



Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association

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## NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION - June 2025

### Message from the President

The summer break will soon be upon us. Every one of you has gone the extra mile for the young people to ensure they get the very best on their educational journey. Many of you are exhausted as a result of the ever-growing demands on your time, too often, way beyond the contractual 35hrs per week.

The summer break belongs to you, it is yours to do with as you please. There is no obligation to do additional school related work. Therefore, switch off from school and switch on to the most precious 'me time'.

It is my wish that all of you have a fabulous summer break, spending quality time on yourself and with those that are important to you in your day-to-day life in the real world outside of school. Relax and relish the next few weeks without the sound of the school bell dictating your day!

Stuart Hunter  
President (2023-2025)



SSTA President, Stuart Hunter

### Cabinet Secretary at the SSTA Congress

Jenny Gilruth MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, attended the SSTA 80th Congress at Stirling on 9th May. The Cabinet Secretary addressed Congress on key areas of education policy and reform:



- **Reform Progress:** The pace of reform has been deliberately slowed to ensure meaningful engagement with the profession. National 5 exams will be retained following strong support from teachers.
- **New Qualifications Body:** Legislation is progressing to replace the SQA and remove inspection from Education Scotland.
- **Funding Challenges:** The Scottish Attainment Challenge is under review as it now supports core school budgets. A call was made for fresh thinking on how schools are funded in future.
- **Teacher Numbers & Contact Time:** Teacher numbers are being protected, and plans to reduce class contact time remain a priority. Councils have been required to maintain 2023 staffing and learning hour levels.
- **Behaviour in Schools:** A national action plan is underway to address behaviour challenges, with further work on consequences expected before the summer break.
- **Additional Support for Learning:** With 40% of pupils now identified as having additional needs, there's a call to revisit the 2004 ASL Act and invest more in specialist support.
- **Teacher-Led Change:** New leadership roles have been created to ensure teachers drive curriculum and qualifications reform.

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[View the Cabinet Secretary address Congress and answer members questions.](#)

# Teachers: The Heart of Education

80th Annual Congress, 9 & 10 May 2025

## Stuart Hunter, Presidential Address

Distinguished guests, sister professional associations from these islands, Past Presidents and to all of our delegates from districts and areas of Scotland, welcome to our 80th Annual Congress. Eighty One Years ago, a number of Secondary teachers left the EIS to form the Scottish Secondary Teachers Association, an association dedicated to being the voice of secondary teachers, that dedication has been strictly adhered to and continues to this day.

At our congress over the next 2 days, we will hear a number of motions being debated that originate from you, members of the SSTA, dealing with a variety of issues that directly impact on the day job of teaching at all levels in our schools.

These last 2 years as President of this association, I have had the incredible privilege of attending the meetings of all of our committees, worked with the members of Executive and Council. It has been an enormous learning experience to listen to the passion and desire of all our colleagues who only want the best for our members. It is my hope and desire that my address today will bring into focus the issues that you have highlighted at these meetings, to express the anger and frustration that we face when dealing with certain bodies as part of our day job.

Ultimately, as President, I see it as my role to be your voice, the voice of Scotland's secondary teachers, whether that be teachers in the classroom, ASN staff, Pupil Support staff, Guidance teachers, Principal teachers, Faculty Heads, Head Teachers and their leadership team.

With this in mind, you will note that our strapline for the coming year is:

Teachers: The Heart of Education

Please indulge me as I explain why this strapline is crucial for all of us in education to consider.

"Everyone who remembers his own education remembers teachers, not methods and techniques.



*Stuart Hunter, President (2023-2025)*

The teacher is the heart of the educational system."  
—Sidney Hook American Philosopher

Sidney Hook hits the bullseye when he speaks of the learner's experience in school. Our young people have no concept or understanding of pedagogy, from their perspective, the teacher is either good or bad. Often this is the signpost of great teaching. When the expertise and experience of pedagogical experience is so seamless, then meeting the student's needs for learning and understanding can be achieved by constantly adapting to the needs of the learner.

The relationship between student and teacher takes place in the learning environment. In that space and time, the teacher is at the heart of education. Not the policy makers, the exam boards, the employers, or the inspectorate, it is the teacher!

"Teachers should be trusted... CfE is about the teacher in the classroom, knowing their students, designing their lessons to fit their needs, it should and must be a bottom up rather than top-down approach to education."

*John Swinney, Education Minister*

The words of our current first minister when he had responsibility for education. There is an old saying, when you want a job done properly, leave it to the professionals who know what they are doing." Teachers are the professionals. Constant micro-management

# SSTA

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from all of the other bodies demonstrate that they do not trust teachers and their professionalism. They know better. Rather than facilitate the experts in the classrooms, they dictate how it should be done. It really is the case that our education system is controlled from the top down. Controlled by those who are not in front of the learners, but they know best! A bottom-up approach values the professional judgment and expertise of the teacher who is at the centre, the heart of education.

So let's take a quick tour of some of the agencies that should be facilitators but consider themselves so expert that they can dictate what teachers should be doing in the learning environment when they are pretty remote from the day-to-day experience of actual teaching.

## QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND

Formerly known as the SQA, they are currently undertaking a root and branch review of their operations. This involves consultation with all of the various stakeholders and interested parties. Like many other organisations, the consultation is a flawed product before it even gets off the ground. Stakeholders are those that have a direct responsibility in the development, construction, and execution of the various qualifications. Interested parties will have input but are not directly involved in the way that the stakeholders are. Therefore, whilst the interested party's input is valuable, it should not override that of the stakeholders who have the ultimate responsibility of delivery.

In other words, it is incumbent on Qualifications Scotland to engage with the teacher's professional associations as partners in the consultation and development process.

I will repeat the above point again for absolute clarity:

Teachers delivering the exams are NOT your employees, teachers are partners.

As a government sanctioned body, schools pay Qualifications Scotland to produce and deliver exam courses that meet the highest levels of integrity. When schools pay for a product, schools are the customer or clients, Qualifications Scotland is a service provider.

As clients the SSTA has repeatedly asked that Qualifications Scotland, the service provider that you take account of timings of the start of the academic year in schools, the contractual Working Time Agreements made in each school designed to control, in part, workload.

This is routinely ignored and, as a result, SQA/Qualifications Scotland is one of the largest contributors extreme toxic workload. Updates tend to arrive, well into the delivery of courses requiring more time to go back and amend what has already been taught. As these are often high-stake exams and are significantly important to the learners, all other work is put to the side. The result is that teachers are stressed, leading to exhaustion, compelled to work for no pay beyond the 35hrs just to catch up on the other tasks such as marking and preparation of lessons.

Your repeated failure to listen to the teacher's concerns is significantly contributing to stress levels that is damaging both the mental and physical health of teachers delivering your product.

Consultation is an important element of any partnership. We are often told that you do consult teachers. However, this appears to be only the teachers you employ. This immediately creates a conflict of interest for those teachers you employ!

The SSTA Education Committee has carried out a number of surveys of our members across secondary schools in Scotland and they are all saying the same thing: The SQA/Qualifications Scotland are one of the major contributors to unmanageable workload and stress!



You are facilitators, you are not in the classroom, teachers are! You may be 'at arm's length' from the Scottish Government. However, Teachers are at the Heart of Education and as a service provider you should be working with us, not issuing random edicts that contribute to excess workload.

We are educators. We are professionals. Too often, we are burdened with top-down directives and unrealistic timelines. We did not join this profession to be micromanaged by an agency that sees education as a system to control rather than a community to nurture.

## Education Scotland: School Inspections

The current review is an opportunity to fundamentally change school inspections. Recent discussions with the SSTA suggest they want this to be 'Supportive'.

However, what might being 'supportive' actually look like? Will time be taken to acknowledge and address that staff are on their knees? Will measures be taken to evaluate mental health support? Will L.A. be held to account for the numerous policy documents that supposedly address issues facing all staff, but simply gather dust in a filing cabinet for fear of reputational



damage? Will the continuing rise of dual qualifications be challenged?

The SSTA recently had a consultation meeting with Education Scotland where these questions and more were raised. There was a positive vibe to the discussion and encouraging to hear a positive response to our concerns with genuine motivations to take on board our concerns.

Nonetheless, it was also acknowledged that, like most educational consultations, a whole host of interested parties were consulted but referred to as stakeholders. This raises once again that the wide consultation, in itself, informative and valuable, there still remains the ever-present risk that the teacher voice is diminished.

The role of Local Authority Inspections was also discussed. It is vital that this is looked at with some scrutiny.

I will come to CoSLA in more detail later. For the moment it is imperative that the inspectorate look closely at the pressure that comes from the employer.

Let's take exam results as an example. Our Head Teachers come under pressure to demonstrate success in attainment. We are all familiar with the meetings we have with the head teacher in August to discuss the success or otherwise of the exam results. Get your predictions right, you get a smooth ride. Less than satisfactory results, we can expect an explanation of what went wrong.

Head Teachers also have meetings about the exam results and experience a similar approach. High stake exams not only put pressure to bear on the student, it also brings significant pressure on the Head Teacher. Tariff scores matter. The higher the score the better the school is perceived. If you are looking for a possible reason why advice from SQA that dual presentation should only take place in exceptional circumstances is routinely ignored, then join the dots. Instead of seeing a fall in the numbers we see a continuing rise in numbers of dual presentations. Head Teachers put pressure on teachers to do dual presentation, Head Teachers are under pressure to raise attainment and increase the tariff points for the school. Reputation takes priority over the needs of the learners!

Two questions for the new inspection regime:

1. As part of Local Authority inspections, will you interrogate why schools continue to do dual presentation?
2. As part of a school inspections, will you seek the evidence to support rising dual presentation?

If inspections are meant to be 'supportive', then dual presentation needs to be challenged as it is a significant

driver of workload and stress.

Teacher's professional judgement is by-passed, and the top-down approach continues.

The scores from exam results are a significant component of the mythological league tables used by the media.

These tables are an abomination! They have absolutely no bearing on what happens in schools. The amazing work that goes on in schools every day, the number of students who work their socks off to get a National 4 etc goes completely under the radar and is a slap in the face to every single student who have given their absolute best but did not get higher tariff points. The media should be ashamed of themselves for being complicit in a false narrative of the work that goes on in our schools.

Therefore, will you acknowledge that teachers are the heart of education and as an inspectorate, you will actively facilitate teachers to do their job?



## SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Successive Ministers for Education have made valiant attempts to improve the educational experience in Scotland. There have been a plethora of reforms and reviews and yet we are on an inevitable downward spiral. Despite what appears to be sincere attempts to improve the lot of teachers and learners alike, progress has been glacial. A whole series of initiatives have fallen by the wayside, recruitment and retention is in crisis, and despite the political spin, the Covid pandemic has exposed the growing crisis that is upon us.

