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Des Morris  
SNCT Teachers' Panel  
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5 March 2025

Dear Des,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 February, setting out the position of the SNCT Teachers Panel on planning towards a reduction in teachers class contact time, and for your questions regarding the Scottish Government's position on two substantive matters of importance to the Panel.

In answer to your questions about the use of the reduced class contact time and time being available for the teaching workforce to engage meaningfully with education reform; the Scottish Government has always been clear that the dual purpose of introducing a reduction in teacher class contact time, by 90 minutes per week, is to reduce teacher workload while also creating the conditions to improve educational standards and outcomes.

This was set out in the 2021 Programme for Government, which stated: "This will give teachers the capacity to reduce contact time by an hour and a half a week which they can use to prepare for lessons, raise standards and undertake professional development". Our position on this remains unchanged, and I would welcome collaboration between partners to agree an approach to delivering these aims that we can all support, particularly as we look ahead to the roll-out of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle and reformed qualifications. While I am pleased that we have a joint focus on reducing teacher workload, I am keen to understand what assurances the Teachers Panel are willing to provide to ensure this change will also achieve the joint aim of supporting teachers to achieve improved educational standards and outcomes.

With regard to your point concerning the representation of the Teachers Panel in discussions on delivery of the commitment, I agree that it is essential that the Teachers Panel is fully involved in discussions regarding the implementation of the commitment. I also agree that the proper mechanisms available within the SNCT structure should be used to achieve this. As you have noted, the Scottish Government and COSLA are working together at pace to develop a fuller understanding of how reduced class contact time can be effectively achieved across all of Scotland's 32 local authorities, taking account of individual local circumstances and contexts. This initial scoping work will ensure that when subsequent implementation discussions are held through the SNCT structure, those discussions are evidence based and we can be jointly assured that any measures proposed are achievable.

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The working group, which you referenced in your letter, has been tasked with providing those assurances, and with reporting progress to SNCT, COSLA Leaders and Ministers, as the work progresses. This due diligence will ensure that measures discussed through SNCT and decisions reached collectively at SNCT can be enacted swiftly. We are happy to share the working group terms of reference with you, when they are finalised.

I have instructed my officials to ensure that this joint scoping work with COSLA is completed as soon as is possible and have also asked them to communicate this to COSLA officers.

I appreciate your co-operation as we move towards formal joint discussions on the implementation of the 90 minute reduction, and look forward to working with you, as equal partners, to deliver this important and significant change for our teachers.

Yours sincerely,



**JENNY GILRUTH MSP**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills**

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