

MINUTES OF SCOTLAND
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
2023

MINUTES OF SCOTLAND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Held on Friday 12 May and Saturday 13 May 2023

Attendance

Delegates/Observers

Aberdeen City:	Audrey Herriot; Eleanore Smith; Cleo Stephenson
Aberdeenshire:	Helen James; Nik James; Claire Stewart; Meleri Thomas
Angus:	Stuart Campbell; Faye Leydecker; Victoria Robb
Argyll & Bute:	James Wire
Dumfries & Galloway:	Lawrence Etiba
Dundee:	Laura Cation; Shirley McGregor; Chelsea Pearson; Kirstie Raeburn
East Ayrshire:	David Anderson
Edinburgh:	Nahid Aslam; Andrew Douglas; Andrew Jardine; Ruth Lamont; Dougie Reid; Kat Lord Watson
Fife:	Bernadette Easton; Afifa Khanam; Mike Matuszak; Morag MacDougall; John Melville; Caroline Mitchell; Iain Mitchell; Stuart Spence
Glasgow:	Dougie Allison; Stuart Baird; Neil Farmer; Nicola Hassard; Linda McCann; Rod McCready; William Reynolds
Highlands & Islands:	Niall MacKinnon; Derrick Roberts
North Ayrshire:	Hazel Gardiner
North Lanarkshire:	Simon Kirkwood
Perth and Kinross:	Shaun Cooper
Renfrewshire:	Lorraine McDermott; Allan Newton
Scottish Borders:	Nicholas Allen; Lorraine Sinclair
South Lanarkshire:	Shakil Ahmed; Maureen Kennedy; Petra McAleenan; Sarah Walker

RMA

Bill Matthew

Officers

General Secretary:	Patrick Roach
Deputy General Secretary:	Jane Peckham
SEC President:	Helen Auld
SEC Vice President:	Linda Gibson
SEC Treasurer:	Carol Wood
NEM:	Eddie Carroll
NEM:	Scott McGimpsey

Staff

National Official:	Mike Corbett
Policy Official:	Tara Lillis
Policy Casework Official:	Darren Waplington
Casework Official:	Claire McInnes
Organiser:	Lewis Akers
Events Officer:	Laura Imrie
Admin & Clerical:	Ruth Anderson
Admin & Clerical:	Alison Rae
Press & Media Officer:	Lena Davies
National Official, Campaigns and Communication:	Chris Weavers

FIRST PRIVATE SESSION

Friday 12 May 2022

13:00 to 13:30

OPENING

Helen Auld (SEC Past President) opened the first private session by welcoming delegates and observers and inducted the SEC President.

SEC PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The President, Linda Gibson, delivered her presidential address.

FIRST PUBLIC SESSION

Friday 12 May 2022

13:30 to 14:30

GUEST SPEAKER

Ken Muir, Honorary Professor, University of the West of Scotland, addressed Conference delegates

APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS

Eleanore Smith was appointed as scrutineer.

ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

David Anderson adopted standing orders.

14:30 to 16:15

DEBATE OF MOTIONS

EMERGENCY MOTION

Support Members at Hutchesons' Grammar School and Stop Fire and Rehire

Eddie Carroll proposed,

Scott McGimpsey seconded:

Conference condemns the management of Hutchesons' Grammar School in seeking to eject staff from their membership of the Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme (STPS), which gives them a defined benefit pension like other teachers in Scotland, and forcing them into an inferior defined contribution scheme.

Conference further condemns the use of fire and rehire tactics to compel staff into accepting the inferior pension scheme. Conference calls on NASUWT to:

- continue to support our members in their dispute at the school, up to and including industrial action;
- robustly challenge any other independent school in Scotland which makes similar attempts to force our members out of the STPS;
- campaign to outlaw the use of fire and rehire, including lobbying politicians of all parties.

The motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Work-related Violence and Risk Assessments

Rod McCready proposed,

Carol Wood seconded:

Conference believes a risk assessment should:

- (i) identify hazards;
- (ii) assess the risks;
- (iii) control the risks;
- (iv) record the findings; and
- (v) review the controls.

Conference condemns:

- (a) the culture in some schools that routinely produces risk assessments, after a work-related violence incident, that do nothing to mitigate the risk of the work-related violence occurring again;
- (b) the fact that all too frequently in the education sector the risks and effects of work-related violence are underestimated and the controls put in place inadequate to stop repetition.

Conference calls upon the Scotland Executive Council to:

1. produce and regularly publicise guidance on risk assessments for members;
2. collect evidence of inadequate controls put in place from members;
3. lobby COSLA and the Scottish Government to take work-related violence in education seriously and act accordingly

The motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Behaviour

Rod McCready proposed,
Eddie Carroll seconded:

Conference believes 'work-related violence' is a significant challenge and is concerned it has become normalised as part of teaching.

Conference is deeply concerned that the health of teachers in schools is being put at risk by pupil indiscipline; firstly by the stress induced, and secondly by the increased risk of more serious incidents through tolerating this indiscipline.

Conference believes that the education and wellbeing of young people in schools is also being compromised through tolerating this indiscipline and violence.

Conference confirms that it is vital that action on behaviour is taken which will benefit pupils, the school and college workforce and local communities.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

- i. lobby government to produce clear national behaviour guidelines which ensure minimum standards are applicable across all educational establishments and providers; and, further, ensure that nurture principles are not used as a methodology to cover up abusive behaviour or indiscipline, or to reduce publicly published exclusion figures;
- ii. continue to seek 'Refusal to Teach' ballots in cases where the school or local authority is not addressing 'workplace violence' by pupils;
- iii. support schools to take effective action to ensure staff safety and wellbeing by providing training for NASUWT Representatives on drafting behaviour policies and undertaking behaviour risk assessments;
- iv. survey members on behaviour and the impact in their schools and classrooms, capturing any disparity between policy and practice;
- v. campaign to ensure sufficient resources are given to schools to meet the needs of young people;
- vi. seek to publicly debunk the blame narrative which pervades many restorative behaviour policies; and
- vii. promote to members, representatives, government and employers the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related violence and associated guidance.

Amendment

Shaun Toppen Cooper proposed,
Carol Wood seconded:

Amendment

Insert at the end of bullet point vii 'and comply with the requirements of health and safety of pupils and colleagues, i.e, SCRISP, CERTS and risk assessments to ensure finance of resources is never a barrier'.

The amendment was:

CARRIED

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Whole-school Approach to Health and Wellbeing

Linda McCann proposed,

Scott McGimpsey seconded:

Conference notes the need for pupil-voice input into whole-school health and wellbeing assessments which link to wider health and safety issues in schools. Many schools are conducting surveys to establish how safe pupils feel in school and to enable fast remedial action: a profile in use in Glasgow City Council is the Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Plan (GMWP). This is used by both nurture groups and whole schools to gather responses on pupil agency, affiliation, autonomy and safety. It identifies needs and suggests activities at class and school level to improve those needs.

Conference further notes that there may be links between how safe pupils will feel in school and the level of violent or disruptive behaviour.

Conference calls upon the Scotland Executive Council to:

- i. raise awareness of the GMWP across Local Associations;
- ii. provide guidance to NASUWT Representatives on how to respond appropriately when local authorities conduct surveys into pupil safety in schools;
- iii. campaign to ensure schools do not ignore teacher health and wellbeing needs and consider the interconnection between the wellbeing of children and young people, the school environment and teaching-workforce wellbeing as part of a whole-school approach.

This motion was:

CARRIED

Workplace Protections for Teachers

Eddie Carroll proposed,

Derek Roberts seconded:

Conference notes:

- (i) with concern and great sadness the recent case of a fellow teacher in the Borders who, while suspended from school and awaiting trial for an alleged assault on a pupil, died by suicide;
- (ii) the ever-present risk of allegations from pupils or groups of pupils which could result in suspension from work while under investigation and criminal charges for our members.