Despite the initiatives, the investments, the reviews, Education in Scotland has passed the tipping point leading to crisis. The brutal reality is that EDUCATION IS BROKEN. It only survives due to those working in schools going way beyond their contractual working hours for the sake of the students. The cost to mental and physical health is enormous. Teaching is

not an attractive profession, pay and conditions are ridiculously poor compared to other sectors. To make matters worse, there is a siege mentality that exists in many, if not all of the organisations dealing with education in Scotland.

The issues are multiple. However, to highlight the disaster unfolding in front of us all right now is the crisis that exists within ASN provision.

There has been an explosion in the number of young people identified with Additional Support Needs (ASN). Yet instead of increased support, we are seeing ASN specialists being cut to save money. ASN staff are overwhelmed, and the system is breaking.

More and more ASN pupils are placed in mainstream classes, with limited—or worse, no—support.

Teachers are now expected to deliver ASN support on top of an already demanding curriculum, preparing multiple sets of differentiated materials. As a result, ASN learners are being failed by a system not built to meet their needs.

It is the GTCS registration category that informs employment. In 2020, the Court of Session clarified GTC Scotland's long held position that a teacher must be employed in a role that aligns with their registration category. The four categories of registration are:

- Primary Education
- Secondary (Subject) Education
- Additional Support Needs
- Further Education

Teachers are at the heart of education. As the government, it is your duty to properly fund and facilitate the urgent support required for all of our young people with ASN. It is not enough to listen. You must act—and act now.

Reform has been worthwhile—but reform without teacher voice at the centre is empty. The professional associations that represent teachers must be front and centre of all consultations. For too long, teacher voice has been drowned out by the cacophony of commentary from every man, woman, and dog!

The Scottish Government is responsible for education policy. While implementation is devolved to Local Authorities, too often, they pick and choose which policies to enforce.

You are the government. You make the policies. It's time to take control, enforce implementation, and stop passing the buck.

Stand up for our teachers. Stand up for all of our learners. Fund, support, and deliver—NOW.

## CoSLA

Not good with acronyms, so took a guess at what COSLA actually stood for.

“Consistently Overdue, Still Lacking Agreement”

“COSLA: Champions of Stalling, Losing All trust”

Some might think I am not that far off!

For over two decades, CoSLA has repeatedly failed to meet pay negotiation deadlines. The only notable exception has been during multi-year pay awards — and even then, success has been the exception, not the rule. Despite the teacher side agreeing to move the deadline to August in good faith, CoSLA still failed to deliver. It raises a serious and fundamental question: why are they even part of the negotiating process if they cannot fulfil this basic responsibility?

The most recent pay deal saw unacceptable consequences for many teachers, as delayed back pay was processed in the new tax year, penalising staff financially. While some local authorities showed compassion, others simply shrugged, refusing to take responsibility.

This is just one symptom of a deeper, long-standing issue: CoSLA continues to use teachers as political pawns, sacrificing the profession in its skirmishes with the Scottish Government. Enough is enough. It's time for CoSLA to act like mature adults, not playground bullies spoiling for a “square go” with ministers, while staff and young people suffer the collateral damage.

Let's be clear about some of that damage:

The widespread exploitation of probationer teachers to plug permanent vacancies is nothing short of abuse of the probationary system. The concept of ‘supernumerary’ has all but vanished.

Every year, many of these early-career teachers buckle under unsustainable workloads and lack of support. They either leave the profession entirely or face slim chances of securing permanent contracts — only to see the next wave of probationers pushed into the same exploitative loop. Cheap labour, at great cost.

Teachers are “at the heart of education” — but when we ask for 90 minutes of ring-fenced time for actual teaching duties like marking and preparation, the horror from CoSLA is palpable. Their preference? More “collegiate time.” Not because it benefits pupils or teachers — but because it's cheaper.

The so-called “national agreement” on terms and conditions is laughably inconsistent. With 32 local authorities come 32 different interpretations, resulting in:

Inequity in maternity and miscarriage leave.

Inequity in applying the “Toolkit.”

Inequity in pay and caseloads for Guidance staff.

Dubious practices such as creating mythical “Primary 8s” or claiming any teacher can teach any subject in the Broad General Education — a direct breach of GTCS guidelines.

Moreover, dual exam presentations continue to rise despite clear instructions that they should only occur in exceptional circumstances. Support for teachers facing abuse is patchy or non-existent. In many cases, staff are actively discouraged from filing reports or calling police due to fears over reputational damage. And while glossy documents on mental health gather dust, teachers work unpaid overtime just to stay afloat — at the cost of their well-being.

This is not sustainable. It is not professional. And it is not acceptable.

We call on CoSLA to stop the political games and start treating Scotland’s teachers — and the young people they serve — with the respect, fairness, and support they deserve.

All of the above is not an exhaustive list, but merely a flavour of the reality.

CoSLA and many of the Local Authorities believe that they are the heart of education and that teachers are a pesky bunch of miscreants who must be micromanaged! Teachers cannot be trusted, and every minute of the WTA must be accounted for! Free overtime is a result of teachers not knowing how to manage their time!

Here is a radical thought. If CoSLA and the individual Local Authorities are the driving force of workload in schools, the epidemic of mental health issues and related physical health conditions, are they fit to run schools?

The brutal truth is that CoSLA, along with the Inspectorate, Qualifications Scotland and the Scottish government believe they are the experts in education.

They believe that by listening to experts who have been out of the classroom for some time are relevant in an education system that is constantly evolving yet many have lost touch with the reality of day-to-day teaching in the classroom in 2025.

