

BETTER DEAL CAMPAIGN BULLETIN

Class Contact Time

The following proposals were put to the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) Teachers' Panel in late March:

- An additional 90 minutes of reduced class contact time to be allocated entirely as undirected Professional Time (largely focused on planning and preparing for lessons, as well as assessing and evaluating learners' progress). A review of relevant definitions within the SNCT Handbook will be undertaken to ensure clarity and consistency in the use of Professional Time.
- All primary teachers and teachers in special schools will have a maximum weekly class contact time of 21 hours from the commencement of the academic year in August 2027.
- All secondary teachers will have a maximum weekly class contact time of 21 hours from the commencement of the academic year in August 2029.

An overwhelming majority (including NASUWT) voted in favour. We did share serious concerns about the length of the proposed timeline for implementation but welcomed the wider deal.

These proposals were then adopted by the full SNCT and, as a result, the dispute with the Scottish Government and COSLA has been settled and work has now commenced on delivering the promised reduction in class contact time.

Although the reduction in class contact time has now been agreed, the delay in implementation means that reducing teacher workload remains a key focus for us in the short term. The Scottish Greens' manifesto adopted wholesale our own manifesto call for work to reduce bureaucracy and administrative tasks and this will now be a key focus in the new Parliament.

Behaviour

Despite our objections, outlined in a response to the formal consultation and in an MSP Briefing, the Restraint and Seclusion Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament in March and is awaiting Royal Assent to become an Act. We will continue to engage with the new Scottish Government to outline our concerns about how the eventual Act will be applied in practice.

A raft of new guidance documents has been issued by the Scottish Government, linked to the National Action Plan on Relationships and Behaviour: the second Annual Progress Report on the Action Plan itself; refreshed guidance on Improving Attendance in Scotland's Schools; new guidance on a Whole School Approach to Racism and Racist Incidents; and new guidance on Responding to Substance Abuse (including vapes and other nicotine products).

We welcomed much of this and will develop bespoke advice for members in each area in time for the new academic session. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Action Plan itself has still not been effectively embedded in too many local authorities/schools and we continue to offer our roadshow of presentations to teachers to outline its key features. Contact scotland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk if you would like us to come and visit your school/area.

The Scottish Government has announced a Consultation on Mobile Phone Use in Scotland's Schools. This will open in August and it is the Government's hope that this will lead to a statutory ban on the use of mobile phones in schools. If you have views that you would like us to reflect as part of our response to the formal Consultation, do let us know at scotland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk

Parliamentary

Scottish Parliament Elections

The results of the election were largely as predicted, with the SNP returning to power with 58 seats (though not succeeding in their aim of getting an overall majority). Reform UK ended up in joint second with Labour on 17 seats, with the Scottish Greens slightly behind them on 15 seats, the Scottish Conservatives on 12 seats and the Scottish Liberal Democrats on 10.

We have already had productive meetings with the new Education leads for Scottish Labour and the Scottish Greens and have requested to meet the new Cabinet Secretary.

Terms and Conditions

Job Sizing

A significant addition to job sizing guidance for those in pastoral/guidance posts has been agreed, with a suggestion that 'the actual number of pupils in the caseload... should not routinely exceed 200'.

Local authorities are expected to implement this change over the next two years and 'should a post or group of posts not have been reviewed by 1 June 2028, Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers (LNCT) will arrange for a job sizing review to be undertaken prior to the end of the school session for implementation from 1 August 2028'.

Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023

At the meeting of the SNCT Support Group, held in March 2026, it was agreed that the entitlement to leave under the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023 would be written into the SNCT Handbook. This was a result of an NASUWT Motion to the SNCT.

Lead Teachers

At the SNCT Support Group held in March it was also agreed that the SNCT Joint Secretaries would write to councils reminding them of the various Lead Teacher posts that are available and the fact that these are nationally agreed positions. This again followed an NASUWT Motion to the SNCT.