Conference recognises that any teacher in Scotland carrying out their everyday duties could be subjected to suspension and possible criminalisation while implementing school, local authority or national policies.

Conference mandates the Scotland Executive Council to:

- consult with members regarding the situation in schools to gather evidence of such cases;
- liaise with local authorities as employers to ascertain the frequency of cases where teachers are suspended from work due to allegations from pupils or have criminal charges raised against them;
- lobby the Scottish Government to produce guidance for employers around ensuring that our members are not put into potentially vulnerable positions in schools by employers;
- highlight these issues with the Scottish Government and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills;
- issue advice to members on the dangers of potentially damaging interactions with pupils which could lead to career-threatening incidents or criminal proceedings and how to avoid such situations in schools.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

FIRST PRIVATE SESSION

Friday 12 May 2022

16:00 to 17:00

MINUTES OF SCOTLAND CONFERENCE 2022

Eddie Carrrol, NEM, proposed, and Scott McGimpsey, NEM, seconded the minutes as being a true record.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carol Wood proposed, and Sarah Walker seconded, the financial report as a true record.

ANNUAL REPORT

Scott McGimpsey proposed, and Eddie Carroll seconded, the annual report as being accurate.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carol Wood proposed, and Scott McGimpsey seconded, the financial report as a true record.

SEC VICE-PRESIDENT/TREASURER

Carol Wood was confirmed as Treasurer and Sarah Walker SEC Vice-President.

ANNUAL REPORT

Scott McGimpsey proposed, and Eddie Carroll seconded, the annual report as being accurate.

SECOND PUBLIC SESSION

Saturday 13 May 2023

09:00 to 10:30

GENERAL SECRETARY'S ADDRESS

Jane Peckham, Deputy General Secretary, addressed Conference delegates.

CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS' ADDRESS

Jenny Gilruth, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, addressed Conference delegates.

DEBATE OF MOTIONS

10:15 to 12:30

Proposed Qualification and Assessment Model and Workload

Stuart Baird proposed,
Nicola Hassard seconded:

Conference is aware of the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment, led by Professor Louise Hayward.

Conference is deeply concerned by the increased workload implications in the proposed qualification and assessment model, as described after the completion of Phase 2 of the review.

Conference calls upon the Scotland Executive Council to:

- (i) condemn any move to increase teacher workload within the Review;
- (ii) demand that evidence required for any new qualification is prepared by the examination body and externally marked;
- (iii) ensure that the workload demands from existing qualifications is collated and used as a benchmark to compare the impact of future changes

This motion was:

CARRIED

Educating Refugee and Asylum-seeker Children and Young People

Nahid Aslam proposed,
Linda McCann seconded:

Conference notes the enormous effort that teachers and schools put into supporting refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people.

Conference is concerned with the lack of funding and proper training available to fully meet the needs of these pupils and students.

Conference commends the Maryhill Integration Network (MIN) 'Migration Education Resource' and commits to:

- (i) circulate this resource to all members; and
- (ii) explore further opportunities to work collaboratively with MIN in the future.

Conference believes greater support should be available for asylum-seeking and migrant students.

Conference pledges its support for the 'Our Grades Not Visas' campaign, founded by Ahmed Alhindi, with support from MIN and JustRight Scotland.

Conference agrees to:

- (i) promote the campaign website to members;
- (ii) support the recommendations for research and campaigning which Scottish Government set out in the March 2023 Survey Report 'Supporting access to education for asylum-seeking and migrant students'.

Conference calls for the Scotland Executive Council to lobby governments for:

- (i) fully funded training and specific teaching resources to support staff to meet the needs of refugee and asylum-seeker children and young people;

(ii) a fully funded package of educational wellbeing support for refugees and asylum seekers.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Class Contact Time Reduction

William Reynolds proposed,

Andrew Jardine seconded:

Conference considers that the SNP manifesto commitment on reducing class contact time for teachers should be instituted without further delay.