In far too many ‘consultations’ the voice of ‘interested parties’ are given equal weighting to the stakeholders. More damning is the lack of voice that the teacher doing the day job has.

Teachers are at the Heart of Education. Teachers are the experts in the application of pedagogical theory. It is the teacher who, in every lesson, calls upon their expertise to adapt their planned lessons at a moment’s notice, when they perceive that the young people are struggling to understand particular concepts or ideas.

When you want an ‘evidenced’ based reason for teaching, then there are no greater experts than the teacher. The most neglected and under used resource of expertise that exists in education. That is why, for great learning to work, for a great educational system to thrive and grow, that nurtures our young people, that helps them on the journey of life, that it is the teacher who is at the heart of education who should be the first port of call when expertise is required. It is also why there must be a radical mind set change by all of the organisations who have input to education that they are NOT the provider; they are the FACILITATORS!

**EDUCATION WORKS BEST WHEN THERE IS BOTTOM-UP RATHER THAN A TOP-DOWN APPROACH.**

**IF YOU WANT A GREAT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THEN IT IS INCUMBANT ON ALL THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THAT YOU SUPPORT THE GREATEST EXPERTS AT OUR DISPOSAL. ASK THE SIMPLE QUESTION: WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOU TO DO THE BEST FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?**

**LISTEN TO THE TEACHERS: THE HEART OF EDUCATION!**

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## GTCs Chief Executive at Congress

Dr Pauline Stephen, Chief Executive and Registrar of the GTCS was a guest speaker at the SSTA 80th Congress at Stirling in May. Dr Stephen spoke on the importance of only secondary qualified teachers teaching in secondary schools and the teacher recruitment crisis in Scotland, and answered questions from delegates.

[View Dr Stephen's presentation to Congress.](#)



*Dr Pauline Stephen, GTCS*



# SSTA General Secretary Report to Congress 2025

Good afternoon, President, distinguished guests, and esteemed delegates of Congress.

It is with profound gratitude, and a deep sense of duty, that I stand before you today, having once again been entrusted with the role of General Secretary.

Over the past ten years, I've had the privilege of serving this organization through a time of significant change. And as we look ahead, it is clear: even greater change lies before us.

## The Challenges We Face

The challenges we face are complex.

They confront us as educators, as trade unionists, as parents, as community members, and as public servants.

Today, freedoms that many once thought were untouchable are at risk. We see the rise of extremism. We see the spread of misinformation. And we see a disturbing erosion of mutual respect, understanding, and accountability. These forces threaten the very foundation of our democratic society.

## Freedom and Responsibility

It is vital, that every citizen, especially those in the public sector, can express their views without fear of censure or reprisal.

Freedom of speech and thought is not a privilege. It is a cornerstone of a resilient, healthy democracy.

This matters deeply to us, because we are in the business of shaping hearts and minds.

But educators cannot, and should not, carry that burden alone. Support from parents, communities, and civic institutions is not optional. It is essential.

Teachers must be trusted.

We must be given the space to educate with integrity. To reason. To explain. To foster critical thinking.

This is how we pass on values of understanding, respect, and responsibility to the next generation.

## Unity and Commitment

The road ahead won't be easy. But it is a road we must travel together. With unity. With courage. And with determination.



*Seamus Searson  
General Secretary*

Let us reaffirm our values. Let us stand firm in our mission. Let us ensure that education, equality, and democracy prevail.

## Our Identity as a Union

From the beginning, our focus has been clear: Secondary teachers, and secondary education. That hasn't changed. It won't change.

For more than 80 years, we've faced challenges. But we've stayed true to the values of our members.

We are a principled union, but also a pragmatic one. We've never accepted that "nothing can be done." We've always worked to find solutions, even when the road was blocked.

What makes the SSTA different is this:

- We don't just highlight problems, we solve them.
- We think differently. We challenge assumptions.
- We understand the bigger picture.

## Pay and the SNCT

Let me turn now to pay. In January, the SNCT submitted our 2025–26 claim: 6% across all SNCT grades. To date, an offer of 3% has been made, and quickly rejected.

Let me be clear: any deal must include a restorative element, not just match inflation. Teachers' salaries must return to the value they once held.

We're open to a multi-year deal, but the figures must protect teachers throughout.

We understand financial pressures. COSLA says it is at the limit.

But this delay, this refusal to act makes teachers feel undervalued and ignored.

*To view the Report of the General Secretary in full, please [follow the link to the SSTA Website](#)*

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## Health and Safety Walkaround in Secondary Schools

The SSTA Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee held an online meeting to explain the process of 'Health and Safety Walkaround in Schools'. The session was led by the Convener Grant McAllister and Iain Glennie Assistant General Secretary who explained the importance of H&S school inspections in a straightforward and interesting way (no jargon). Please follow the link below to see the presentation.



If you would like more information about being a SSTA Health and Safety Rep, do contact the SSTA Head Office at [info@ssta.org.uk](mailto:info@ssta.org.uk)

[Health and Safety Walkaround in Secondary School recording](#)

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## Behaviour Action Plan - Presentation

The Scottish Government published the Relationships and Behaviour Action Plan in August 2024. The 3-year action plan was developed by the Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS) [Improving relationships and behaviour in schools: ensuring safe and consistent environments for all Joint action plan 2024 - 2027](#)

Poor pupil behaviour is a major driver of stress and increased workload and the SSTA has continued to press the Scottish Government for a unified approach to support teachers in meeting the needs of pupils. The SSTA webinar on the Scottish Government's Behaviour Action Plan was well received by members who were able to attend. The webinar was led by our SSTA representative on the SAGRABIS Committee. This presentation gives an overview of the action plan, the way forward and can be [viewed here](#).

