



Date 03/07/2014

**LNCT/14/15**

**Visiting Specialist Guidelines and Recruitment**

Dear Colleague,

There was a review of the VS service and subsequent consultation on the proposals. The circular covers the outcomes of that review and consultation and subsequent Management decisions.

The restriction on recruitment to primary qualified teachers only is one that the teachers' panel are not in agreement with but it is acknowledged that it is for the Management side to decide - they are not LNCT negotiated matters.

There are three documents included:

- Staff Guidance Session 2014 -15 following the outcome of the VS consultation and review.
- A variation to [LNCT/11/01](#) to allow the use of fixed term contracts for one year given that schools have not had time to plan for these changes.
- An updated VS Guidelines.

Yours sincerely

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## **Staff Guidance Session 2014 -15 following the outcome of the VS consultation and review.**

This session will be one of transition for the service. Although all staff will continue to deliver their specialism there will be a few changes to the way annual timetables are created and also to expectations regarding deployment in schools. All of the changes are necessary to ensure that staff are fully engaging with curriculum.

### **Recruitment**

As posts become vacant clusters will be asked to identify schools where the vacant post can be located and the vacancy will be advertised as a Primary Teacher. Specialists will then be deployed to the remaining schools.

## **Timetabling Principles 2014 – 15**

### **Network Coordinators**

<b>Allocation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This will continue to be on the basis for NCCT FTE requirements for establishments</li><li>• Schools should be asked to take account of the interests and skills of their core staff when requesting specialists.</li><li>• Network Coordinators should not create timetables which allocate all specialists to their own establishments.</li></ul>
<b>Deployment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where there are two specialists of the same discipline in a network they should be deployed to different schools.</li><li>• Where possible facilitate staff engagement with all aspects of the curriculum; specialists should not be allocated to one class for the whole year.</li></ul>
<b>Travel</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This should be kept to a minimum consistent with the above. There should continue to be the premise that specialist are allocated to the minimum number of schools to meet network need.</li><li>• Where possible allocation to a school should be for a whole day. There should be a maximum of two schools per day.</li><li>• In large networks coordinators should consider creating two halves and allocating accordingly.</li></ul>
<b>Collaborative Working</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggested approaches cluster based sessions built into the working Time Agreement and also the use of In-service days for engagement with curriculum development. Previous models of delivery have included a workshop based approach with staff opting in to sessions which they feel meet their development needs.</li></ul>

## Head teachers

<b>Specialist Allocation</b>
When requesting specialism Head teachers should consider the skill base of their core staff. If there are existing staff members with the ability to deliver any of the specialist areas in school opportunity should be given for this to be experienced.
<b>Deployment</b>
To facilitate engagement with all aspects of the curriculum head teachers are encouraged to consider the way they deploy the specialists in their school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specialists should no longer be assigned to a single class for a whole year.</li><li>• Consideration should be given as to whether the specialism is more suited to early, middle or lower stages.</li><li>• Secondary registered staff should not be used to deliver anything other than their registered subject.</li></ul>
<b>Collaborative Working</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visiting Specialist Teachers and Class teachers should liaise closely together so that information about progress is clear and transitions are effective.</li><li>• If there are core staff with an interest in a particular discipline, Head teachers are requested to encourage discussion and liaison with any allocated specialist to facilitate development.</li></ul>

## Visiting Specialist Teachers

<b>Deployment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There will be rotation around a fixed number of schools within the network over the course of the year.</li><li>• Within an individual school there should be a range of classes, not necessarily the same classes for the whole year.</li></ul>
<b>Collaborative working</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will be expected to liaise closely with class teachers with regard to progression when you are not working with their class. This will involve sharing information on progress of individuals, engagement with Es &amp; Os and may include suggestions for next steps.</li><li>• Sharing practice with class teachers should be a part of the collegiate programme for the year, with both class teachers and specialists providing examples of ideas and approaches.</li><li>• There should be no expectation that specialists will provide programmes or work or resources for staff to follow. The collaboration is more about the sharing of approaches and where to find support materials or resources.</li></ul>

**Recruitment to Visiting Specialist posts.**

Following the outcome of the VS consultation it was agreed by DMT that from now on Visiting Specialist recruitment to permanent posts would be for primary teachers only.