Conference mandates Scotland Executive Council to reaffirm in the strongest terms at SNCT the position that any time freed as a result of class contact reduction should be used at a teacher's discretion and allocated for 'preparation and correction'.

Amendment

Shaun Cooper proposed,

Petra Macaleenan seconded:

Amendment

Insert at the end 'at a location of their choosing'.

The amendment was:

CARRIED

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Women in the Trade Union Movement

Sarah walker proposed,

Linda Gibson seconded:

Conference notes that:

- (1) three-quarters of NASUWT's membership is made up of women but the Union is still striving to achieve full representation of women throughout its structures;
- (2) there is a need to grow women's trade union activism by securing ways to enhance women's union knowledge and skills;
- (3) a particular focus on trade union conference skills would bolster women's confidence in a range of areas including speech writing, public speaking, union and conference terminology, and constructing and delivering motions.

Conference further notes that developing crucial trade union skills will:

- (i) increase the participants' knowledge and understanding of trade union and conference structures and conference proceedings;
- (ii) encourage women to become active and stay active in their union and participate in union structures as well as internal and external conferences.

Conference mandates the Scotland Executive Council to provide a training event which will:

- (i) bring together a diverse group of women from across the Union to provide bespoke training, skill sharing, networking and women's empowerment within NASUWT;
- (ii) allow participation in a mock Women's Conference;
- (iii) provide targeted training to develop confidence with public speaking and speech writing/delivery skills;
- (iv) give support to develop confidence and skills with constructing, composing, amending and debating motions.

Conference further calls on the Scotland Executive Council to ensure:

- (a) all participants in the training will be supported by an experienced trade union mentor or supporter;
- (b) all participants receive a sufficient allocation of time that is meaningful and suggests that a day-and-a-half model is adopted during 2023/24 with a review thereafter, which will include the feedback of women participants, with a view to implement such training as an annual event.

This motion was:

CARRIED

Recruitment and Retention

Nicola Hassard proposed,
Bernadette Easton seconded:

Conference is concerned that we have a recruitment and retention crisis in teaching. Conference notes:

- (i) many schools have vacant posts that cannot be filled and encouraging new teachers into teaching, on its own, would fall significantly short of addressing endemic recruitment and retention problems;
- (ii) momentum has been lost following the Independent Panel on Career Pathways for Teachers report.

Conference believes:

- (a) the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Career Pathways for Teachers report would have gone some way to support the retention of teachers, had they been properly implemented;
- (b) opportunities should be created that enable career progression both incrementally and laterally for all teachers.

Conference affirms the need for a Better Deal for Teachers which addresses both workload and wellbeing. Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to campaign for a national strategic plan, informed by accurate data, which will:

- (i) provide security for the many Newly Qualified Teachers who have been unable to achieve permanency;
- (ii) support areas, many rural, who struggle to fill vacancies or attract supply teachers.

Conference further calls on the Scotland Executive Council to raise with employers, government and the SNCT:

- (i) concerns that without allocated funding the posts of Lead Teachers will not be embedded within the system;
- (ii) that the recommendations within the 2019 report are formally reviewed every four years to assess impact and to redirect national focus given the original suggestion that all recommendations from the Career Panel Pathways report were to be implemented by August 2021.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Time to Teach Qualification Courses

Stuart Baird proposed,
Nicola Hassard seconded:

This Conference recognises that National Qualification courses require sufficient timetabled time to be effectively delivered to pupils. A notional time for these courses is recorded in course specifications or can be determined via the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

1. lobby COSLA and local authorities to ensure the integrity of our National Qualification courses by allocating sufficient timetabled time to each course;
2. collect evidence to establish the time given to teach National Qualifications courses across local authorities and schools.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Women's Health: Endometriosis

Hazel Gardiner proposed,

Scott McGimpsey seconded:

Conference notes that women make up the majority of working-age people and that they play an essential and positive role in the workplace. Conference deplores the fact that women's health issues continue to be downplayed and even dismissed by many employers.