The SSTA met with Jenny Gilruth, Cabinet Secretary Education and Skills on 18 June and welcomed the developments in the action plan. As it ensures a national approach to pupil behaviour in schools. The SSTA emphasised for the action plan to be successful it was important that additional professional support in schools such as school counsellors, school nurses, school social workers, etc. as an essential component and must be provided for all secondary schools. The SSTA pushed for protected Government funding for this purpose and for the additional staffing not to be left to the discretion of local authorities.



# Motions Passed at Congress 2025

Please find below a note of all the motions passed at the 80th Annual Congress of the SSTA.

## **Emergency Motion - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)**

Congress notes the recent UK Supreme Court judgement regarding the meaning of sex as used in the Equality Act and the Interim Guidance issued by the EHRC shortly after that judgement.

Congress is aware that strong feelings existed on both sides prior to the judgement and that strong feelings have continued unabated since. Irrespective of those arguments, the law has been clarified and schools are required to operate in compliance with the Equality Act. However, it is clear that the Interim Guidance from the EHRC has now rendered the 2021 guidance on 'Supporting transgender young people in schools' out of date, with parts of the guidance recommending actions that are not in compliance with sex-based rights within the Equality Act.

Congress recognises that schools and school leaders do not have the luxury of waiting for updated guidance – they are required to be acting in compliance with the Equality Act now. Congress therefore calls on the Scottish Government to provide clarity to schools and school leaders by immediately withdrawing the 2021 guidance and providing updated guidance as a matter of urgency.

**Proposer: Gordon West, Equalities Committee**

## **Motion A - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)**

Congress is acutely aware that workload requirements result in teachers working on average, 11 hours above contractual requirements.

Congress calls on His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIe) to include a section in the new inspection framework that describes the adequacy of the resourcing, funding, and staffing of schools. In addition, this framework will require this information to be benchmarked against comparator schools.

**Proposer: Paul Cochrane, Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee**

## **Motion B - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)**

Congress is concerned that there is currently a lack of consistency of approach across Local Authorities in the provisions for Family Leave to employees covered by the SNCT Handbook.

Congress calls for SNCT to ensure

- that there must be an up to date, sympathetic family leave provisions within the SNCT Handbook which would provide certainty for all employees across all Local Authorities
- two weeks paid leave for both parents affected by a miscarriage before 24 weeks of pregnancy
- paid leave for staff who are undergoing fertility treatment to attend appointments and undergo treatment

**Proposer: Catherine Nicol, Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee**



Gordon West



Paul Cochrane



Catherine Nicol

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## Motions Passed at Congress 2025

### **Motion C** - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)

Congress is concerned about the detrimental impact the different Local Authority interpretations of the annual leave entitlement of centrally employed staff covered by the SNCT Handbook.

Congress calls for the SNCT to confirm the correct interpretation of leave entitlement and seek improvements to leave entitlements beyond that stated in the SNCT Handbook.

**Proposer: James How, Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee**

### **Motion D** - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)

Congress believes vocational qualifications, such as National Progression Awards (NPAs), should be included in national performance measures when first published each year to reflect the diverse achievements of Scotland's students. The current exclusion of these qualifications distorts educational outcomes and discourages schools from offering vocational pathways that align with students' career goals.

Congress urges the Scottish Government to update attainment statistics to include all SCQF-accredited qualifications. Recognising all qualifications will create a more inclusive and balanced education system.



*Derek Harris*

**Proposer: Derek Harris, Education Committee**

### **Motion E** - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)

Congress is concerned that high numbers of students withdraw from initial teacher training after their first placement. Retention rates are reported to be as low as 60%.

Congress calls on the Scottish Government and COSLA to address this concern urgently.



*Lynn Myles*

**Proposer: Lynn Myles, Education Committee**

### **Motion F** - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)

School HMIE inspections immediately prior to the main diet of SQA exams can be a significant source of stress for teachers and a distraction from teaching and learning.

To help with teachers' wellbeing and to maintain a focus on attainment, Congress calls on HMIE to take workload factors into consideration before inspections commence.

**Proposer: James Cowans, Education Committee**

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## Motions Passed at Congress 2025

### **Motion G** - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)

School quality assurance measures have expanded over time and are now a significant work related stress. The impact on improving teaching and learning is uncertain.

Congress calls on the Scottish Government to carry out an independent review of QA measures used in schools, reporting on workload, impact and possible alternatives.



*James Cowans*

**Proposer: James Cowans, Education Committee**

### **Motion H** - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)

Congress has welcomed opportunities to meet with SQA representatives in the past and looks forward to constructive meetings with representatives of the new body, Qualifications Scotland, in the future.

Moving forward, Congress seeks assurances that the SSTA, as the voice of Scottish Secondary teachers, will be fully included in decisions relating to national assessment of Scotland's learners.

**Proposer: Lynn Myles. Education Committee**

### **Motion I** - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)

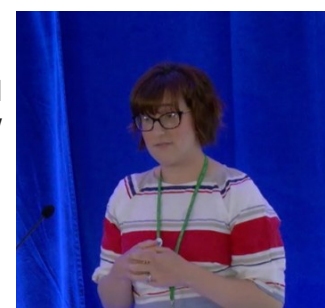
Congress recognises AI's transformative potential in education, enhancing personalized learning, streamlining administration, and supporting innovative teaching. However, without national guidance, AI implementation may be inconsistent, misused, or inequitable. Concerns include academic integrity, misinformation, and ethical risks, highlighting the need for clear policies and teacher training.

