

# MOTIONS

SCOTLAND CONFERENCE 2024

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## Officers' Motions

### 1. Ventilation and Clean Air

Conference agrees that air quality remains an ongoing concern for workers both within and outwith their place of work.

Conference notes that ventilation of learning spaces in our schools has been acknowledged as a key mitigation in the prevention of transmission of SARS-Cov-2 and other airborne pathogens.

Conference further notes that providing adequate ventilation indoors, proxy measured by the concentration of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the air, and reduction of air pollutants have a positive impact on the ability of pupils to learn, reduction in levels of sickness absence, improvement of educational outcomes and reduction of costs.

Conference mandates the Scotland Executive Council to campaign to:

- i. secure air filters in every learning space, office area and common area in all schools;
- ii. maintain pressure on Public Health Scotland (PHS) and the Scottish Government to promote the use of specific concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> within schools to determine specific actions to increase ventilation;
- iii. reinforce the use of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors with employers and members via local authority Health and Safety Committees;
- iv. support the recommendation that air quality monitors are installed in Scotland's primary schools to assess levels of air pollution.

### 2. Paid Miscarriage Leave & Pay

Conference is concerned that members experiencing a miscarriage before the end of their 24th week of pregnancy are not entitled to maternity leave or pay, so any time off would be at the discretion of the employer.

Conference believes that this is both upsetting and triggering for women.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

- i. campaign for a change in the law with regards to miscarriage and have it included within maternity rights;
- ii. encourage activists to raise this at LNCTs to ensure miscarriage is exempt from local authority sickness absence policies;
- iii. inform and educate all Workplace Reps on how to tackle miscarriage and sickness absence with employers;
- iv. work collaboratively with STUC affiliates to develop a model policy and training for our Workplace Reps; and
- v. bring a motion to the SNCT Teachers' Panel to secure collective agreement to improvement of the SNCT Handbook terms and conditions in relation to paid miscarriage leave.

## ALL OTHER MOTIONS

Note: these have been balloted after printing and will be taken in balloted order, which will be different from how they appear here.

### 1. Equalities

Conference notes:

1. the Equalities Act 2010 which includes the nine protected characteristics;
2. the leading role that NASUWT and other unions have taken in promoting equality for all minorities over the course of decades;
3. that although progress has been made in many areas, there is still a long way to go.

Conference believes that:

1. whether we have direct policy or not, all people with any of the nine protected characteristics should have their rights protected by NASUWT, both publicly and privately;
2. education is part of the equalities campaign;
3. current and prospective members not being in favour of supporting people with one or more of the characteristics is not a reason to stop actively promoting that support.

Conference instructs:

1. the Scotland Executive Council to require that Scotland Officers challenge anything which undermines the equality agenda within NASUWT Scotland social media accounts;
2. the Scotland Executive Council to include in a bulletin to all members an article explaining why all strands of the equality agenda are important and that we cannot pick and choose.

*Aberdeenshire*

### 2. ASN – failure of CfE

Conference notes that resources and specialist provision for learners with additional support needs, such as neurodivergent conditions, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities that impact learning, are reducing, whereas, with better diagnostic tools, the number of learners being identified as requiring support in learning is increasing.

Conference notes that in many schools, 48% or more learners now have an identified support need for learning.

Conference takes into consideration these issues and believes that:

1. presumption of the mainstream and integration masquerading as inclusion is not working;
2. children with severe and complex needs, including multiple neurodivergent conditions, should be recognised as having a disability within the definition of the Equalities Act 2010 and be able to access education as part of the wider Single Equality Duty;
3. specialist provision is being eroded with the closure of special schools, while the use of school buildings for enhanced supervision which are not fit for this purpose is often seen as the cheaper option and not based on the needs of children;
4. children are being prevented from accessing meaningful education as is their right;
5. class sizes for learners with ASN/SfL were established in 1985 and do not reflect the situation in 21st-century schools.

Conference calls for the Scotland Executive Council to campaign for:

- i. the end of the presumption of mainstream and integration masquerading as inclusion;
- ii. the reopening of special centres for children with severe and complex needs, including multiple neurodivergent conditions;
- iii. effective staffing and resources of the centres;
- iv. training at a postgraduate level for all teachers who wish to be registered with the GTCS as an ASN specialist;
- v. the right of all of our school communities to feel safe.

*Moray*

### 3. Work-Related Violence

Conference is extremely concerned at the rate at which 'work related violence' is escalating and that its impact on members of the teaching profession is continually being devalued and disrespected.

Conference is significantly concerned about teachers' health, safety and wellbeing; firstly as the stress caused to their wellbeing by work-related violence is inadequately addressed in terms of the Health and Safety Executive's six standards for managing stress at work by employers: demands, control, support, relationships, role and change; additionally, as current indiscipline and lack of consequences for pupils has resulted in the ever-increasing number of serious violent incidents being responded to less robustly than necessary.