For some clusters with existing vacancies the impact of this change would be immediate. It has been highlighted by a number of schools that the time to prepare for this will be limited. The concerns raised centre on the PE, MUSIC and MLPS curriculum areas.

Given that session 2014-15 will be a period of transition for the VS service and schools and in response to concerns raised, it is proposed to seek to recruit specialist teachers for a fixed term of one year at the request of clusters.

Should applicants be primary registered they will be able to be offered a permanent contract and will be made aware that at the end of the year they may be transferred meeting cluster needs and within existing policies.

Secondary registered applicants will be made aware that should capacity exist in their subject area then they will be able to be transferred. If such capacity does not exist the contract will be terminated at the end of the year.

It is proposed that this arrangement be strictly limited to one year to assist schools in the period of transition. A further paper and update regarding this matter will be brought to LNCT in April 2015.

**GUIDELINES FOR  
VISITING SPECIALIST  
TEACHERS**

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## **1. WORKING PRACTICES**

### **1.1 Base School**

The network Coordinator will allocate each Visiting Specialist a base school within their CSN which should reflect where they spend the majority of their time. This is referred to for the purposes of calculating travel and subsistence. The administrative base, for the purposes of attending meetings and handing in forms, would be where the Network Co-ordinator is located.

A base(s) for the storage of specialist specific resources and an access point for information, mail and e-mail will be arranged by the network coordinator(s) within the CSN(s).

[LNCT/14/11](#) Excess Teaching Staff – Transfers policy is applicable to all unpromoted teachers.

### **1.2 Class Contact**

All full time Visiting Specialists are class committed for up to 22 ½ hours per week, or pro-rata for part-time staff. Travelling time within the school day will be counted as class contact time.

Class time with any class should be no less than 45 minutes and 4-6 classes only may be timetabled each day to ensure best practice.

### **1.3 Collegiate Time**

The weekly 5 hours collegiate time will be allocated in agreement with the visiting specialists and their network coordinator in the agreed negotiating forum and, for planning purposes only, may be aggregated into a total of 190 hours of collegiate time.

Requests from individual schools for collegiate time with Visiting Specialists will be sent to the network coordinator to be agreed with the Specialists and

allocated in accordance with [LNCT/14/06](#) Guidelines on Working Time and Collegiate Activities.

#### **1.4 Council Policies**

Visiting Specialists will have access to appropriate council policies and staff circulars from their Base school or Network Co-ordinator. They can also access HR policies online via [Arcadialite](#) and LNCT Agreements can be accessed via [LNCT/00/00](#) Index of agreements

#### **1.5 Guidelines on Behaviour Support & Pupil Information**

Visiting Specialists should be provided with a copy of schools' behaviour policy and adhere to such. They must also liaise with the head teacher or nominated depute head teacher and/or the classroom teacher on all aspects of pupil behaviour.

Where a member of support staff is scheduled for a pupil or group of pupils, they should accompany the class during Visiting Specialist input.

Visiting Specialists should be provided with any relevant medical/pupil information along with class lists.

#### **1.6 Health and Safety**

Visiting Specialists should work in accordance with the health and safety policy of their school, and should have access to the written policy. They should be provided with any relevant Risk Assessments.

They should also be provided with the authority ICT Policy.

#### **1.7 Induction and Training**

Arrangements will be made for the induction of newly appointed Visiting Specialists by the VS Manager. This will include 1/2 day to job shadow an existing Visiting Specialist. An on-going programme of support and staff development will be planned on school in-service closure days throughout the session.

Full-time staff are expected to attend 5 days in-service. Teachers employed on a part-time basis have a pro-rata entitlement to 5 days in-service. When this involves working days in addition to the pro-rata portion of 195 days, these

days will be undertaken with pay. See LNCT 14/06 for detailed Working Time Agreement.

These additional days will be subject to agreement between the network coordinator and the Visiting Specialist.