Congress urges the Scottish Government and Local Authorities to develop national AI guidance, provide structured CPD for teachers, establish policies on responsible AI use, integrate digital literacy into the curriculum, ensure equitable access to AI tools, and monitor AI's impact. With proactive measures, Scotland can harness AI's benefits while mitigating risks.

**Proposer: Derek Harris, Education Committee**

### **Motion J** - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)

Congress calls on COSLA to ensure that the bulk of the £28m provided to Local Authorities for ASN is specifically ring-fenced for recruitment and training for new teachers and teachers already working within this specialised field.



*Ruth Nicoll*

**Proposer: Ruth Nicoll, Additional Support Needs Committee**

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## Motions Passed at Congress 2025

### **Motion K - [View the motion being proposed and the debate](#)**

Congress is aware that for many years it has been presumed that the great majority of pupils will attend mainstream schools.

Congress is concerned that resources and staffing for supporting pupils with additional needs in mainstream schools, and the increasing demands for associated documentation, have not kept pace with requirements. As a consequence, the SNCT Job-Sizing Toolkit, is no longer fit for the purpose of assessing and evaluating the role of Principal Teacher of Learning Support.



*Monique Dreon-Goold*

Congress calls on SNCT to:

- establish a baseline minimum for learning support arrangements in schools, taking account of the recommendations of the SNCT ASN working group report and the SNCT Job-Sizing Review Group recommendations.
- review the responsibilities of Principal Teachers of Learning Support to ensure they align with the evolving demands of the role and fit within the job-sizing framework

**Proposer: Monique Dreon-Goold, Additional Support Needs Committee**

## Special Meeting of Council, Wednesday 18th June 2025

The following Motions were remitted to SSTA Council as there was not enough time to hear all the remaining motions, A special meeting of Council was held online on 18 June 2025 and the following motions were passed.

### **Motion L**

Employers have the responsibility under Equalities legislation to consider and make reasonable adjustments for their workforce. The SSTA calls upon each Local Authority to meet their legal obligations and ensure there is a protected and sufficient budget to provide appropriate support.

**Proposer: Richard Graham, Equalities Committee**

### **Motion M**

Congress welcomes the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice that all workplaces must include workers Mental Health as part of their risk assessments. A key control measure being the availability of Mental Health First Aiders.

Congress recognises the budgetary pressures on Local Authorities to meet their obligations to their employees and calls on Scottish Government to ensure ring-fenced funding to enable Mental Health First Aid training and the provision of Mental Health First Aiders in each workplace.

**Proposer: Grant McAllister, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee**



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# Motions Passed at Congress 2025

## Motion N

Congress congratulates Scottish Government for commissioning COSLA to create a report on Education Workforce Health & Wellbeing (HWB) Support.

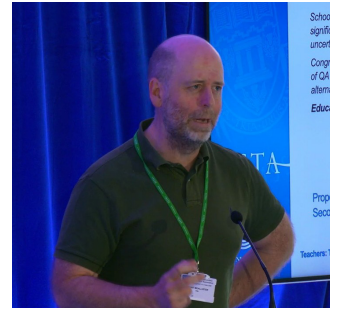
Congress urges Scottish Government and COSLA to enact the report's recommendations to enhance health and wellbeing in the education workforce.

These include:

- A National HWB Group should be formed to develop strategic responses and include key education stakeholders for effective partnership engagement.
- The group is tasked with creating a national HWB strategy that provides guidance for local authorities (LAs) to improve staff health and wellbeing.
- LAs must utilise education workforce HWB data to address local needs, ensuring inclusive and accessible support for all staff.
- Actions should promote two-way communication, allowing all staff to feel valued and engaged, regardless of their role or background.

Congress urges Scottish Government and COSLA to ensure that trade unions are fully represented in the National HWB group.

**Proposer: Grant McAllister, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee**



*Grant McAllister*

## Motion O

This Association champions being the voice for all Scotland's secondary teachers, however, many of our communications are challenging for some of our members to access.

The STUC Accessibility Guide is practical advice on how our communications can be improved. It covers making documents, webpages and social media, and video conferencing accessible. By improving our communication methods, we increase the democracy of the association.

Congress calls for the adoption of the STUC Accessibility guide, with immediate effect.

**Proposer: Grant McAllister, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee**

## Motion P

The present process of postal balloting for trade union official positions is inappropriate. It is time consuming and costly. Postal voting by trade union members is becoming an antiquated method of balloting that belongs to a bygone era.

At present, with the technological advances in computers, mobile devices and data encryption, the opportunity for electronic balloting that can be made in secret and is secure makes a compelling case.

This Association calls on the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to undertake a major revision of balloting Trade Union officials and introduce e-voting or remote voting as a statutory alternative to postal balloting.



