

# EIS RESPONSE ON COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP PROPOSAL



## 1. The authority's proposal says:

We will group schools into collectives to work together. These collectives would be based on shared locations and communities, decided by elected members.

We will create a collective leadership team, all of whom would work across the schools. The collective model is flexible and could handle different numbers of schools, primary and secondary schools, larger and smaller schools etc.

## EIS union members' response is:

The EIS is in favour of increased collaboration, sharing experiences, specialist PTs, sharing resources etc. The Local Association contend this already happens across the majority of Argyll and Bute schools. Headteachers link in with the Central Team who help to provide overall strategic leadership. It is already a duty of every Headteacher, in accordance with SNCT, "(The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers – the tripartite negotiating body that agrees all teachers' Ts&Cs) to "work in partnership with parents, other professionals, agencies and other schools."

This does not provide an explanation or rationale for the Executive Head/Collective Leadership/Head of Schools model. The quality of school leadership is known to be a critical factor in ensuring quality of experience for young people in schools, and of outcomes.

Concerns have been raised around what will be included/excluded from the collectives. Will they include Primary, Secondary, 2-18 Joint campuses, Gaelic units, ASN schools, and faith schools? If so, what about the leadership requirements of the Church in terms of school leadership?

This proposal runs counter to the message constantly communicated to schools about each school being unique and having its own context. Members spoke of the consistent hard work they have put into their schools and communities, especially through the current pandemic. They speak of the deep understanding and knowledge of pupils and families and are concerned that their ability to lead their schools will be undermined.

Using the term 'collective leadership' is disingenuous when the model really relies on a weakening of leadership structures within each school in favour of a model of heroic leadership which places too much responsibility and workload demand upon one individual whilst minimising the day-to-day leadership role of the Headteacher onsite in a school building. This is contrary to the [Empowered Schools](#) agenda.

## 2. The authority's proposal says:

The proposal is not intended to remove Headteachers from schools – it is intended to strengthen our leadership capacity.

The Head of School has first-hand day to day understanding of their school, pupils and community. Their voice in the collective leadership team ensures the school and its needs are fully represented in all decision-making. The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for driving excellence across the whole collective.

Current Head teachers are regularly out of schools acting as strategic leaders; working within the Local Authority or national/regional committees, liaising with community partners, attending Career Long Professional Learning and attending events to understand the emerging national context and drivers of change so that they can lead improvement in their schools. It is for this reason that “the role of a depute headteacher is to assist and, where necessary, deputise for the headteacher in the conduct of school affairs” and why DHTs are appropriately remunerated within the job-sizing toolkit.

## EIS union members' response is:

The proposal is that DHTs or current HTs can become Head of Schools and deputise for the Executive Head who will be out of each school for the majority of the week, providing 'strategic leadership' to the collective.

As such, this proposal will reduce the amount of time that each school has access to a HT and there will be consequences of this, however unintended. Headteachers attending events is not equivalent to permanent dilution of their roles across multiple establishments.

DHTs are not there to permanently deputise for a HT, even if the DHT is now called a Head of School. If the Head of Schools are, in reality, carrying out the role of the HT in the school without remuneration then a pay claim will be made in this respect. Furthermore, Head of Schools will now have specialisms across the collective which means they may also be out of school for a variety of reasons, including for attending CLPL or liaising with community partners.

This proposal does not address the problem of Headteachers being overworked.

## 3. The authority's proposal says:

The Head of Schools will have overall responsibility for the good order of the school, and for maintaining the high quality of learning experience for the school's children and young people – just the same way that a Head Teacher does in the current model.

The Head of School will be the person who understands where each child is in their learning journey, and maintains a relationship with parents, carers and the local community. Unlike a Head Teacher, most Heads of School will be non-teaching.

The only exceptions will be Heads of our very smallest schools, with 10 pupils or less. This will allow the Heads of School, our most experienced educators, the capacity to work strategically across their collective and to take on specialisms, developing skills in specific areas of education for sharing across the collective.

The responsibility for Child Plans will lie with the Head of School, as it currently does with the Head Teacher. The Named Person will remain located in the schools, as it is in the current model.

The ultimate responsibility for the school's budget will lie with the Head of School, as it currently does with the Head Teacher.

## **EIS union members' response is:**

What is the difference between a Head of Schools and a Headteacher, other than they also have additional specialisms across the collective? If that is the case then they should be job-sized to ensure they are being appropriately paid. This may mean they are paid more than current Headteachers are. This proposal would require significant investment, not savings or financial stagnation, if it were to work. Furthermore, it is unclear how these specialisms will be job-sized.

## **4. The authority's proposal says:**

The proposal intends to improve recruitment and afford career progression.

The Collective Leadership model will offer more support to our Heads of School. Working in collaboration with the other Heads of School across the Collective, they will be less isolated in their role and able to access local, specialist knowledge as and when they need it. This builds capacity into the system. With no formal teaching commitment they will have time to engage in high quality school improvement and collaboration not just across the Collective but also with school leaders in other Local Authorities. The teaching resource in the school will be supplemented to allow the non-teaching element of the new Head of School role. This gives our school leaders capacity to focus on the effective running of their schools and time to focus on continuous school improvement, securing better outcomes for all of our children and young people. And it provides our children and young people with a focused class teacher, whose sole responsibility is to teach.

## **EIS union members' response is:**

We accept that there are recruitment and retention problems in some areas of Argyll and Bute, but we are unsure how this proposal will make this any better.

What evidence does the local authority have that these proposals will incentivise applicants? The issues with housing and regeneration require to be addressed. There needs to be an increase in local opportunities which would help address the declining population. This proposal will not help. The authority should look at why it struggles to grow and retain its own senior leaders.

The role of the Head of Schools is, in one way, much broader than a Headteacher's role i.e. with specialisms across collectives; but in another way it is undermined as a Headteacher role. For example, the [Headteacher Charter](#) states Headteachers are "empowered to design a staffing structure which best supports the school's curriculum and leadership requirements, working within their delegated staffing budget and supported by their Local Authority and SNCT/LNCT agreements and guidance." Clearly that area of responsibility would be undermined by this proposal.

Concerns were also raised about the notion of being a "specialist" for a number of schools to call on – members see this as an advisor's role, and not a head teacher or Head of School acting as a consultative 'specialist' could also add to the considerable workload of a Headteacher or Head of School.

HTs spoke positively about the support currently provided by Education Officers and the supportive networks of Headteachers already in place. They feel that, therefore, this proposed structure will add nothing positive beyond what was in place before Education Officers had their school responsibility removed from them at Christmas time.

## **5. The authority's proposal says:**

The proposal intends to improve outcomes for children and young people and to maintain schools in their local communities.

## **EIS union members' response is:**

The EIS sees little to no analysis within the Community Services Committee paper, nor within the proposal being used as an engagement document, of educational rationale for the introduction of multi-headships. There is some reference to objectives as set by national government but nothing that explains and evidences how this approach will deliver those objectives.

The EIS is in favour of increased collaboration, sharing experiences, specialist PTs, sharing resources etc. The Local Association contend this already happens across the majority of Argyll and Bute schools. This does not provide an explanation or rationale for the Executive Head/Collective Leadership/Head of Schools model.

The quality of school leadership is known to be a critical factor in ensuring quality of experience for young people in schools, and of outcomes.

The EIS understands and supports the benefits to learner outcomes of school collaboration and sharing of resources in the main but this can be done without the introduction of Executive Heads. The EIS wish to see the evidence base for the assumptions/claims made with regards to educational benefits of Executive Heads and this model of leadership. As stated in the promotional film these new collectives will make it easier for schools to plan together, share expertise, share resources, to moderate pupils achievements and to learn from each other – all of these things are currently happening in our schools. School leaders are already “embedded within the school to understand day to day issues.” What is the local authority's proposal for ensuring collegiate working is embedded in any leadership model?

## **6. The authority's proposal says:**

The duties of the Head of School and Executive Head Teacher roles will be in accordance with the SNCT Handbook Headteachers and Depute Headteachers.

The duties of these new roles, and particularly the specialisms allocated to Heads of School, are part of the ongoing consultation process.

“The role of the Executive Head Teacher is to promote high quality learning and teaching to secure improved educational outcomes for the benefit of pupils and the community, under the direction of the local Council. Executive Head Teachers have a corporate responsibility to contribute to an agenda of ongoing improvement in their school collective and across their Council area.”

“A Head of School will deputise for the Executive Head Teacher for their school and will support the Executive Head Teacher in the performance of his/her duties.”

The salary for the Head of School posts will be job sized using the SNCT approved job sizing toolkit under the Depute Headteachers and Headteachers spine: Appendix 2.1 - SNCT Handbook. This toolkit is used to determine the salary for all promoted posts in Scottish schools and is approved by Argyll and Bute's Local Association Secretary for the EIS.

## EIS union members' response is:

This is very misleading and factually inaccurate. These roles cannot be "in accordance with the SNCT Handbook" because neither post nor job title exist within the SNCT Handbook. The EIS does not believe these posts can be adequately job-sized. Is there a draft of the job sizing completed?

The SNCT report [Headships and Beyond](#) takes cognisance of the fact there are many 'multi-establishment Heads' in Scotland. The overwhelming majority of these are Headteachers for no more than two schools at the same educational stage.

Paragraph 9.3 outlines ongoing issues with these posts including the concern that they are created for purely financial or budgetary reasons as opposed to educational rationale. The report states "when advertising multi-establishment headship posts, Councils should ensure that the issues of consultation, support, workload and rationale for the post have been addressed". The EIS does not believe that qualification has been met in this case.

The group had initially considered adding material on Executive Headships but agreed that such a role should not form part of the career pathway for school leaders in Scotland. Therefore, the SNCT pay scales and job-sizing toolkit/discussions do not cover Executive Headships nor Head of Schools.

The SNCT working group intend to produce a Code of Practice on multi-establishment Heads which would ensure the posts are appropriately job-sized. It would seem sensible for Argyll and Bute Council to continue working as part of the SNCT via COSLA and await this Code of Practice. The infrastructure for creating posts, consulting and negotiating already exists.

The EIS believes some of the duties of the Executive Head are more akin to the job of a quality improvement officer, a quality improvement manager or a Head of Service e.g. "to contribute to an agenda of ongoing improvement in their school collective."

The duties of the Head of Schools cannot be undertaken by a Principal Teacher in a primary school, unless every time they perform these duties they receive acting-up allowance. It is not the role of a Depute to deputise on a permanent or semi-permanent basis for the Headteacher. This will amount to pay claims. There is a world of difference between "deputising" and "acting-up".

Either the duties are in accordance with SNCT or they are not. If they are then there should be no need for them to be part of the 'ongoing consultation process.' If they are not then they need to be negotiated and agreed by union reps locally via LNCT.

## 7. The authority's proposal says:

This proposal is lawful and appropriate in terms of GTCS registration requirements for a school leader to be registered at a different level. This already occurs eg in 2-18 schools, where the Head is either Primary or Secondary qualified. The leadership hierarchy that sits within these schools ensures appropriately registered GTCS staff are in place within each part of the settings. Within a local context our 3-18 schools are currently led in this way. We ensure that there are appropriately registered and experienced DHTs/PTs to counter-balance the registration and experience of the HT.

## **EIS union members' response is:**

EIS concerns regarding 'potential unlawfulness' of the proposals (as they stand) centre, in particular, on the provisions of Education (Scotland) Act 1980; the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000; the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 and the Requirements for Teachers (Scotland) Regulations 2005.

Further, the development of the post of Executive Headteacher runs contrary, in our opinion, to such direction and wishes of COSLA and the GTCS as outlined in the joint letter to Councils dated 9 October 2019 (copy attached) and, we believe, to the judgment of Lord Malcolm in the Appeal by General Teaching Council of Scotland 2021 SLT 828.

The EIS maintains that the GTCS has not considered the standards of education and training appropriate to an "Executive Headteacher" as proposed in this model as it is a purely strategic role which is more akin to a role in the central team. As such, the duties of Headteacher would remain with the Head of Schools.

## **8. The authority's proposal says:**

Our total population is falling, and the age profile is increasing which means we may need to look at mothballing schools if another suggestion, like this proposal, is not looked at.

## **EIS union members' response is:**

What does a recruitment "crisis" look like? 15% of jobs are re-advertised – are they then filled? How many are not advertised?"