### **1.8 Leave of Absence – Special Leave**

All requests by Visiting Specialists for special leave must be made through their network coordinator, giving as much notice as possible. Paid leave (LvAp1) and unpaid leave (LvAp2) forms are available in all schools.

### **1.9 Mileage**

Visiting Specialists will be entitled to claim mileage from their base school, but where an employee travels from home to a place other than their base school, then the amount claimed should be the **lesser** of a) the distance actually travelled or b) the distance which will have been travelled if the employee had started their journey at their base school.

See [LNCT/14/05](#) for detail.

The Network Co-ordinator will provide a mileage ready reckoner reflecting distances between schools.

### **1.10 Occasional Days and Public Holidays**

Visiting Specialists will take the occasional days chosen by their base school. Part-time Visiting Specialist Teachers are entitled to occasional days and public holidays on a pro-rata basis. All staff should agree at the beginning of the session with the Network Co-ordinator, when they will take occasional days so that schools can be notified.

The teachers' working year is expressed solely as 195 days, but the occurrence of public holidays and occasional days impacts on the working year of part time teachers. Where the working pattern is such that a part time teacher would be unable to take public holidays and occasional days then other arrangements should be made to enable the teacher to take this leave. Likewise, if the working pattern would result in a part time teacher receiving more public holidays and occasional days than they are entitled to then arrangements would need to be made to ensure that the leave was appropriately adjusted.

Part time teachers are required to work their pro rata share of 195 days.

### **1.11 Planning and Preparation**

The Visiting Specialist will be required to undertake forward planning on an individual basis as part of the Working Time and Collegiate Activities Agreement. This should be done in consultation with class teachers and submitted by the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> week of term.

Planning templates for each subject team are available from the Manager of Visiting Specialist staff.

### **1.12 Professional Development and Professional Update**

Reviews for Visiting Specialists will be undertaken by the network coordinator in line with Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services policy and copies of the reviews will be sent to the VS Manager who holds the budget for CPD.

### **1.13 Sick Leave**

In the event of illness or any other absence, the Visiting Specialist or their representative must notify the network coordinator concerned as soon as practicable. The network coordinator will make arrangements to advise other schools timetabled for that day.

For an absence of 4-7 days a self certification form (S/69) must be completed and submitted to the network coordinator on return to work. For absences exceeding 7 days, a doctor's sick note is required (on 8<sup>th</sup> calendar day) and should be sent to the network coordinator with the self-certification form to cover the first 7 days of absence.

### **1.14 Lunch Break and Travel Time**

Visiting Specialists have an entitlement to a minimum of 40 minutes lunch break. During this time, they should not be driving and under no circumstances should lunch be taken whilst driving to the next school.

Travelling time will be taken from either the morning or afternoon session by agreement with the network coordinator and head teachers to fit in with school timetables.

However, there may be occasions when a Visiting Specialist will have to travel between schools throughout the school day and travelling time will be taken from either school by agreement with the network coordinator and head teachers to fit in with school timetables.

Travelling time allocations are as follows:

Up to 5 miles – 10 minutes

6-10 miles – 15 minutes

11-15 miles – 20 minutes

Only in exceptional circumstances will visiting specialists be asked to travel in excess of 15 miles at lunchtime and appropriate time would be given.

### **1.15 The Working Week**

The working week is 35 hours which comprises of a maximum of 22.5 hours class contact time and each full time teacher will have a minimum of 7.5 hours personal allowance for preparation and correction and a further 5 hours for collegiate activities. The 2.5 hours non class contact time will be timetabled in blocks of not less than 45 minutes. There should be no aggregation of working hours over a period longer than a week. The weekly 5 hours collegiate time may however be aggregated over the school session for planning purposes only.

### **1.16 Travel and Subsistence**

All Visiting Specialist staff are allocated a base school from which mileage, when travelling on authority business, will be calculated. Travel expenses and subsistence incurred through normal timetabled duties are claimed on form TRAV 01 (lilac). A list of dates is given for submission on TRAV 01. The Network Co-ordinator will be able to provide a mileage ready reckoner for the network. These forms must be completed and submitted timeously month by month to the network coordinator.