Conference recognises the importance of raising awareness of endometriosis with employers and government and challenging discrimination.

Conference mandates the Scotland Executive Council to host a Women's Health Conference which would focus on endometriosis, bringing awareness of the impact of this chronic condition on the individual, family, friends and colleagues and the wider community including the workplace.

Conference further mandates the Scotland Executive Council to include within the Women's Health Conference:

- (i) exploration of collaborative dynamic best practice and current thinking on endometriosis treatment pathways from across the world, e.g. India, Bucharest, the USA, Switzerland and New Zealand;
- (ii) the need for research funding to uncover the root cause of this debilitating condition;
- (iii) calls for access to high-quality and experienced medical professionals and centres in order to ensure equality of service in areas of rural isolation.

Conference further calls for support to be provided to Local Association Secretaries and Workplace Representatives to negotiate policies on women's health, including menstruation, menopause and endometriosis, which will: educate managers; raise workforce awareness and understanding; enable women to ask for reasonable adjustments; and ensure employers make accommodations.

Conference believes the Scotland Executive Council must build a legacy to organise around Women's Health and calls for the role of Women's Health Champion to be created within NASUWT and an evidence base of key issues to be collated via a health survey to support engagement and campaigning thereafter with employers, councillors and MSPs.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Improving Diversity across the Secondary School Curriculum

David Anderson proposed,

Nahid Aslam seconded:

Conference notes that:

- (i) many young people have their options limited by society's expectations and preconceptions, and are told from an early age that certain subjects are not for them;
- (ii) many individual teachers battle to address the injustices experienced by large numbers of young people living with the violence of racism, sexism, classism, ableism and anti-LGBT+ sentiment, from which no school is immune;
- (iii) having a diverse range of viewpoints is crucial for economic progress and productive teamwork;
- (iv) decades of research shows that whole-school approaches are needed to ensure that everyone – from students, educators, parents and other stakeholders – shapes and takes responsibility for an inclusive environment: this should be instilled in every setting, from nursery to further and higher education.

Conference urges the Scotland Executive Council to engage with the Scottish Government Education, Children and Young People Committee; COSLA; Education Scotland; and local authorities to ensure that all schools, leaders and teachers are able, and fully supported, to address the prejudices limiting opportunities and access to a full range of subjects for many learners.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Inspiring and Raising Aspirations of LGBT+ Students in our Schools

Conference recognises the positive step Scotland took when it passed the LGBT Inclusive Education Bill in 2018.

Conference is disappointed to note that many LGBT+ students still go through school experiencing little or no LGBT+ inclusive education: there are often no spaces in schools where students can discuss, question or explore their own feelings about sexuality and gender or see themselves in the curriculum.

Conference is appalled by the current moral panic which has meant LGBT educators or their allies have found it very difficult to promote LGBT+ inclusive education over fear of backlash, while creative initiatives like Drag Queen Story Time have come under attack from the far right, with some schools not even allowing LGBT+ authors into schools.

Conference notes that since the abolition of Section 28 some schools have developed good practice in developing an LGBT+ curriculum and created LGBT+ student spaces/lunch clubs. Conference is concerned that these groups often exist in isolation from each other or are challenged.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

- (i) positively encourage all schools to be a safe and secure learning space for all;
- (ii) publicly challenge homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in schools;
- (iii) promote the educational, equality, health and wellbeing, and social justice impacts of initiatives like Drag Queen Story Time and inviting LGBT+ authors into schools;
- (iv) campaign to ensure school leaders are trained to tackle the ongoing culture of moral panic confidently in regards to relationship education and trans inclusion.

Conference further commits the Scotland Executive Council to provide support for teachers in challenging the dominant heteronormative culture and curriculum.

