

JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHING STAFF

Minute of virtual meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff (JNCT) held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 21 September 2021 at 2.30pm.

Present: **Representing Perth and Kinross Council**
Councillors J Duff and J Rebbeck; S Devlin, S Johnston,
M Donaghy, J Donnelly, A Lemon, and D Macluskey (all Education
and Children's Services); P Johnstone (Corporate & Democratic
Services).

Representing Teachers' Associations
S Dowling, L Gibb, LJ Grant, M Laurie, T Summers, and C Weston
(all EIS); M Mackie (SSTA) and S Topen-Cooper (NASUWT).

In Attendance: F Mackay, B Martin-Scott (all Education & Children's Services);
A McAuley, Joint Secretary (Trade Unions); C Flynn, Joint Secretary
(Management Side) and L Brown (Corporate and Democratic
Services).

Apologies: Councillor Shiers, G Doogan, M Taylor and C Rose.

Councillor J Duff, Convener, Presiding.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted and noted as above.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ELECTED MEMBERS ONLY)

There were no declarations of interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTES

The minute of meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff of 15 June 2021 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Primary Staffing Standards Update (Item 8 refers)

S Johnston reported that full implementation of the primary staffing standards will commence from August 2022. Two meetings will shortly be arranged with the Trade Unions firstly in relation to how the changes will affect Depute Head Teachers and secondly in relation to any movement within primary schools where teachers who are taking a class might have to be moved or take on a different role because Depute Head Teachers might be covering classes. A staff consultation plan is currently in development.

The Committee noted the position.

5. NATIONAL UPDATE

S Devlin provided an update on the Programme for Government (PFG) which builds on the commitments that were set out in the First Steps/100 days document which was published following the Elections held in May 2021 and which set out a raft of work to be taken forward during this parliamentary term.

Key areas of relevance to the Committee from the PFG included the investment of £1 billion to tackle the poverty related attainment gap in schools - looking at a different model of funding for all 32 local authorities, consultation on the future model still ongoing.

A number of important reviews are underway nationally which the Council will be participating in and responding to, these include the National Care Service Review and the OECD Review. In terms of the National Care Service Review which looks to establish a National Care Service by 2022 there is currently a consultation on the Review which is open until 2 November 2021. Any individual or organisation is able to make a contribution to that consultation.

School inspections will resume across Scotland from September 2021. Initially the focus will be on outstanding return inspections that were put on hold because of the pandemic. There will also be some thematic inspections undertaken between now and December 2021 where the focus will be on children and young people's health and wellbeing, approaches to outdoor learning adopted by schools and about the Covid 19 response. From January 2022 the focus on inspections will be in the 4 core Quality Indicators.

Education Scotland advised no additional paperwork will be requested; however, they do want to see any recovery plans schools and local authorities might have in place. The Education Service will be advising Education Scotland if it is felt that any planned inspection should not proceed at the expected time.

S Devlin concluded her update by expressing her sincere gratitude to everyone for their continued efforts to ensure that they keep themselves and others as safe as possible. She emphasised the need to be realistic, Covid has not gone away, history shows on average a pandemic lasts around 5 years. Staff will continue to have to work in this volatile and ever changing environment for some time therefore everyone needs to ensure they continue to do so as safely as possible.

The Committee noted the position.

6. SQA – ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL (ACM)

There was submitted a briefing paper by D Macluskey on the delivery of the Alternative Certification Model across schools in Perth and Kinross (G/21/118). He advised the structure and processes that were established to ensure effective delivery of the ACM last year remain in place, namely co-ordination and support via Subject Networks, designated time during In-service Days and Quality Assurance guidance and support from the Council's central team.

The secondary team continue to liaise with Education Scotland, SQA and Scottish Government while working with staff across schools to support the implementation and recommendations highlighted in the recent OECD report on Scottish Education's future approach to assessment and qualifications.

C Weston welcomed the positive comments in relation to staff contained in the report but sought an assurance that given the high workload involved that support is there for secondary teachers going forward. D Macluskey confirmed staff will continue to receive support going forward.

Thanks were conveyed to all teaching staff for the hard work and dedication shown to young people and learners over the course of the pandemic and in particular for their efforts in regard to assessments.

The Committee noted the terms of the report.

7. COVID-19 UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2021

There was submitted a paper by L Hamilton providing an update on Education and Children's Services Covid-19 Recovery Plan as of September 2021(G/21/119).

In response to a question on providing evidence that a PCR test has been carried out after a period of self-isolation, L Hamilton advised pupils are asked to confirm that they have had a PCR test before any return to school. The results are taken on trust as the school are unable to request hard evidence of confidential medical information. In terms of a positive result once the 10 days of isolation have passed if there are no symptoms the pupil is free to return to school. The pupil would not be asked to take any further tests at that stage.

C Weston welcomed the programme to install CO₂ monitors in schools and noted that this will be completed by the October break. In response to a request for clarification on installation in learning and teaching areas S Devlin advised that desk top modelling on air flow and ventilation had been carried out some time ago in Perth and Kinross and the spaces were deemed safe learning and teaching spaces for up to 30 pupils. The further modelling now taking place is for use by larger numbers.

In response to a further question on the cost implications should a need for additional ventilation be identified, S Devlin advised that Covid monies had already been recognised nationally. The funding received from Scottish Government had enabled the Council to undertake some of the approaches described within the COVID-19 update report. In addition to this the Council had agreed additional funding to assist with the ventilation and CO₂ monitoring strategy. It was important to note that not all schools in Perth and Kinross will require CO₂ monitors. Some of the Council's newest builds have mechanical ventilation which has been modelled and is considered to be more than appropriate. Any refurbishment work or new builds will have the most modern ventilation built in.

S Johnston added although there is guidance available to schools on monitors, colleagues in Property Services have identified a group of monitors that have

been wrongly measured in terms of their thresholds with some monitors remaining on “red “even though windows have been opened. Property services and now working to ensure these monitors are set to the correct levels.

It was noted that current national guidance on ventilation and CO₂ monitoring is predicated on the Perth and Kinross model.

The Committee note the COVID-19 update for September 2021.

8. INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE OR AGGRESSION INCIDENTS OF DISTRESSED/CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR – QUARTERLY REPORT – TERM 4 (19 APRIL – 24 JUNE 2021)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education & Children’s Services) (G/21/120) providing a summary of the information gathered in relation to incidents in schools and other educational settings which result in an emotional or physical impact on a member of staff for the period 19 April to 24 June 2021 (Term 4).

M Laurie advised the Teachers side appreciated all the work that has gone into the new reporting style and the work that the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) has undertaken. The Teachers side appreciated it will be an ongoing process and the SLWG continue. The new data presentation format is much easier to read and provides a breakdown of the data in a useful way. The actions at the end of the report are particularly welcome and very useful.

The Committee noted the quarterly report for the period 19 April to 24 June 2021 (Term 4).

9. ANNUAL LEAVE CALENDAR 2021/2022

There was submitted for information the annual leave calendar for 2021/2022 (G/21/121).

P Johnstone advised the calendar will be subject to change as a date for the Jubilee Holiday has still to be finalised.

C Weston enquired if it was known when clarification would be received on the date of the Jubilee Holiday. In response P Johnstone advised trade unions had been consulted on this, however, only the EIS had responded by the closing date of 17 September. A report now requires to be submitted to Council and the report must include trade unions comments.

The Committee noted the position.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There were no other items of business raised for discussion.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7 December 2021.