked to endorse the report and publication which will be arranged for after the summer holidays.

The outstanding issues regarding the SNCT website have now been resolved and LNCTs are to be reminded to continue to upload their local agreements to the website.