

RESPONDING TO COVID-19

As of 1 May 2022, COVID-19 advice in Scotland has changed, with free testing no longer available to the majority of the population and self-isolation guidance being replaced with the following Stay at Home guidance: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/changes-from-1-may-2022/>.

The NASUWT did not support the changes implemented and has both recently and throughout the pandemic raised significant concerns about mitigations and protections for schools. While the NASUWT engaged repeatedly with the Scottish Government and others on these most recent changes, it is clear that the desire to align with the rest of the UK was considered paramount.

The population-wide Stay at Home changes have been reflected in the updated Scottish Government guidance to schools *Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools* and *Coronavirus (COVID-19): early learning and childcare services*, which continues to stress the importance of risk assessments and ongoing COVID-19 mitigations such as handwashing/sanitisation, continued use of face coverings in communal areas, physical distancing wherever possible and effective ventilation.

On the last of these, we have received reports of some local authorities/schools trying to use average CO₂ readings across multiple teaching areas or even whole schools. This directly contradicts current Scottish Government guidance on ventilation, which clearly indicates that measurements of ventilation and the associated actions required are based on the space/classroom/teaching area where any activity is taking place.

It is also worth remembering that the Scottish Government's guidance represents the minimum requirements, and local authorities/schools are free to enhance these. The Union would expect all schools to update their risk assessment. For more details on risk assessments, see: www.nasuw.org.uk/ComplyingCovidRiskAssessments.

Members with concerns about working arrangements or safety in their workplace should contact NASUWT Scotland for further advice and support: Scotland@mail.nasuw.org.uk.

PAY

Members will be aware that, despite strong opposition from the NASUWT, the 'best and final offer' on pay made by the employers' side was passed by a majority of the SNCT Teachers' Panel on 31 March, and the following should apply for the 2021/22 pay year:

- a 1.22% increase at all SNCT pay points effective from 1/4/21;
- a further 1% increase at all SNCT pay points effective from 1/1/22;
- an £800 cap for those earning £80K and above;
- a one-off non-recurring payment of £100 to each SNCT member of staff (pro-rated for part-time) for all SNCT members in post on 31/3/22 and based on working hours at that time.

The NASUWT did not vote for this offer because it equates to a real-terms pay cut of more than 4.5% for teachers in Scotland for the 2021/22 pay year, when the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) measure of inflation is applied; and this is before the increases in energy costs and National Insurance contributions, which took effect in April 2022.

As this has, however, now been agreed, all members should monitor their payslips to check that a backdated payment has been received. If you changed employer, left teaching or retired during the time period April 2021 to March 2022, then you should contact your employer for that period (if not your

(continued overleaf)

current employer) to remind them that you are owed the backdated percentage uplift. If you encounter any difficulties with this, please contact Scotland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk.

As part of the NASUWT's 'A Better Deal for Teachers' campaign, the Union will be calling for a substantial above-inflation pay award to be made to teachers in Scotland for the 2022/23 pay year.

It is essential that we have a representative or contact in every workplace to support communication around the 'A Better Deal for Teachers' campaign. Do you have a school representative? If not, please get in touch with the Scotland Centre who can support arrangements for a local meeting. Keep up to date with the campaign on the website www.nasuwt.org.uk/BetterDealForScotlandTeachers and via social media [@NASUWT_Scotland](https://www.facebook.com/nasuwtscotland) and [facebook.com/nasuwtscotland](https://www.facebook.com/nasuwtscotland).

SNCT

On 19 April, a new SNCT Circular 22/89 came into effect which covers 'COVID-19 Related Absences': <https://www.snct.org.uk/library/2981/SNCT22-89.pdf>. The temporary changes to the SNCT Handbook are now amended as follows:

6.36.1 Absence from work caused by COVID-19 will be treated as paid special leave for the duration that the person is unable to work, or 10 days, whichever is shorter.

6.36.2 If an employee is asked to self-isolate through Test and Protect, medical advice, by the employer or similar arrangements and can work at home, they should do so and be paid normally.

If they are unable to work, they should be paid normally for the period they are required to isolate under the provisions in paragraph 6.34 of the SNCT Handbook (Infectious Diseases).