Conference is furthermore deeply concerned at the negative impact on the attainment and mental health of young people whose education is being constantly disrupted by the increasingly high levels of indiscipline; and whose health and safety is frequently put at risk because of others' unsafe behaviour.

Conference confirms that immediate action to address violent and undisciplined behaviour is crucial to ensure a safe environment for all education communities comprising pupils, teachers, lecturers and other partners in learning.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to lobby government to facilitate a swifter publication and implementation of nationally recognised, agreed and clear behaviour guidelines.

Conference further calls on the Scotland Executive Council to create a charter of rights for teachers in relation to work-related violence, so all teachers know what to expect, and for this to be promoted to local authority employers.

The following concerns of classroom teachers are to be addressed and considered:

- i. develop teacher voice in behaviour summits and surveys;
- ii. introduce, implement and monitor consistency of consequences for unacceptable behaviour – including exclusions;
- iii. clear, concise and fair support for teachers suffering work-related violence in schools;
- iv. nationally agreed strategies to deal with unacceptable breaches of expectations for respect, health and safety and safeguarding of all staff and pupils;
- v. adequate support provision for mainstreaming children with ASN – including pupil referral units and appropriate settings;
- vi. robust policies on restorative practices: and increased use of visual media to promote respect and protection.

*Policy Committee*

### 4. Seclusion & Restraint

Conference is concerned that in the absence of clear national guidance on seclusion and restraint/physical intervention, individual employers, including local authorities, are creating their own disparate policies leading to inconsistencies in the way conflicts, such as when a teacher or support staff colleague intervenes in a dispute between pupils, are managed across Scottish schools.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to lobby the Scottish Government to complete the national advice on seclusion and restraint/physical intervention expeditiously, ensuring that national advice will:

- a. be created in partnership with NASUWT to ensure guidance clearly reflects the views of teachers;
- b. include clear and agreed definitions of seclusion and restraint/physical intervention;
- c. take into account the duty of care to all in the school community by ensuring rights are not viewed exclusively through the lens of the child who may be the subject of an intervention;
- d. have been considered through an intersectional equality lens, taking, for example, appropriate cognisance of the impact of gender-based violence, and linking to the ongoing national work of the Gender Equality Taskforce in Education and Learning (GETEL) as well as the racism and racist incidents subgroup of the Anti-Racism in Education Programme (AREP);
- e. have been through a workload impact assessment;
- f. avoid placing anyone in the school community in harm's way, ensuring teachers will feel safe and supported at work;

- g. be accompanied by the right for any teacher who wishes to access appropriate training;
- h. be supported by an investment in sufficient resources for local authorities, schools, headteachers and teachers, including the provision of supervision for teachers;
- i. include a timeframe for national review and have appropriate mechanisms built in to allow for further revision as appropriate.

*Policy Committee*

## **5. Teachers should be Leaders of Learning, not Assessment**

Conference is concerned that:

- i. at a time of maximum change we have reduced capacity with: smaller leadership cohort; fewer resources; local government budget cuts and no agreed timeframe for implementing the promised reduction in teacher class contact time;
- ii. the Scottish Government has broken down at a crossroads in education reform;
- iii. despite numerous 'consultation processes' we are no nearer achieving a system which:
  - a. is capable of genuine and meaningful engagement with the teaching profession;
  - b. works to empower classroom teachers and gives them agency; and
  - c. supports the profession to deliver the best for pupils.

Conference notes that while efforts are being made by the SQA to improve consultation and engagement, as yet real change has not been seen on the ground.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to lobby government and the SQA to ensure:

- i. the voice of practising teachers is embedded within all new structures;
- ii. clarification, consultation and agreement around the centre for teaching excellence;
- iii. any changes in assessment do not increase bureaucracy and workload;
- iv. any changes to the curriculum and assessment structure result in a robust and reliable system;
- v. teachers should be leaders of learning, not assessment;
- vi. external assessments are maintained and expanded moving forward;
- vii. the time, leadership and resources necessary for any agreed change are committed.

*Policy Committee*

## **6. Poverty**

Conference is appalled at the figures showing increasing numbers of children living in poverty in Scotland.

Conference is concerned that one of the most profound and damaging consequences of child poverty is the impact it has on pupils' educational attainment, their wider wellbeing and their future life chances.

Conference notes that there is a growing body of evidence indicating that high levels of income inequality increase instability, debt and inflation which are damaging for a developed economy in the long term.

