

7 February 2025

DISPUTE DECLARED OVER TEACHERS' CLASS CONTACT TIME – STATEMENT FROM SNCT TEACHERS' PANEL

The Teachers' Panel of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) has today (Friday 7th February) declared a formal dispute following the failure of COSLA and the Scottish Government to table a proposal on the nature and timescales for a reduction of class contact time to a maximum of 21 hours per week, as a step towards the alleviation of teachers' workload.

Following COSLA and the Scottish Government's inability to table a proposal by a previously set deadline of 12 noon on Monday 3rd February, the Teachers' Panel met today to consider its response. It was the unanimous view of panel members that the abject failure to realise publicly stated commitments and make meaningful progress on the promise to reduce class contact time to a 21 hour maximum, has left no option but the declaration of a formal dispute.

In declaring dispute, the Teachers' Panel calls on both COSLA and the Scottish Government to commit swiftly to discussions towards a resolution of the dispute that, had they acted as repeatedly stated they would, could have been avoided.

Commenting, SNCT Teachers' Side Joint Chair, Des Morris, said, "It is frankly beyond belief that after years of delay, the Scottish Government and COSLA have been completely unable to even begin to make meaningful progress on an improvement to teachers' working conditions despite publicly having committed to do so."

"The Scottish Government was elected in 2021 on a manifesto that, among other promises to the electorate, committed to reducing class contact time for teachers to a maximum of 21 hours per week as a way of reducing teacher workload which continues to be unsustainably excessive. Their failure to keep to this promise after almost four years of talking about it, is beyond the tolerance of Scottish teachers. Nor can COSLA absolve itself of its responsibility in failing to undertake the work required to implement this change, despite having had years in which to do so and despite being signed up as Fair Work employers."

It is time for both COSLA and the Scottish Government to demonstrate, in reality, their commitment to addressing the unsustainable workload of Scotland's Teachers. They must now undertake all that is necessary to negotiate an end to this dispute without any delay."

(ENDS)

Issued on behalf of the SNCT Teachers' Panel