This motion:

FELL

Long COVID

Shaun Cooper proposed,
Marie Sparrow seconded:

Conference notes that:

- (i) more than one million people in the UK are now living with Long COVID, with teachers and education support staff one of the most likely professions to be affected;
- (ii) some employers fail to recognise this condition or support school staff with the necessary reasonable adjustments they require;
- (iii) some employers are now deploying draconian absence-management procedures when school staff with severe debilitating symptoms are seeking time off;
- (iv) the financial and economic precarity many teachers are experiencing from moving to reduced or no salary as a result of being absent from work; and
- (v) for those teachers living in rural settings, the change in financial circumstances, compounded often by a lack of access to local medical services, can result in a substantial negative impact on mental wellbeing. Conference reaffirms its commitment to campaign for Long COVID to be legally recognised as a disability under the Equality Act and for improved access to ill-health pension provisions.

Conference also calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

- (i) continue to fight for the rights of all those affected by Long COVID;
- (ii) hold employers and the Scottish Government to account on their duties to eliminate disability discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for all workers;
- (iii) promote absence-management procedures which support the implementation of reasonable adjustments, promote flexible working for those living with Long COVID and recognise the importance of supporting and retaining teachers impacted by Long COVID;
- (iv) campaign for financial compensation for teachers who have contracted Long COVID as a direct result of their work;

- (v) seek to address the current inadequacy of the Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme (STPS) in responding to cases of teachers who are unable to continue working because of Long COVID; and
- (vi) campaign in support of the proposed Scottish Industrial Injuries Council Bill, ensuring Long COVID will be included as part of this proposed Bill as an industrial workplace injury.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Asbestos

Carol Wood proposed,
Linda Gibson seconded:

Conference notes that a recent Freedom of Information request by the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party uncovered the fact that more than 1,700 schools in Scotland have asbestos on their premises. Conference believes the danger to health posed by asbestos is well documented and significant, and calls for the Scotland Executive Council to campaign against asbestos in schools via:

- (i) engagement with MSPs and the Scottish Parliament, including the Cross-Party Group on Lung Health;
- (ii) collaborative working with other trade union colleagues and instituting an Asbestos in Schools Steering Group. Conference further mandates the Scotland Executive Council to request a Condition Data Collection (CDC) survey to accurately identify the extent of asbestos in the schools estate, the condition it is in, and the extent to which schools are complying with the Asbestos Management Regulations.

Conference also calls on the Scotland Executive Council to campaign for all asbestos registers to be kept up to date and for regular inspections to be on an annual basis, rather than every three years, as well as to provide an 'Asbestos at Work' workshop for all Local Secretaries and Health and Safety Representatives.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

THIRD PUBLIC SESSION
SATURDAY 13 May 2022
13:15 to 13:45

ADDRESS BY WALES & NI PRESIDENTS

The Wales and NI Presidents addressed conference.
NATIONAL OFFICIAL REPORT
Mike Corbett, National Official, presented the report.

DEBATE OF MOTIONS
14:00 to 16:00

Management Time

Neil farmer proposed,
William Reynolds seconded:

Conference believes that adequate management time is needed for the health and wellbeing of promoted members, as well as the staff under their guidance. The current method of local authorities or even individual schools allocating management time is failing all teachers.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to negotiate via SNCT a national entitlement to management time, recognising that promoted staff should be entitled to a formal reduction in maximum class contact time.

This motion was:

CARRIED

School Buildings

Eddie Carroll proposed,
Scott McGimpsey seconded:

Conference notes that the Department for Education raised the risk of some school buildings in England collapsing from 'critical' to 'critical - very likely'. Conference believes it is likely that similar issues exist in Scotland, predominantly in those buildings built in the years 1945 to 1970 which used 'system-built' light-frame techniques. Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to lobby local authorities and Scottish Government to ensure full surveys are commissioned of their system-built schools to ascertain the condition of the buildings. Conference further calls on the Scotland Executive Council to provide support for Local Secretaries and Workplace Representatives so they can ensure:

- (i) appropriate systems are put in place to ensure the condition of buildings is monitored and issues are addressed; and
- (ii) appropriate procedures are in place for staff to report building issues to management

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Attacking the Education System

Neil farmer proposed,
Carol Wood seconded:

Conference asserts that teaching assistants, support workers, technicians and auxiliaries are the backbone of our education system as they help teachers to teach and they support those pupils most in need.

