

Renfrewshire Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

To: Renfrewshire Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

On: 11th June 2024

NQT Induction Days (Fri 11th August 2023 and 12th August 2024)

Report by
Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side)

Background

The members of JNC will be aware that annually Renfrewshire Council organises an induction day to welcome the new intake of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to the Local Authority where important information about the coming session is communicated. In past years the trade unions had been invited to speak to each new cohort and present the benefits of trade union membership to Renfrewshire's NQTs.

This session's induction event took place before the start of session, on Friday 11th August 2023 but the Trade Unions were not allocated the customary slot at that event. At that event the Trade Unions were merely offered a space where a stall could be set up to engage with NQTs during their lunch break. This marked a change to previous practice; a change decided unilaterally by education managers-itself a concern as it undermines the principles of trust and collegiality which are expected to underpin discussions and which characterise many of our other interactions.

Following this, the joint secretary Teachers' Side met with the then Head of Service and agreed that the programme on future induction days would include an opportunity to address the NQTs from a representative of the trade unions.

In May 2024 however after some changes in personnel, the Trade Unions received a message, again, that the Trade Unions would not be allocated the opportunity to address this year's new intake of NQTs on 12th August 2024 despite having received verbal assurances to the contrary. Rather, it was suggested that an education manager would promote the benefits of union membership and thereafter facilitate a Teams meeting for interested parties.

Clearly, the teacher trade unions are keen to participate in the induction day and are aggrieved at the lack of discussion around the change for this session. Subsequent verbal assurances were given and accepted in good faith and so renegeing on those assurances would amount to a breach of trust that might require all future negotiations to be minuted and recorded.

Moreover, the teachers' side considers that Renfrewshire's new intake of teachers may be disadvantaged by denying them the opportunity to hear about the benefits of trade union membership.

Furthermore, it is a concern that the stance adopted by Renfrewshire in this matter runs counter to expectations of cooperative and collaborative working and that it differs from some other local authorities who actively encourage trade union participation in NQT induction days.

Action

The Teachers' Side is requesting, in the interests of equity and the furtherance of collegiality and good working relations, that the short time slot be re-incorporated to the coming event in August 2024 and that trade union input is made a standing item at future NQT induction days.