Travel forms must be accompanied by a VAT fuel receipt. The receipt must pre-date the travel and be of sufficient value to cover the journey undertaken.

**Travel costs for in-service travel are claimed on form GF58 (orange) and are sent to the VS Manager.**

## **2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1 Roles and Responsibilities of the Visiting Specialist Teacher**

Deliver a quality education to pupils in accordance with national curricular guidelines and council policies and guidelines.

- to teach assigned classes/groups of pupils;
- to plan, prepare, assess and record appropriate activities for all pupils within the schools' policies and procedures;

- to report and discuss pupils' progress with teachers, parents and any other bodies;
- to maintain good order and discipline among pupils and to safeguard their health and safety;
- to advise and guide pupils on issues relating to their education;

Contribute to the professional and corporate life of the school(s)

- to contribute to the development of the school curriculum;
- to participate in the professional development and review scheme and undertake appropriate continuing professional development;
- to contribute to the professional development of colleagues, including probationary and student teachers;
- to participate in the administration and organisation of the school, as appropriate;
- to accept a commitment to the corporate life of the school in relation to pupils, parents and staff – teaching and non-teaching;
- to cooperate with promoted and non-promoted staff and with any other relevant bodies;
- to become familiar with and implement operational and curriculum matters.

Operate within Aberdeenshire Council's framework for Quality Assurance and Development;

- to participate in the self evaluation of the school and service through use of "How Good is Our School?" and "The Child at the Centre";
- to contribute to the establishment of priorities for the Improvement Plan and thereafter the Action Plans, as appropriate;
- to contribute to the evaluation of agreed specified targets;
- to contribute to the identification, organisation and management of resources.

## **2.2 Roles and Responsibilities of the Class Teacher**

- The class teacher will liaise with the Visiting Specialist regarding the needs of specific individual pupils.
- Effective use of both teachers' and pupils' time must be ensured, and good use made of opportunities to plan collaboratively as agreed within the Working Time and Collegiate Activities Guidelines.
- The class teacher will liaise with the Visiting Specialist on planning, delivery, assessment, recording and reporting.

## **2.3 Roles and Responsibilities of the Head Teacher and Promoted Staff in the schools in which Visiting Specialists are deployed**

- The head teacher/promoted staff must ensure that all staff are aware of these guidelines, and are implementing these accordingly.
- The head teacher/promoted staff must ensure appropriate, effective and flexible deployment of Visiting Specialists within the parameters of the guidelines: Class time with any class should be no less than 45 minutes and 4-6 classes only may be timetabled each day.
- Head teacher should facilitate and encourage adequate and appropriate time for liaison with relevant staff to plan collaboratively as agreed within the Working Time and Collegiate Activities Guidelines.
- It is vital that the management team involve the Visiting Specialist; nurturing a sense of belonging and enabling them to feel part of the school staff team. Visiting Specialist teachers should be considered members of staff when they are in each of their schools and involvement in school activities and events
- The head teacher/promoted staff should liaise with Visiting Specialists on planning, delivery, assessment, recording and reporting, quality improvement, classroom observation and professional development needs.
- The management team should ensure the availability of necessary resources and their accessibility to the staff.
- Policy documentation should be made available to the Visiting Specialists, including health and safety and an efficient and effective communication system established for dissemination of information.
- In consultation with the Visiting Specialist Network Coordinator Head teachers should undertake appropriate Quality Assurance processes and

classroom observation ([LNCT/08/11](#)), the focus will be the priorities as outlined in the VS improvement plan.

- The head teacher will inform the VS Manager if there are work performance and potential disciplinary issues involving the Visiting Specialist.