Conference is concerned that local authorities, under pressure to cut costs, are viewing reductions in support staff as a quick way to balance the books.

Conference offers solidarity to the unions representing support workers, recognising the critical role they play in supporting children in classrooms, in libraries and across the school estate, in particular providing specialist support to young people with Additional Support Needs and working collaboratively with the education workforce to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to strengthen links with other STUC affiliate unions who represent these workers and to support their local and national campaign activities.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Slavery, Redress and Education

Nahid Aslam proposed,
David Anderson seconded:

Conference believes that, given the continuing impacts of social and economic injustice, racism and discrimination, schools must be deliberate in their approach to tackling inequality and advancing equality for those who suffer disadvantage, including through the curriculum.

Conference therefore reaffirms its commitment to the decolonisation of the curriculum. Conference believes that to be impactful this must take place in tandem with national commitments to secure redress and reparation.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to accelerate a national discussion about the implications of Scotland's involvement in slavery which should address how Scotland's past is represented in our curriculum, streetscapes and museums.

Conference further calls on the Scottish Government to take into account the long-term implications of that past and how its legacy remains a shackle on the lives of working-class and marginalised communities living in those nations, and those who, through sheer determinism, have fled their homeland to seek a better future in Europe, and Britain in particular.

Conference therefore supports efforts to secure redress and reparation for UK slavery and believes this must begin with being honest about Scotland's dark past of slavery and colonialism, making formal apologies for this, as well as acknowledging that we remain materially better off than countries we formally colonised. Conference acknowledges that Scotland therefore has a moral and ethical duty to support those countries by such means as cancelling outstanding economic bilateral debt and offering educational opportunities to refugees and asylum seekers coming from those lands, while supporting infrastructural development in those countries that support their natural environment rather than further degrade it.

This motion was:

CARRIED

Facility Time

Scott McGimpsey proposed,

Rod McCready seconded:

Conference reaffirms that campaigning for trade union facility time to support NASUWT lay activists in carrying out trade union duties and activities should remain an important priority for NASUWT.

Conference is concerned that there are significant variations between local authorities in terms of their facility time policies, as well as associated customs and practices.

Conference believes that a national Scottish entitlement should exist which would enable senior Scotland-wide trade union office holders to be able to access facility time from a shared financial pot, which, through agreement, all local authorities would contribute.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to engage with COSLA and local authority leaders to work to reach an agreement for facility time for national teacher trade union posts.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Assessment in the Primary Sector

Linda McCann proposed,

Sarah Walker seconded:

This Conference notes the lack of clarity in assessment procedures in primary schools from the Scottish Government, resulting in a variety of assessment tools being used across the sector.

Conference believes the implications of these for teachers are:

- i. increased bureaucratic workload as teachers try to navigate various methods of recording and analysing data;
- ii. undermining of teacher judgement caused by interference from external sources; quote: we primary teachers "are too harsh" in our judgements; and
- iii. over-reliance on commercially produced materials which take vast sums out of the public sector school system.

Conference mandates the Scotland Executive Council to:

- i. lobby the Scottish Government for clear, specific policy and procedures on assessment in the primary sector;
- ii. lobby the Scottish Government to provide assessments and annotated exemplars on appropriate literacy and numeracy assessments.