## **9. The authority's proposal says:**

National education reform means we need to change. The key papers are: the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) review of Scottish Education – report published June 2021; consultation on the reform of the SQA and Education Scotland led by Dr Ken Muir which was announced at the end of September 2021 as well as a review of A Curriculum for Excellence – Implementation framework published late October 2021; Additional Support for Learning Implementation (2020); ICEA report 2020 (International Council of Education Advisors); Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) across Scotland were recently reviewed by the Scottish Government, published 16/12/2021.

## **EIS union members' response is:**

These are all reviews which are discussed by SNCT if there is to be a change to working practices, terms and conditions. If the local authority wish to genuinely consult on any local changes then they should do so through a listening exercise, not through a marketing agency. Any changes locally have to be negotiated and agreed with trade unions. Trade unions are not on equitable footing with 'local business' in terms of consultation and negotiation. The authority has a duty to negotiate with unions on these changes. If changes cannot be agreed then there is a dispute mechanism via SNCT.



A marketing company is carrying out this engagement exercise as a PR exercise to persuade parents and communities to accept this proposal. The EIS do not believe it is a genuinely open consultation which may result in the proposal not being implemented.

## 10. The authority's proposal says:

There is a similar model in operation in the Western Isles.

## EIS union members' response is:

Western Isles Council have cited Argyll & Bute as an example in making a proposal about Executive Heads. Previously, the Executive Head model was voted down by councillors in Western Isles. Regardless, the proposal is not the same as Argyll & Bute's as it does not propose collective leadership models of Executive Heads over clusters to the same extent. The EIS in Western Isles are also challenging this proposal. Indeed, a former Chief Executive of GTCS who lives on the Isle of Lewis intervened, stating that he [felt the proposal was one of a business model, with no educational rationale, which would dilute the identity of the schools.](#)

## 11. The authority's proposal says:

Executive Heads will be recruited from existing local Head Teachers, ensuring that a high level of relevant, local experience is brought to the position. Part of their role will be to take local concerns from each school in their collective to the central Education Services team, amplifying the local community's voice in regional conversations.

## EIS union members' response is:

It is unclear that there will be enough interest to effectively implement this proposal. It has not been adequately explained the difference between central team strategic function, Exec Head strategic function, Head of School with a specialism, Depute when Head of School is absent, Lead Teacher that is different from Head of School specialist and PTs under this proposal. How does the role of Lead Teacher fit in to this proposed structure as it seems to the EIS that this role can achieve some of the objectives including that of the Head of School specialisms and shared working practices.

## 12. The authority's proposal says:

This proposal allows for more teaching time as Head of Schools will not be class committed.

Depending on the size of the school the role of DHT may become non-teaching to allow capacity for the Head of School to take on a specialism.

Teaching Head Teachers have told us they are spending up to 70% of their week teaching. This means that they do not have the capacity to focus on the strategic leadership of the school, developing the curriculum and learning about what works well elsewhere. Although non-teaching,

the Heads of School will still maintain a presence in classrooms in order to drive forward quality assurance and school improvement, and to maintain close relationships with their teaching staff and learners. This model is designed to give our teachers, focussed time to teach, and leaders, focussed time to lead.

## **EIS union members' response is:**

There will only be more teaching time if more teachers are recruited. This is something the EIS would support. Otherwise, the EIS fails to see how a Head of Schools is not simply a Headteacher with additional responsibilities of specialisms across a collective.

If Head of Schools can be non-teaching, plus an Executive Head is appointed as non-teaching, and some DHTs may be non-teaching, then more classroom teachers will be required to be appointed. Is there going to be investment in this proposal and what are the authority's plans for recruiting more classroom teachers?

Some of our members like the teaching part of the teaching headteacher remit and have no desire to become non-teaching nor have a specialism across a collective.

There is also the fear from others that they will not become non-teaching, due to the lack of supply teachers, meaning they will be running a school, teaching and being in charge of a specialism across the collective, whilst NOT on a Head Teacher salary.

The proposal is for HTs to stay in natural roles and then progress to End Goal of the model within 5 years. School leaders can still teach classes "if and when they choose to"/ smaller schools under 10 still have a teaching Head of School." Where is the equity in that?

## **EIS union members' issues are:**

- Workload
- Resourcing
- Communication
- Collegiate working
- Transparent decision-making structures
- No unnecessary changes
- Equality Impact Assessments prepared with involvement of union equality reps
- Pay and duties for posts in line with SNC