*John Guidi*

**Proposer: John Guidi, Renfrew Area**

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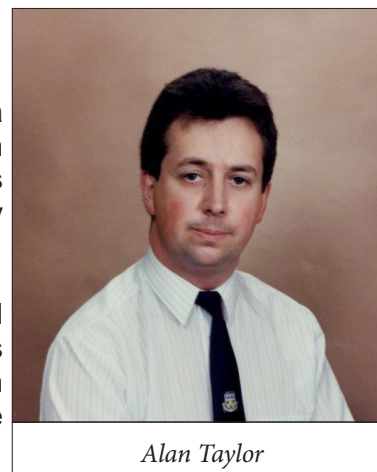
## SSTA NATIONAL AWARDS AT CONGRESS 2025

At the close of the first day of Congress, the President had the honor of awarding Life Membership to Alan Taylor, North Lanarkshire and James Cowans, Renfrew. Both have served the Association with distinction over the years. A note of their nominations can be found below.

### **Nomination for National Award: Alan Taylor**

Alan Taylor started teaching in 1974 and joined the SSTA in 1984. He was a Principal Teacher of Modern Languages Brannock High School in North Lanarkshire where he became the SSTA School Representative. He left his permanent teaching post in 2013 and continued his teaching career as a supply teacher in North Lanarkshire.

Alan's journey within the SSTA is a testament to his unwavering commitment and exemplary service spanning nearly four decades. He first attended SSTA Congress in 1987 and became a member of Council in 1991 and Executive in 1993. Alan became the North Lanarkshire District Secretary in 1996 and continued in the role until 2013.



*Alan Taylor*

Alan became a member of the SSTA Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee in 1991 and subsequently the Convener in 1998 and remained in the position until 2013. As Convener he represented the Association at negotiating bodies such as SNCT furthering the interests of SSTA members.

Alan was elected Minutes Secretary in 1995 and served religiously until his resignation in September 2024. As Minutes Secretary Alan not only recorded proceedings professionally, guided and supported several Presidents through National Executive and Council meetings. He ensured that protocols were adhered to with tact and diplomacy. Alan was well respected for his dogged determination to seek out the truth of matters even with busy agendas when colleagues were inclined to simply move to next business.

Alan's influence came to the fore at SSTA Congress; his knowledge and experience became a vital element of the smooth running of Congress business, and he has been much appreciated by several SSTA Presidents.

Throughout his time as Minutes Secretary, Alan was a stalwart of the Finance Committee and ensured that business was conducted correctly, and all issues were fully discussed and decisions agreed collectively.

Alan was involved in a range of SSTA Committee/Panels and regularly made valuable contributions. These included the Equalities, Health and Safety, Recruitment, Education, STUC and Standing Orders Committees. He was the cornerstone of the Constitution Working Group that was constructed after an exhausting process, of the current version of the SSTA Constitution.

Alan was elected to the GTCS as one of the Association's nominees and served from 2005 to 2009. He was also an important contributor on behalf of the Association at the SQA for several years and continued to advocate the importance of modern languages in schools.

Alan's ability to remain calm and studious in difficult situations was an important factor in developing the Association into the professional respected body we know today.  
Stuart Hunter SSTA President said

"I am honoured to nominate Alan Taylor for the prestigious national award with the SSTA in recognition of his outstanding leadership, dedication, and significant contributions to the association and the education community.

***Nominated for a National Award by SSTA National Executive***

# SSTA NATIONAL AWARDS AT CONGRESS 2025

## Life Time Award Nominee: James Cowans

James Cowans, a highly successful Chemistry teacher devoted a career towards teaching and learning since the early 1990's. His experience included a spell as a guidance teacher. With such a varied background in education, James developed his knowledge and skills in pedagogy.

James joined the SSTA in 2002. Later, he became a school representative for Williamwood High School, in East Renfrewshire. His interpersonal skills with colleagues were widely respected and admired resulting in an increase of SSTA membership at his school.

James' involvement and commitment to the SSTA is further demonstrated at local level as the minute's secretary of Renfrew Area.

James became a member of Council in 2011 and National Executive in 2017. He joined the Education Committee in 2014 and became the Convener of the Education Committee in 2017. James other valuable contributions to our Professional Association, includes speaker and proposer of many motions at Congress.

All these contributions by James represent his commitment towards our Professional Association at school, local and national level.

As Education Convener, James' focus was to challenge and improve Scottish education for the benefit of teachers and learners. His strategic direction included member surveys, a valuable tool reflecting the impact of policies impacting Scottish Education. For example, a survey relating to National Qualifications became an invaluable insight of the challenges facing secondary teachers. The results of the National Qualifications survey exposed the inequity of the senior phase at Local Authority, school, and subject level. The survey highlighted the fact that "multicourse teaching" as opposed to "multilevel teaching" was taking place in many schools in Scotland.

The lack of cohesion between Nat 4 and Nat 5 courses that teachers were experiencing leading to additional stress and workload as Nat 4 and 5 courses were not fully compatible or even incompatible when teaching concurrently in the classroom.

The results of the survey were presented as evidence to the The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in their report of "Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence".

James as Education Committee Convenor has led meetings with Education Scotland and the SQA. He has represented the Association in both the Muir and Hayward Reviews that have examined national education structures and the future of assessment and qualifications.

Since retiring from his school, James continues to make a positive contribution for our Professional Association at National level. James has easily won the respect and trust with those within the Executive and Council with his expertise and contribution.

With the attributes that James has, he is a well-deserved candidate for the Life Membership Award as he has raised the profile of our Professional Association across the whole of Scotland.



*James Cowans receives his National Award from the President*

***Nominated for a National Award by Renfrew Area***

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# SSTA NATIONAL AWARDS AT CONGRESS 2025

The President was delighted to present Ann Stewart-Kmicha, Lothian Area, with a National Award at the Congress dinner on the Friday evening.

