

Defence Children Services
Review of the Cyprus Education Delivery Model Phase 2
(Secondary Schooling) - Terms of Reference
December 2021

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to comment on the review of Cyprus Education Delivery Model Phase 2 (Secondary Schooling) - Terms of Reference (ToR).
2. The NASUWT - The Teachers' Union - represents teachers and Headteachers across the United Kingdom.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT understands and supports the need for all buildings in Cyprus to be seismically compliant. Indeed, it is deeply concerning that currently teachers and pupils are potentially at risk of injury, or even death, should a major seismic event occur.
4. Likewise, the NASUWT would support a review of provision alongside the rebuilding plans to ensure that provision is fit for purpose and appropriately resourced.
5. The Union would assert, however, that the basis for any review must start from the premise of ensuring the children receive the best possible education, which is facilitated through high-quality, fit-for-

purpose buildings, well-resourced schools, and high-quality, well-paid teaching staff.

6. Although costs are obviously a factor in any rebuilding project, it is of critical importance that sufficient funds are provided to ensure high-quality, fit-for-purpose buildings and provision, and savings must not override this key aspect.
7. The ToR should also take into account the strategic importance of the Sovereign Base Areas, given the continuing instability in the region. Major and prolonged deployments to the bases could occur at any time and the school estate must be able to cope, should there be a sudden influx of additional children.
8. The NASUWT would also assert that whilst the rebuilding programme is underway, the existing schools must continue to be resourced appropriately, with maintenance necessary to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils continuing.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Education

9. It is concerning that that the ToR appear to seek an adequate level of educational provision, rather than an excellent level. This is also suggested when the ToR refer to resourcing to provide a 'good' quality education. The NASUWT would urge Defence Children Services (DCS) to raise their ambition and seek a system which is truly world-class, not merely adequate.
10. The NASUWT is concerned that this lack of ambition suggests that cutting costs will be a primary driver of the review.

11. The ToR should reflect that providing sufficient resources is key to obtaining world-class provision, and therefore should accept that levels will not be reduced below current levels.
12. Indeed, the NASUWT has concerns that current levels are already insufficient, such as numbers of specialist staff leading to too many lessons being delivered by non-specialists.
13. The NASUWT would broadly support any major changes occurring within academic years. However, the Union also agrees that this should be done on a risk-based approach. Put simply, it would make little sense for a new seismically-compliant building to stand empty whilst teachers and pupils continue to use a sub-standard building.

Infrastructure

14. Whilst the Department for Education's (DfE) building bulletins can be useful in the design of new school buildings, the NASUWT would assert that there are sadly many examples of new school builds in England that are not fit for purpose despite meeting the relevant building bulletins. DCS should therefore not slavishly follow the DfE's guidance but instead look to enhance the DfE's minimum standards wherever possible.
15. DCS should also consider other guidance and regulations, such as The School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) Regulations 1967 and the Northern Ireland School Building Handbook, particularly where these go beyond the DfE's requirements.

Options for Evaluation

16. As stated above, whilst the NASUWT broadly supports the concept of a review, the Union would also assert that it must not be done on the

basis of saving money. **DCS must also recognise the value, not just the cost, of its educational provision.**

17. From the outset, the NASUWT is sceptical that any model, other than retaining the two extant secondary schools, will result in enhanced educational provision.
18. Reducing to a single secondary school with boarding facilities would need to be carefully considered in terms of the extra demands on staff through additional supervision requirements, and the impact on young children being separated from the parents on a weekly basis.
19. Variant one, which removes Key Stage 5 provision from the DCS schools, is likely to result in significant impacts on staff and therefore pupils, particularly as many secondary staff enjoy teaching to A-level standard. This could impact on DCS's ability to recruit and retain sufficient staff.
20. The NASUWT would also be deeply concerned about the impacts on young people if they are forced to board in England, or the impact on their families should one parent be required to stay in the UK. It cannot be right or proper to forcibly separate families in order to provide an education to children.
21. Variant two, which effectively converts the two secondary schools into high schools, would have a significant impact on primary schools. Where high schools exist in England, they do so alongside middle schools, which do not currently exist in Cyprus. It is therefore difficult to see how this option could be enacted without major upheaval and the required creation of middle schools.
22. Variant three would result in extremely small schools, containing only Years 9, 10 and 11. This not only has all the significant drawbacks of variants one and two, but would also result in the schools being very

small. It is difficult to see how this would enhance education provision in any way, shape or form.

23. The NASUWT could not support complete or partial removal of secondary provision. This would be a significant retrograde step that would leave DCS unable to provide comprehensive secondary education, making it reliant on other providers over which it has no control, or UK boarding, which could have significant detrimental impact on young people and their families.
24. Likewise, the NASUWT could not support an outsourced model of education. Outsourcing invariably leads to reductions in the terms and conditions of the staff involved, and funds being diverted away from frontline activities into either profits for the provider, and/or into large salaries for senior managers.
25. When considering these options, DCS must be cognisant of the military covenant and how it applies to Education.
26. The covenant states *'Children of members of the Armed Forces should have the same standard of, and access to, education (including early years services) as any other UK citizen in the area in which they live. The Services should aim to facilitate this in the way they manage personnel, but there should also be special arrangements to support access to schools if a place is required part way through an academic year as a consequence of a posting. For personnel posted overseas, the MOD provides early years and educational facilities where the numbers support it, although the range of provision and choice may not be as great as in the UK.'*
27. It is clear that the full or partial removal of secondary provision on Cyprus would renege on the Covenant, as well as making the posting less attractive and risk separating families unnecessarily as many will opt to come to Cyprus unaccompanied

28. DCS should also be aware that many of these options, and the final two options in particular, would be highly likely to lead to considerable industrial unrest. Indeed, the mere inclusion of many of the options in a consultation phase is likely to cause deep concern for teachers, pupil and parents alike.
29. For this reason alone, the NASUWT would urge DCS not to make significant changes to the education provision that will not result in an enhanced education experience for teachers and pupils.