Conference believes that poverty and socioeconomic inequality has the greatest effect of any inequality on a person's health, mortality and overall life chances.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

- i. work with STUC, CPAG, Poverty Alliance and others to continue to campaign to eradicate poverty in Scotland;
- ii. continue to support the Food for Thought campaign;
- iii. campaign robustly to ensure poverty is viewed through a similar lens to protected characteristics and 'povertyism' to be included in anti-discrimination law as well as raising the profile of socioeconomic inequality in the overall equalities discussion;
- iv. look to support a more diverse teaching profession, which inter alia includes those with lived experience of poverty.

*Policy Committee*

## 7. Broken Promises

Conference reflects on a litany of Scottish Government broken promises and is concerned that a culture of procrastination and obfuscation now prevails as a result within Scottish education.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to maintain pressure on Scottish Government, COSLA and local authority employers to meet stated national commitments on:

- a. Behaviour
- b. Pay
- c. Class Contact Time
- d. A Device for Every Child
- e. Teacher Numbers
- f. Employment Security for Teachers
- g. System Review
- h. Workload
- i. Education Funding
- j. ASN

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to lobby all MSPs to raise awareness of any and all broken promises and to insist politicians consult with teachers and their representatives on issues which adversely affect education and their pupils.

*Policy Committee*

## 8. Women's Health

Conference notes that 77% of teachers are women, nearly 42,000 of them.

Women face health concerns, and not all of them feel well-supported at work, which in the long term is not good for them or their employer.

Conference notes that:

- i. almost 8 out of 10 women go through the menopause at work;
- ii. 1 in 10 women live with endometriosis;
- iii. women's health issues continue to be downplayed and even dismissed by many employers, resulting in many women being forced out of work;
- iv. women overwhelmingly outnumber men as sufferers of the longer-term effects of COVID-19;
- v. women are disproportionately vulnerable to long-term inflammatory immune conditions such as endometriosis and ME/CFS and many sickness absence and health and safety policies fail to address gender-specific conditions.

Conference condemns the stigmatisation of women's health in the workplace and society in general, which results in many women suffering in silence and reluctant to seek the work-life adjustments they need.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

- i. campaign for greater awareness of intersectional gender-sensitive health and safety issues for teachers; and
- ii. demand that local authorities develop gender-sensitive sickness absence and health and safety policies with mandatory training for all SLT.

*Policy Committee*

## 9. Education Cuts and Low-Income Families

Conference condemns the ongoing assault on all education budgets and particularly condemns the disregard for the effect this has on the most deprived areas and the future life chances of children from these areas.

Conference calls upon the Scotland Executive Council to evaluate the effect cuts have on the lowest income families.

Conference calls upon the Scotland Executive Council to lobby COSLA and the Scottish Government to protect education budgets with particular regard to the most deprived areas.

*Glasgow*

## 10. Stop Education Cuts

Conference believes the mechanism by which state schools are funded is critical to securing an inclusive and world-class education system, operating in the public interest and contributing to the maintenance of a democratic, just and inclusive society.

Conference is alarmed that Scottish Local Authorities are under significant pressure to cut costs; for example, Glasgow City Council has produced a budget cutting £27.8 million from the education budget.

Conference abhors the adverse effect this will have on all education in the city but is particularly concerned how this will affect those with additional support needs as well as the poverty-related attainment gap.

Conference calls upon the Scotland Executive Council to lobby COSLA and the Scottish Government to protect education budgets with particular regard to additional support needs and the poverty-related attainment gap.

*Glasgow*

## 11. Classify Physical Education, Drama and Music as practical classes

Conference notes that the SNCT definition of 'PRACTICAL CLASSES' contained in Appendix 2.9 of Part 2 of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers Handbook has not moved with the times to recognise changes in schools and in the curriculum.

Physical Education, Drama and Music are subjects where pupils need to move around, with the teacher there to ensure there is a safe learning environment and full participation.

Conference believes that the class sizes of these subjects need to be reconsidered to ensure that teachers are confident that class sizes ensure a safe learning environment and full participation.

Conference calls upon the Scotland Executive Council to gather and submit evidence on class sizes in Physical Education, Drama and Music in order to lobby COSLA and the Scottish Government to classify Physical Education, Drama and Music as practical subjects, with a maximum number of 20.

*Glasgow*

## 12. Job-Sizing Toolkit: Questionnaire Review/Update

Conference notes that:

- a. it is essential that the Job Sizing Tool Kit must reflect the current aspects of education within schools for management posts;
- b. since the Job Sizing Toolkit, and the questionnaire which accompanies it, remain in the same format since their inception, they require updating to reflect the changes within Scottish education in order to determine a fairer pay structure in management posts;
- c. job-sizing of guidance posts is currently restricted to the case loads allocated only to formal Guidance posts and does not take into consideration the Guidance work/case loads carried out, unpaid, by heads of special support units which more and more school models have added.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council of the NASUWT to campaign for the SNCR, with a high degree of urgency, to modernise the toolkit thus ensuring:

- i. the accurate calculation of management time to be set much more flexibly to job-sizing of any appropriate post which has extra responsibility;
- ii. the introduction and implementation of a regular review period being set to allow adaptation as a consequence of changes in education policy and remits set within a national context.

