

## **SNCT REPORT**

In the last year, full SNCT has met on 17th May 2023, 20th September 2023, 21st February. Teachers Panels met in advance of these meetings with one special meeting on 19th January 2024 to formulate a pay award.

More detailed information about each meeting is contained in reports to council.

The main thrust of SNCT meetings this year has been on the pay claim by the Teachers' Side which eventually was agreed to be 6.5%. This claim is designed to retain gains of last award and make a modest move towards restoration. The claim is a flat, undifferentiated one.

Disappointingly, there has been little movement on important matters identified last year such as ASN, Job Sizing, Class Size matters, Sabbaticals, Lead Teacher, Maternity, Management Time and Practical Class Sizes.

Whether the lack of progress is due to workload, it is remarkable that leadership in Scottish Education seems so reticent to make progress on improvements designed to help teachers and learners

**Paul Cochrane**  
**Convener**  
**Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee**

## **SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT**

In the last year, the Salaries Committee met on 29th September 2023, 21st November 2023 and 28th February 2024.

At each meeting, the General Secretary updates the Committee of educational matters relating to recent and impending developments. This year, this has mainly linked to Hayward, WTA, SQA, Education Scotland, Centre for Teaching Excellence, workload, COVID, the 90 minute reduction and outreach work by the SSTA, particularly via the pensions seminars.

The Committee also dedicated time to gathering information and formulating motions for Congress.

The Committee liaised closely with Euan Duncan on email workload that resulted from a remitted Congress motion. We thank him for his work. Evan will also be the liaison Professional Officer for the Committee.

Mark Devlin was proposed and accepted as Vice Convenor. This is to manage transitions and give experience to members.

**Paul Cochrane**  
**Convener**  
**Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee**

## SQA REPORT

One of our motions from Congress 2023 called for the suspension of returning to 'Full Exams'. In discussions we advocated a phased return. Unfortunately, this fell on deaf ears. Some of the discussion points we used in communication with SQA and the Education Minister, were highlighted in a recently published SQA survey for 2023. Simon Allan, Head of SQA Research said:

“There are some signs of recovery, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that the impact of the pandemic is both complex and substantial, and it seems very, very likely to us, from this point, that it will take several years for that to fully resolve.”

“Learners thought that the pandemic has had an effect on the development of their skills and knowledge, and I think we would say practitioners overall didn't feel that the education system has really fully recovered from the pandemic.”

He added: “The majority thought that compared to pre-pandemic learners, learners nowadays are somewhat less resilient, have lower levels of focus, and they have what I'd call less developed foundation skills and knowledge – the knowledge and skills a teacher would typically expect at the beginning of a national qualifications course.

“This combined with data on declining levels of attendance has resulted in a situation where many practitioners believe that learners nowadays find external assessment more stressful than was the case with previous cohorts.” (Scotsman 27th March 2024)

On the marking the 2024 exams SQA will take into account the circumstances in which the exams are undertaken.

Pupils will have started their exams by the start of Congress, SSTA wish them every success.

SSTA was represented at 6 meetings with the NQ24(SQA), National Qualifications 2024 Group. Some of the topics discussed at the meetings were: Appeals; Dual Entry; Communication and Engagement; Artificial Intelligence; Return of Exam Script; Approaches to Evaluation; Assessment Arrangements; Assessment Arrangement Survey; Awarding 2024. The SSTA have already received invites to NQ25 there is six meetings scheduled.

The Education Minister on behalf of SQA issued a letter stating that dual presentations of N4/N5 in the same subject should not happen. This is something that the SSTA had been arguing for.

More recently the SSTA raised concerns about dual presentation of pupils for N5 Maths and Application of Maths. SQA have previously sent letters to Local Authorities discouraging this practice. SQA have stated that they will send a reminder letter reinforcing their position, to Local Authorities.

The Appeals System for 2024 will follow a very similar approach to Appeals System of 2023.

No date has been announced for when SQA will be replaced, re-badged.

No timeline or timescale for the introduction of new qualification system is known, still being debated.

There were two other meetings with SQA this year. Engagement and Communications meeting which was exploring ways for improving both with teachers. The other was regarding Future Planning, Transition, which we were asked to keep confidential.

**James Cowans**  
**Convener**  
**Education Committee**

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

One of the main pieces of work undertaken this year was the Mobile Phone Survey. Results of this have already been published on our website. Our members would not support a mobile phone ban in school but prefer to restrict where and when mobile phones can be used. It was concerning to read how mobile phone use is affecting pupil behaviour and the impact that their use in the classroom is affecting learning and teaching. Other themes were: poor connectivity; lack of access to mobile devices; school Mobile Phone policies are failing. The survey has been picked up by a number of news outlets and is being used on ongoing discussions.

At our meetings this year, the following are some of the topics discussed:

- Centre of Excellence
- Behaviour Summit, ongoing behaviour issues
- When to carry out another Behaviour Survey
- Concerns related to poor attendance
- Mobile phone survey results
- Hayward and Withers Reports
- Decrease in Modern Language teachers particularly German
- Leadership of Discrete Subjects
- Artificial Intelligence
- Motions for Congress
- SQA matters, see SQA report

We have had no meetings with Education Scotland over this past year. Currently we do not have a date for the reform of Education Scotland.

I would like to thank our members for continuing to highlight issues to the Education Committee, your support is much appreciated, please continue to do so. I would also like to thank the members of the Education Committee and Euan Duncan for their commitment and work through the year.