The absences under 6.36.1 above should not be counted within absence management procedures locally. These temporary arrangements will be reviewed in June 2022.

WORKING TIME AGREEMENTS

Advice developed for a recent Working Time Agreement (WTA) training session has now been uploaded to the website and, given the time of year, any member who is involved in WTA negotiations is encouraged to view this here: www.nasuwt.org.uk/WorkingTimeScotland.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The SQA confirmed on 28 April 2022 that, in order to recognise the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching caused by COVID-19, it has decided 'to keep the current types of modifications to assessment in full for session 2022-23'. In other words, all courses, from National 3 up to and including Advanced Higher, continue with the same coursework and assessment requirements as this year.

You can view a summary of the modifications to assessment for session 2021-22 on the SQA website. The SQA has committed to update this information by the end of May for session 2022-23: https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/98682.html?utm_source=marketo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2022.04.28-AssessmentOfNQ&HNvQIn2022-23-ES-AM&utm_content=button&mkt_tok=NTA1LVICSC0zMDAAAAGEDrDrRXYltgBSBw6bP8Y0Qm5IDkQFEpX3xXcN_WzIgs3IYLUBAI5izmYXIH-QX05b9wzXR8f4GD-Qn7iRBYf6bKQp0ppGqKdz3toBZN7f.

MOVING JOBS DURING THE ACADEMIC SESSION

It is important to be aware that if you change jobs part way through the session, there could be an impact on your salary. If you are undertaking a new role on a different salary in the same local authority or you move to a different employer part way through the session, calculations will be undertaken and applied to you as 'leaver' of one role and 'new starter' in the other.

This is all covered in the following SNCT provision: NATIONAL PAY AND LEAVE SPECIFICATION – https://www.snct.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Appendix_2.19.

These calculations are applied to ensure that pay is correct for the remainder of the year in terms of working days and associated annual leave, and can cause difficulties, especially if someone is moving between different local authorities. Given that school holidays are designated and teachers are obliged to take them when they arise, depending on when in the school year they move to a new employer, an employee may end up accruing more leave than they have taken, or owing an employer for taking more leave than they have accrued. Either way, as long as the transition between roles is continuous, this should balance out between employers, but some members have ended up being left surprised and with a financial burden because they did not realise in advance exactly how these calculations are done or why.

What to do:

If you are moving from one local authority to another during the school year, before accepting the new job ask your prospective new employer for a 'new starter' calculation. This will show all deductions. You can also ask your current employer for a 'leaver' calculation which will show if you are entitled to be paid for accrued annual leave, which may balance out the deficit from your new employment.

If you do not currently work for a Scottish local authority as a teacher and are offered a job with a Scottish local authority during the school year, it is essential that you ask your prospective new employer for a 'new starter' calculation. The system your current employer uses will be totally different from the unique way in which annual leave is calculated under the SNCT Handbook. You could be at a significant disadvantage moving between sectors (or from outwith Scotland) during the school year.

If either scenario leaves you at a financial detriment, before accepting the job ask the prospective new employer if there is any support they can offer to offset this detriment and also check if there are any other entitlements or inducements that could be offered, such as a relocation allowance (if applicable). You can also ask for any identified 'new starter' calculation to be deducted across the rest of the financial year and not all from your first salary.

CORRECT INFORMATION

Members are encouraged to ensure that the Union has the most up-to-date information for them, including their contact details and their relevant employment status (the latter is to ensure that they are paying the appropriate subscription rate). Go to: www.nasuwt.org.uk/Login.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 21 May NASUWT Scotland Conference
- 21-22 May STUC LGBT Conference
- 9 June NASUWT Tutoring & Accreditation Course
- 15 June NASUWT Health & Safety Training (Day 2)
- 17 June STUC Cost of Living event (TBC)
- 18 June TUC March and Rally, London
- 21-22 June NASUWT Representatives Casework Training

Also, members should be aware that the Kodály Music Education Summer School, open to class teachers, instrumental teachers, students, nursery practitioners, freelance musicians and anyone interested in music education, offers a 10% discount to NASUWT members. Further details can be found here: https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/_YBvCI5x0TYZ0MSG0QQK?domain=nycos.co.uk/.



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