## **2.4 Roles and Responsibilities of the Network Coordinator**

- The network coordinator will be the operational line manager of the Visiting Specialist working in CSN schools, on behalf of the VS Manager who has overall line management responsibility for the Visiting Specialist Service. Specifically the network coordinator will be responsible for:
  - timetabling across CSN schools,
  - PDRS,
  - working time arrangements,
  - resolving issues of concern referred by Visiting Specialists or head teachers where possible,
  - authorising travel and subsistence claims
  - leave of absence requests and absence management.
- The network coordinator will undertake their timetabling in consultation with schools and Visiting Specialists, addressing issues of schools indicated requirements and equitable provision.
- The network coordinator will ensure the smooth operation of the council's PDRS and CPD procedures conducting these annually with Visiting Specialists working in the CSN to identify strengths and agreed areas for CPD and forwarding all relevant information to the Manager.
- The network coordinator will inform the VS Manager regarding leave of absence requests which he/she is unable to authorise and absence management issues which cannot be resolved locally.
- The network coordinator will forward details of vacancies for Visiting Specialist posts to the VS Manager who will arrange for the vacancies to be advertised. The network coordinator will be required to participate in the recruitment process as required.
- The network coordinator will facilitate the production of the VS improvement plan for their network and the associated WTA as well as necessary meetings. The agreed priorities should also be shared with head teachers in the network to facilitate smooth running of quality assurance and classroom observation at school level. The network coordinator should establish and maintain strong communication links.

- The network coordinator is required to attend regular meetings with the Visiting Specialist Manager to facilitate good communication, joint development of practice and planning.

## **2.5 Roles and Responsibilities of the Manager of Visiting Specialists**

- The VS Manager will lead and manage the Visiting Specialist service across all 17 CSNs and be the overall line manager of the Visiting Specialists.
- The VS Manager will allocate Visiting Specialist time to CSNs and oversee the timetabling process for Visiting Specialists by network coordinators.
- The VS Manager will coordinate and arrange CPD activities and INSET for Visiting Specialist and regular meetings of network coordinators. He/she will promote links and joint ways of working with other strands of the Education, Learning and Leisure Service including Cultural Services, Sport and Recreation, and the Instrumental Music Service, and with external bodies.
- The VS Manager will provide advice and support to network coordinators and establish and maintain strong communication links with network coordinators, Visiting Specialists, head teachers and QIOs.
- The VS Manager will arrange regular meeting with all 17 network coordinators to facilitate good communication, joint development of practice and planning.
- The VS Manager is, as overall line manager of the Visiting Specialists, responsible for administering personnel policies and procedures in relation to attendance, grievance, discipline and work performance. However, in accordance with these policies and procedures, every effort should be made to resolve such matters at the lowest level possible (deployed school or network coordinator).
- The VS Manager will arrange for all vacancies for Visiting Specialist posts to be advertised, on receipt of information from network coordinators and arrange Inductions accordingly.
- The VS Manager may undertake classroom observation of Visiting Specialist in selected schools on a planned basis as part of the Visiting Specialist Service Improvement Plan.

## **3. TIMETABLING PRINCIPLES**

### **3.1 The Manager**

- The VS Manager will allocate visiting specialist FTE to networks taking account of the requirements for delivering Reduction in Class Contact Time and the breadth of visiting specialist disciplines.

### **3.2 The Network Coordinator**

- The network coordinator will consult and liaise with head teachers and Visiting Specialists and, where appropriate, the neighbouring network coordinator.
- The network coordinator will ensure an allocation of time to cover the elements of 22 ½ hours class commitment for teachers and Visiting Specialists in accordance with the agreed Guidelines of Working Time and Collegiate Activities
- The network coordinator will also be responsible for the allocation of base(s) for visiting specialists, travel and subsistence and arrange for suitable base(s) for the storage of resources and the dissemination of information to the visiting specialists.

### **3.3 The Head Teacher**

- The head teacher will allocate all class teachers 2 ½ hours non-class commitment per week and on a pro-rata basis for part-time staff. The allocation should be in blocks of no less than 45 minutes. Within the primary and nursery sector, to achieve the minimum non-contact period of 45 minutes, time may be aggregated for staff on a contract of 0.2 fte or less. This is the only occasion where time can be aggregated and only then by agreement between the teacher and head teacher. If there is no such agreement, non-contact time should be allocated on a weekly basis.
- Circular ST4/109 Statement of Collegiality and the Working Time Agreement provides further details on class contact for full and part time teachers

**June 2014**