If you have an issue(s) you would like to highlight to the Education Committee or would like to be a member of the Education Committee please contact or speak to SSTA office, Euan Duncan or James Cowans.

**James Cowans**  
**Convener**  
**Education Committee**

## **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS COMMITTEE REPORT**

This is a brief summary of this year's business for the ASN Committee.

The business of the Committee continues to be focused on the need for members to address the needs of pupils with Additional Support Needs whilst protecting the wellbeing and interests of teachers and others meeting those needs.

During the maternity period of the Convenor, Ruth Nicoll, Matt Cavanagh as Vice Convenor is acting in her absence.

### **Issues addressed by the Committee include:**

- Meeting Pupils' needs/GIRFEC
- Named-person responsibilities
- ASL Consultation
- Pupil Behaviour

### **Actions taken forward:**

The committee is working on sharing advice to members on the role of the Named Person in order to support teachers who may be unfairly burdened with responsibilities related to this with a focus on keeping this workload manageable.

SSTA ASN committee feedback was submitted to the Education Children and Young People's committee's survey on ASL in Scotland as well as attendance at a related hearing in The Scottish Parliament to speak on behalf of the union.

Ongoing work in correspondence with other members within the union to support their interests related to pupil behaviour with particular regard to those working within an ASN context whilst the Scottish Government is reviewing the way that disruptive behaviour is managed in schools. To aid communication, our SSTA rep on SAGRABIS was co-opted onto the ASN Committee and related updates are another new fixed item on the ASN Committee's meeting agenda.

The Committee is always keen to expand on the range of backgrounds and experiences of its members. If anyone is interested in more information, or if they would like to join the committee, please contact Matt Cavanagh who is happy to talk about these things via our office team by emailing [Info@ssta.org.uk](mailto:Info@ssta.org.uk) or seek nomination via your local District/Area.

This concludes the ASN Committee report.

**Matt Cavanagh**  
**Vice Convenor**  
**Additional Support Needs Committee**

## **EQUALITIES COMMITTEE REPORT**

The panel has met four times over the past year.

The focus for the last year has been how to support members with disabilities. At Congress last May, numerous delegates shared how they had felt forced to provide work when they were absent from school due to ill-health and lack of support when returning from that absence.

It was felt that it would be useful to produce a list of suggested reasonable adjustments which had already been put in place in local authorities. I would like to thank those members who have helped by providing information for this list.

A list of possible suggestions has been divided into three main categories: Physical Changes to Environment, Workload Support, and Emotional Support and Wellbeing. This will be uploaded to the SSTA website shortly. Maggie has attended a couple of STUC equalities webinars. These are available to view on the STUC website for anyone to view.

[www.stuc.org.uk/equalities](http://www.stuc.org.uk/equalities)

We are also looking again at the previously produced advice note which resulted from the Scottish Government Guidance on “Supporting Transgender Young People in Schools”. It is felt this needs to be re-visited given the recent change in culture. Work has started on this in April and will replace the current advice note as soon as possible.

The committee has accepted Richard Graham to the role of vice-convener. Thank you to Richard for accepting this role.

Finally, I would again like to give my thanks to all members of the panel for their input over the last year, it has been beneficial to have new members to the committee. A final thanks to Fiona Dalziel for all her support.

**Maggie Nesbitt**  
**Convener**  
**Equalities Committee**

## **HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing handbook and website materials revision is complete and added to the website. Outstanding is work on Stress.

There is still work to do on getting LAs to engage with Pupil Centred Risk Assessment training from last session, however we are pleased to note that Fife has engaged with the Association on this and will have Gordon West training a group soon.

Following congress motions last year, the committee will also be trying to engage local authorities about their responsibilities to their employee's mental health and to appropriate risks assessments in place. The other motion was calling on all institutions to address neurodiversity in staff. Iain Glennie and Grant McAllister met with James Richards from Heriot Watt University during the summer. James is keen to support the teaching unions working together to support neurodivergent colleagues. This starts with modelling good practice from ourselves.

The committee has kept a watching brief on both Long COVID cases and RAAC. RAAC is a building material used in the seventies to reduce construction costs and we may be entering a crisis in public buildings as it reaches end of life.

Several local authorities are making progress in developing Mental Health Policies for staff. However, policy and interventions should follow risk assessment and not the other way around. The committee chair met with representatives of ADES who are drafting a paper on Workforce Support. As well as asking what support the association has for its members, they spoke of a huge variance of support across the country. A postcode lottery of valuing and caring for public sector employees. The report is due by the end of session.

Recent First Aid guidance from the HSE highlights the need for Mental Health First Aid provision in all workplaces and we will look to ensure that all schools meet their expectations in their workplace risk assessments.

The biannual Health and Safety Representatives meeting will be on Friday 13th September at The Stirling Court Hotel. Congress is reminded that Union Health and Safety representatives training entitlement is in statute, and schools cannot refuse attendance. Thanks to the Finance and General Purposes committee for supporting this event.

The Chair and Assistant General Secretary Iain Glennie attended the STUC support Scottish Hazards conference on February 29th. The Chair is currently pursuing ways to work more closely with HSE after this event.

The committee thanks the secretariat and office bearers for their support; I must give particular thanks to AGS, Iain Glennie, for his advice and guidance, particularly this session. And my own personal thanks to all members of the committee for giving of their time and talents so freely. We were delighted to add new members this year and would welcome even more.

**Grant McAllister**  
**Convener**  
**Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee**