

Update on SNCT Working Groups 28 January 2009

Conditions of Service Working Group

The Conditions of Service Working Group has dealt with a number of issues, including matters referred by sub-groups dealing with job sizing and technical aspects of pay and conditions of service.

Annual Leave and Hours of Work of Educational Psychologists and Quality Improvement Officers

The SNCT has previously agreed that the annual leave arrangements and hours of work of Educational Psychologists and QIOs was a national matter. At the SNCT in June the Employers' Side tabled a proposal that the employers were prepared to offer a national position establishing a 40 day annual leave arrangement and a 35 hour working week for all relevant employees. The working week was agreed in principle. The Teachers' Side sought a "no detriment" clause in relation to annual leave. The SNCT in June continued this item for further information to be gathered and further discussion.

Following discussions in the Working Group there is still a gap between the sides which is set out in the position paper before committee. The Employers' Side has set out a revised position, accepting a three year leave protection in return for a 35 day leave provision for new starts, which would apply also to those who have less than 5 years service at the putative date of implementation (01.08.2009). The Teachers' Side indicated a willingness to put this proposal to its side meeting, subject to lifetime leave protection in return for 35 day annual leave provision for new starts and that the 35 days should solely apply to those appointed after 1 August 2009.

Both sides agreed that the SNCT should seek to resolve this matter.

Maternity Provision

Following changes to statutory maternity provision the Working Group has agreed that the provisions set out in the SNCT Handbook (ref. Section 7, Part 2 of the Handbook). The Employer's Side has expressed a desire to bring the qualifying period for maternity pay into line with statutory provision while the Teachers' Side wishes an improvement in compensatory leave arrangements and in pension arrangements. These matters are ongoing.

SNCT Appeal Procedures

The Working Group has agreed to consider the current appeals procedure. This work is currently being dealt with at secretariat level before proposals are considered by the Working Group.

Teachers on Assimilated Salaries

The Working Group has considered the salary placement of teachers who have assimilated salaries and who leave teaching but later return. Agreement was reached that former Assistant Principal Teachers and Senior Teachers on assimilated salaries who leave employment with a Scottish Council but who return to teaching after a break which extends beyond 12 calendar weeks should lose their entitlement to salary assimilation.

The Committee also considered the salaries of Chartered Teachers who retire and who return on a supply basis. While in principle a similar rule may apply to such teachers it was agreed to discuss this further with SNCT since the status of Chartered Teachers lies with GTCS.

Practical Classes

During the drafting of the SNCT Handbook it was recognised that the list of classes, defined as practical, which was set out in the 1956 Code, required updating. The issue could not be resolved at that time and the Working Group is considering, in the first instance, updating the list, based on the list of subjects recognised by SQA. Thereafter, the Working Group will consider wider issues which may arise particularly in relation to other subjects which may be set as practical classes through custom and practice rather than through application of the 56 Code.

Accelerated Incremental Progression

The SNCT Handbook makes provision in paragraphs 1.21 and 1.22, Part 2, to provide enhanced salary placement for teachers who have experience, prior to teaching, which is relevant to their teaching. These provisions were agreed following the 2001 Agreement and were introduced to provide an incentive to mature entrants to the profession following the removal of age related salary placement rules which were set out in the Scheme of Salaries and Conditions of Service for Teaching Staff in School Education (the "Yellow Book"). There is agreement in the Working Group that the current provisions create issues of interpretation and consistency of operation across Councils. The Employers' Side has argued that these provisions could now be deleted. If the SNCT wishes to retain provision for accelerated incremental progression the Working Group will consider improvements to guidance about this provision.

Job Sizing Sub-Group

A proposal for national training is set out separately on the Agenda. The Working Group agreed with this proposal which came from the Sub-Group. If the SNCT accepts the principle then issues will arise regarding costings. The Sub-Group has undertaken a redrafting of the toolkit and guidance notes. This is close to completion and will be drafted to provide replacements to the SNCT Handbook. The Group has still to finalise its position regarding more fundamental issues. When that work is complete a report will be sent to the Conditions of Service Working Group.

Review of LNCTs Working Group

The Review of LNCTs Working Group has met on two occasions since the last SNCT meeting. Teacher workload continues to be a priority for the Working Group and responses have now been received from all 32 LNCTs in relation to the Joint Secretaries' request for information on local initiatives in this regard.

In considering the responses, the Group has sought clarification from a number of LNCTs on the information that they provided, while two LNCTs are to be contacted by the Joint Secretaries to offer support and advice to deal with workload issues that they are currently facing. However, the Group has welcomed the fact that a large number of responses have picked up on the advice received at the Hampden event in March 2008 and, in general, good progress is being made.

The Working Group is now revisiting all of the returns and follow-up responses with a view to issuing a report which provides advice and shares best practice in relation to the management of workload. It is hoped that this will be finalised and circulated following the next meeting of the Group in March.

The Working Group also continues to oversee the development of the SNCT website. A current priority is to ensure that LNCTs continue to upload their local agreements to the website and, with that in mind, a Joint Secretaries' letter is being drafted, advising LNCTs of their responsibilities in this regard.

Chartered Teacher Working Group

Following the agreement of the SNCT in June, the CT Working group was established in September 2008 and has met on 3 occasions. The agreed remit is to:

- (a) consider the distinctive role of Chartered Teachers in Scottish schools arising from the Standard for Chartered Teachers;
- (b) consider whether any other recommendations of the Review Group are relevant to the work of the SNCT; and

- (c) thereafter, to produce such guidance and other supporting information which enhances the clarity of the distinctive role of Chartered Teachers, and to report to the SNCT.

It has been agreed that the timescale for production of guidance should be in line with the GTCS review of the Standard for Chartered teacher by Spring.

During its deliberations the group has had presentations from the GTCS regarding the revised draft Standard for Chartered teacher and Margaret Alcorn from the National CPD team. It is not envisaged that the GTCS would seek a major review of the standard and the group will see drafts as this work progresses.

ADES personnel network has also been asked for examples of good deployment practice which might be fed into the resulting guidance to authorities.

The group meets again on 27 January 2009.