The SNCT website has itself had a refresh and should now be more user-friendly than before. It contains most of the key terms and conditions for teachers in Scotland and can be accessed at <https://www.snct.org.uk/>

Policy

Curriculum and Qualifications Reform

Important changes to the curriculum, qualifications and assessment system are getting nearer.

Education Scotland is scheduled to issue samples of the new Know/Do/Understand curriculum approach before the end of June (to replace the current approach which is wedded to Experiences and Outcomes). It will look for feedback and engagement from teachers on the new approach, with a view to issuing finalised guidance in 2027 for adoption in the BGE (early to third level) in August 2028. Revised guidance for the fourth level of BGE will be available in 2029.

New National Qualifications up to Levels 4 and 5 will begin in 2031 and up to Levels 6 and 7 in 2032.

Qualifications Scotland

NASUWT met with Nick Page, Chief Executive of Qualifications Scotland, in March and again in June and discussed a wide range of issues, including the make-up of the Qualifications Scotland Board, Education Reform, digital assessment and the integrity of some National Qualifications.

We also met with the Chair of the Qualifications Scotland Board, Shirley Rogers, to explore our complaint about the lack of classroom teachers on the board of the new organisation. We were partially reassured by the fact that a specific Teacher Practitioner Committee has now been formed and its Convenor will have a seat on the full board. We had a productive conversation about Education Reform and have agreed to work together with Qualifications Scotland on this, where our interests align.

Graduate Teacher Pathway

A new group has been established to consider the possibility of revising the way in which new teachers in Scotland enter the profession. This is largely as a result of more aspiring teachers using the Flexible Route to gain full registration, rather than the Teacher Induction Scheme. The former does not have the dedicated additional time and mentor support offered in the latter and, ideally, a new scheme will be developed which helps to address this.

Consultations

We have responded to consultations and calls for views on:

GTCS Fitness to Teach Operational Processes;

GTCS Accreditation Process and Requirements;

School Premises Regulations;

Supporting Children's Learning – Code of Practice – Statutory Guidance Consultation; and

A Scottish Skills Model.

These and previous submissions can be accessed at [NASUWT | Consultation Responses](#)

Health and Safety

Air Quality

We have been working with partners at Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) and the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE) to seek to promote our policy aim of improving air quality in schools. Most recently, this led to us issuing a joint press release with RCPE, supporting their call for a pilot programme of air pollution monitoring around schools.

Equalities

United Workplaces Project

We undertook several visits to schools in and around Falkirk earlier this year and also conducted a webinar to share research and information around online disinformation in schools and in wider communities.

Feedback from all these sessions was overwhelmingly positive and, when we gave a formal presentation to the STUC and Scottish Government (who funded the project), they were very impressed and we are hopeful that we will be able to roll the project out to other areas.

STUC

STUC Congress

We had our most successful STUC Congress in many years on 20-22 April in Dundee, with more delegates than ever before and prominent involvement in two major Composite Motions on Public Services and The Far Right. We also proposed a successful Emergency Motion on Gender-Based Violence, Regulation and the Justice System and had delegates speaking on amendments we made to Motions on Addressing Violence in Schools and on Artificial Intelligence. NASUWT Delegates also spoke in support of Motions on: Reducing Workload and Improving Staff Wellbeing in Education; and Neurodivergence and Employment Policies.

Our Policy Official, Tara Lillis, was invited to address Congress as the Chair of the STUC Women's Committee, while one of our members, Morag McDonald, was presented with the STUC Health and Safety Award by First Minister John Swinney, for her work in protecting the health and welfare of members at her school.

It was also agreed (by a margin of nine to one) that, following the 2027 STUC Congress, there will be a move to a two-yearly cycle of STUC Conferences (including Congress and all Equalities Conferences).

Forthcoming Meetings/Events

1 September: Working Assertively – online course open to all members

3 September: Wellness Recovery Action Plan – in-person course open to all members

15 September: Menopause Awareness – online twilight course open to all members

19 September: Scotland Equalities Conference – national event open to all members

If you are interested in any of these opportunities then, contact scotland@mail.nasuwat.org.uk in the first instance.