*East Ayrshire*

## 13. Paternity Leave

Conference recognises that:

- a. UK Paternity Leave terms and conditions remain in the dark ages in comparison with other leading industrial countries around the world – varying from 30 weeks down to only two – when meeting modern-day requirements and expectations of gender equality where the concept of shared parental leave is widely implemented;
- b. having some time away from work is really important when welcoming a newborn child into the world, for both parents;

- c. the UK is moving on from times where expectations were that mothers only dealt with all the childcare. More new dads/parents are opting to make use of their paid/unpaid paternity leave to spend quality time with their newborn – important for bonding and setting the foundation for a healthy relationship with their child and partner;
- d. shockingly, only a third of eligible fathers take any paternity leave at all – influenced by social and financial pressures;
- e. while the UK paternity leave laws are set at one week paid and one week unpaid – in line with the European Union’s statutory minimum – four years post-Brexit should mean that an urgent revision of the worst paternity leave in Europe is long overdue and totally outdated.

Conference calls for the Scotland Executive Council of NASUWT Scotland to campaign at SNCT for:

- i. an immediate revision and update of the SNCT’s draconian paternity leave policy;
- ii. close analysis of global policies, along with consultation, regarding shared parental leave to ensure a fair and just system;
- iii. urgent implementation of a system of parental leave which is socially, financially and morally fit for purpose – meeting the needs of all families.

*East Ayrshire*

#### **14. Replacement Body for SQA**

Conference notes that:

- a. following the recent release of findings from research conducted by the Scottish Qualification Authority into its own practices, and subsequent coverage in the *TES*, *Herald* and other newspapers, it is increasingly clear that the organisation continues to operate in a way which takes little or no account of the pressures on schools, teaching staff and students.
- b. in the wake of the results scandal of 2020 and the subsequent review by Prof Mark Priestley, SQA accepted the majority of recommendations made; yet little or no progress has been made towards such recommendations as:
  - the development of more extensive approaches to collaborative decision making and co-construction by professional stakeholders of assessment practices related to National Qualifications;
  - a commitment to embedding equalities in all aspects of the development of qualifications systems.
  - the development of more systematic processes for working with and engaging young people, as stakeholders and rights holders in education;
  - a review of qualification appeals systems, including consideration of the rights and roles of young people, in the context of the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scottish law and that the changes to the previous appeals system put in place since 2022 have made things worse.
- c. the Scottish Government’s announcement in March 2022 to replace the SQA from 2025 onwards brought hope that this opportunity for reform of the nation’s assessment and certification body would encourage the board to be open to considering the views of stakeholders and be more transparent in its decision making. However, hopes were dashed with the SQA announcing in March 2023 that assignments and other forms of coursework would return in the 2023-24 session, despite the majority of respondents to a consultation (including from its own focus groups) not wanting to see these tasks return.

Conference calls for the Scotland Executive Council of the NASUWT to

- i. seek greater transparency, accountability and consideration from the SQA, as it transitions into its new identity, regarding addressing the unacceptable pressures on schools, teachers and students;
- ii. have serving classroom teachers involved in board level decision-making at the new body.

*East Ayrshire*

#### **15. SQA Remuneration**

Conference notes that

- a. SQA remuneration to markers has been reduced considerably over the past seven years without either warning or consultation eg Higher English Folio Fee: 2017 £4.75; 2024 £3.78 – making the system unjust and unfair in this difficult economic climate;

- b. the likelihood of a shortage of experienced markers is apparent as markers who stopped marking because of poor pay have this year been bombarded with emails asking if, as they are on the waiting list, they would accept an invitation to mark;
- c. one major reason many teachers are less likely to want to mark for the SQA is that the Scottish Government imposes a tax rate of 42% on SQA earnings for experienced teachers whose pay scale level is higher; therefore undertaking marking is not financially worthwhile;
- d. this calls into question the robust nature of the assessment process and its potential impact on results as the valuable experience of many teachers who could mark is taken out of the equation.

Conference calls for the Scotland Executive Council of NASUWT Scotland to:

- i. address the problem of a considerably decreasing rate of remuneration for teachers by the SQA by:
  - highlighting to those concerned the inequities of current pay rates;
  - eliciting information under a FOI request regarding pay rates for all subjects over the past seven years; and
  - establishing the level of pay which should be considered fair and just; and be of equal or greater value to what the 2007 levels would be worth in today's terms.
- ii. campaign for a new pay rate worthy of experienced teaching professionals who are liable to pay higher rate tax.

*East Ayrshire*