This motion was:

CARRIED

Failure of Inclusion

Claire Stewart proposed,

Carol Wood seconded:

Conference notes that:

- a) special schools in many local authorities have virtually disappeared;
- b) teachers are being assaulted in classrooms up and down the country;
- c) children with severe physical disabilities will qualify for full-time care;
- d) children with early life trauma, foetal alcohol syndrome, attachment disorder and other recognised severe neurodivergent disorders are treated as naughty children and do not qualify for full-time, specialised, targeted support;
- e) teachers with these children in their classes have a large increase in workload, both in preparation and with risk assessments and Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs);

Conference believes that:

1. inclusion has been shown not to have worked;
2. children with severe neurodivergency need to be treated as disabled;
3. the presumption of mainstream for all children is damaging the education of others;

4. instead of 'Getting It Right For Every Child', we are 'Getting It Right For Hardly Any Children';
5. children are being denied the right to an education;
6. because schools are 'firefighting', we are failing to close the attainment gap;
7. managing the behaviour in school is severely damaging the mental and physical health of the teachers in school;
8. education should be equitable across Scotland;
9. if, in one authority, a child would qualify for a special school with small class sizes, then the maximum class size in the mainstream class in other authorities should be reduced pro-rata.

Conference calls for the Scotland Executive Council to campaign for:

- i. the end of both automatic inclusion and the presumption of mainstream;
- ii. the reopening of special centres for children with severe mental health issues and neurodivergent disorders;
- iii. support teachers to teach rather than to contain;
- iv. the right of all children and adults to feel safe.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

SQA

David Anderson proposed,

Nahid Aslam seconded:

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to lobby the SQA to:

- (i) reconsider its recent decision to remove assessment modifications brought in during the pandemic, reinstating the coursework components of NQ certificate courses;
- (ii) ensure the modifications introduced for session 2020-21 remain until SQA is replaced, as recommended by the Muir report, and the system of assessment and certification is reformed after the completion of the ongoing Hayward review.

This motion was:

CARRIED

Library Provision

Helen Auld proposed,

Nahid Aslam seconded:

Conference affirms the critical role that school and public library services play in supporting children and young people's literacy and enhancing the social and cultural dimensions of their lives.

Conference notes that for the one in 11 children living in households with no books, school and public libraries provide a vital role in providing access to high-quality reading materials.

Conference is, therefore, deeply concerned by evidence of the restricted access children and young people have to school and public library services. Conference further notes the findings of research that a quarter of Scottish state primary schools do not have a dedicated library area and more than one in eight Scottish libraries have had to permanently shut their doors since 2010.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

- (i) campaign for investment to ensure that every school in Scotland has access to good-quality school library services including, where feasible, its own school library;
- (ii) set out standards of provision that every school library and school library service should meet, including on the range and diversity of texts and access to the skills and expertise of qualified librarians;
- (iii) support broader campaigns to increase funding for public library services;
- (iv) work with CILIP, local authorities and others to build an evidence base to counter arguments made regarding the impact of school library closures and to assess the provision in place across Scotland; and
- (v) promote the use of Equality Impact Assessments and Equity Impact Assessments as a vehicle for demonstrating impact among Scotland's working-class children and families.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Supply

Helen Auld proposed,
Ruth Lamont seconded:

Conference is deeply concerned about the inherent unfairness in the current supply system from the lack of job security, the availability of work and the mechanisms for securing supply posts.

Conference deplors the impact of precarious work on teachers' ability to make future plans and life decisions. Conference is deeply concerned that the current processes and systems inhibit teacher retention.

Conference agrees that supply teachers are a valuable asset and believes that urgent reform of the supply system is required which would tackle the unfair distribution of work and provide a more equitable and transparent system which is accessible to all.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to campaign for:

- (i) equal access to support systems for supply teachers, including PRD and Glow logins;
- (ii) supply teachers to be provided with the appropriate information on site to ensure their safety at work;
- (iii) a national supply register which has been equality assessed to ensure fair treatment of all supply teachers.

Conference further calls on the Scotland Executive Council to make representations to the SNCT to ensure all supply teachers receive full equivalent permanent teacher employee entitlements to pay, pensions, family leave and flexible working from the first day of their placement in a local authority school.

This motion was:

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

CLOSURE

Conference closed at 16:20, with a vote of thanks to the Chair from Derrick Roberts.