

Argyll and Bute EIS Members' Briefing on Executive Heads Proposal - September 2021



Invites went to all Argyll & Bute EIS members ahead of an online meeting on Thursday 23rd September which over 85 members attended. This presented an opportunity for members to share their concerns on Argyll and Bute Council's proposal on Executive Heads and to hear the national EIS position on the Council's proposal to introduce a new post of Executive Head which we regard as cut costing exercise dressed up in pseudo educational rationale.

STAND, a marketing and consultancy agency, have been tasked by Argyll and Bute Council to "showcase" the benefits of Executive Heads over the next few months. Following committee meeting in June when Councillors asked that the proposals in the 'transformation reform strategy' be widely consulted on, the Council have hired this external firm (we are currently unaware of the full cost of this) to carry out wider 'consultation' with stakeholders: "Empowering our Educators."

A calendar of the proposed consultation exercise is cited in Appendix 1 on page 3 of this communication.

It is unclear from the proposals exactly what the role and remit of Executive Heads would be or what the true educational rationale is, but the potential budget savings are clear - cutting the number of Headteachers from 80 to around 14.

The EIS nationally has major concerns over these proposals and members locally have highlighted a number of issues. These include:

- GTCS registration – how would someone registered to teach in primary be qualified to be an Executive Head over a secondary school and vice versa?
- How would redeployment be managed? Would there be redundancies?
- What would this mean for those who are DHTs or PTs on days when the Executive Head is not in the school? Does their workload increase? Will this have a knock-on impact to the rest of the school community? It's clear from the proposals that some PTs will be expected to deputise in primary schools. This is a serious concern for parents as well as teachers.
- How does this align with career progression? Executive Head posts don't exist in the SNCT handbook so how can they be job-sized? How could the new SLTs be benchmarked, if one post is outside the agreed arrangements?
- An Executive Head may have no or limited knowledge of the schools and little time to build this knowledge. How are relationships built if not in school grounds?
- What is the educational rationale? How can it possibly improve attainment?
- How does this positively enhance how schools already operate?
- This will impact local decision-making abilities. How does this impact the Empowered Schools Agenda?

- Should a lot of the 'executive remit' not be covered by the existing Central Team?
- “Empowering Educators” misses out large groups of the school community like ASN, cleaners, caterers who will also be significantly affected, but not acknowledged.
- There is already a recruitment crisis for Head Teachers in primary schools in rural areas. This will be worsened by the proposal.
- Identity of individual schools will be lost.
- There are inequalities within the proposal.
- External strategic overview is meaningless. Headteachers should not be taken out of schools.

The SNCT report [Beyond Headships](#) 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 within the same sector and GTCS registration category. The SNCT intends to produce a Code of Practice on multi-establishment Heads. 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.

What Next?

EIS reps will be consulted on the proposals in October, along with Headteachers. School staff will also be consulted by their own Headteachers on the proposals in October. Between October-March, all staff will be able to attend 1:1 ‘engagement sessions’ (consultation meetings).

The Local Association is encouraging all members to do the following as soon as possible:

- Read the consultation proposals (when they come out) and SNCT document.
- Send a note of your concerns to the EIS Local Association Secretary - Alison Palmer argyllandbute@eis.org.uk. If you can do this collectively as a school branch then even better!
- Have a think about what you are really looking for. Is it reduced workload? Is it a reduction in contact time or class sizes? What would really help close the attainment gap? Send Alison a list of these solutions too.
- There is a concern that some schools are already running with reduced SLT and teachers acting up to posts without proper pay, training or support. If you are in this situation, please fill in the [Workplace Audit](#) and send it to Alison Palmer argyllandbute@eis.org.uk
- A further briefing will be sent out following the union consultation in October, prior to school-based or 1:1 consultation meetings. A briefing for parents will also be prepared. If you attend a 1:1 consultation meeting, make sure you ask for an EIS rep to attend with you.
- If you would like to join the working group on this campaign, please email Dee Matthew, EIS Organiser dmatthew@eis.org.uk for more information!

Appendix 1 - Consultation timeline

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PDF - 61 KB

Dates	Audience	Method
Sep 2021	Policymakers	Share overview of engagement strategy
Sep	Educators: Head Teachers focus groups	Workshop sessions to consult on and explore proposals
Oct	Educators: Unions and professional associations	Workshop sessions to consult on and explore proposals
Oct–Nov	Educators: All Head Teachers in Argyll and Bute	Workshop sessions to consult on and explore proposals
Oct–Nov	Educators: School staff	Head Teachers engage with school staff internally
Oct–Mar	Policymakers	Ongoing one-to-one engagement
Nov–Mar	Media: Press and reporters	Digitally supplied press packs
Nov	Educators: HE/FE partners at Argyll College and SAMS	Workshop sessions to consult on and explore proposals
Nov–Jan	Communities: Parents, communities and pupils	Self-led group engagement (toolkit provided)
Nov–Jan (2 weeks tbc)	All: Open consultation	One-to-one virtual drop-in sessions
Nov–Jan	Communities: Businesses, diocese and Bòrd na Gàidhlig	Electronic direct mail campaign
Nov–Mar	All	Ongoing engagement via dedicated social channels
Apr	Argyll and Bute Council	Findings and analysis review
Apr–May	Argyll and Bute Council	Informed development of proposals based on findings
May 2022	Head Teachers, policymakers and unions	Presentation of findings and refined proposals