## **Nomination for National Award: Ann Stewart-Kmicha**

Ann Stewart-Kmicha has been a steadfast member of the SSTA for 30 years and has recently retired from teaching. Her interest in SSTA is nonetheless as strong as it ever was. The outstanding effort of ASK throughout the years is worthy of recognition by the Union for the following reasons. People like Ann are rarely found, and anyone who has worked with her knows this. This application is written on behalf of all those individuals whom Ann has helped and on behalf of all those who did not realise the work she has done to support the profession and her colleagues.

Ann has tirelessly dedicated her time, energy and skill into supporting the rights of teachers throughout her teaching career. Her commitment to union responsibilities can be measured on a yearly basis as she attended every Area meeting and Congress in addition to her commitment to her own school. Ann's mastery of the detail and understanding of the workings of correct union practice made her a tremendous asset in any team. Ann's regular reminders of what was the correct time to do the right thing enabled union business to flow. Her expertise, experience and knowledge of union matters is just one reason why her contributions to SSTA should be recognised.

In addition to her knowledge Ann's willingness and ability to support her peers developed strong camaraderie within Area meetings. She would advise, encourage and guide when it was required. Despite being very busy with community politics, she was always ready to use her own time to advance union business when her skills were needed. Indeed her organisational skills were excellent at keeping others abreast of the detail. Ann's personal values and generosity merit recognition from her peers and from SSTA.

A last comment ought to include Ann's ability to adapt with the times and embrace new colleagues and educational leaders. Her career spans decades. She has witnessed and embraced significant change in assessment, teacher training methods, the workload of teachers, and the complexity of social behavioural needs in the classroom. We should perhaps include her experience, feedback and success within a newly designed PFI building which challenged the methodology of the entire staff. All of these changes are testimony to the worth of ASK.

***Ann Stewart-Kmicha has remained indomitable throughout the years - she deserves recognition for her personal skills, her intrepid character and her relentless pursuit of doing the right thing, on behalf of her fellow professional and the profession per se.***



# SSTA Legal Services cover more than you think



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Visit [TalkToThompsons.com](https://www.talktothompsons.com)

## Are you and your family prepared for the future?

We all know that we should have a Will but statistics show that less than 50% of Scottish adults have one. It is difficult but it is not morbid. It is just about ensuring that your wishes are expressed and followed and it is about ensuring that your family are properly catered for. But a Will is only one of three key legal documents that experts advise everyone should have these days for the future protection of their family.

The three documents are a Will, a Power of Attorney and an advanced Directive. Our legal partners, Thompsons Solicitors, will explain the importance of these three documents and answer any questions that you may have.

## The SSTA's best kept secret – complete legal services for you and your family

You will know that if you have an employment issue you will have the full support of the SSTA's legal service. You may know that if you have an accident at work you will also receive expert legal support for free. But there is so much more to the legal support you and your family receive as an SSTA member.

In fact, our aim is to provide a complete package of free or discounted legal services so that we can be your one stop shop for every legal issue you may have.

Our legal partners will describe the full range of legal services and support available to you as an SSTA member, how you may access them and some of our success stories over the years.

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# Statement to members for period ended 31 December 2024

as required by section 32a of Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

## Income and Expenditure

The total income of the union for the period was £983,471. This amount included payments of £897,073 in respect of membership income of the union. The union's total expenditure for the period was £941,658.

## Political Fund

The Association does not maintain a political fund.

## General Secretary Salary and Other benefits

The General Secretary of the union was paid £112,779 in respect of salary and £20,300 in respect of benefits.

## Irregularity statement

A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (the 'Association') for the year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, the Balance sheet and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the association's affairs as at 31 December 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993.

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## **INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Finance Committee members' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Finance Committee members with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' report thereon. The Finance Committee members are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

### **Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- The Association has kept proper accounting records in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993 and has maintained a satisfactory system of control over its transactions in accordance with the requirements of that section; and
- the financial statements agree with the accounting records.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Finance Committee members' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- proper accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

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## **INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the Finance Committee members' responsibilities statement, the Finance Committee members are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Finance Committee members determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Finance Committee members are responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Finance Committee members either intend to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations – this responsibility lies with management with the oversight of the Finance Committee. Based on our understanding of the Association and industry, discussions with management and directors we identified financial reporting standards as having a direct effect on the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. As part of the engagement team discussion about how and where the Association's financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud, we did not identify any areas with an increased risk of fraud.

Our audit procedures included:

- completing a risk-assessment process during our planning for this audit that specifically considered the risk of fraud;
- enquiry of management about the Association's policies, procedures and related controls regarding compliance with laws and regulations and if there are any known instances of non-compliance;
- examining supporting documents for all material balances, transactions and disclosures;
- review, where applicable, of the Finance Committees' minutes;
- enquiry of management, about litigations and claims and inspection of relevant correspondence
- analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- specific audit testing on and review of areas that could be subject to management override of controls and potential bias, most notably around the key judgements and estimates, including the carrying value of fixed assets and accruals;
- considering management override of controls outside of the normal operating cycles including testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements including evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions, outside the normal course of business;

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements of the financial statements may not be detected, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with the ISAs (UK).

The potential effects of inherent limitations are particularly significant in the case of misstatement resulting from fraud because fraud may involve sophisticated and carefully organised schemes designed to conceal it, including deliberate failure to record transactions, collusion or intentional misrepresentations being made to us.



## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Auditors' report.

### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Association's Finance Committee, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 Section 33 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Association's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the organisation and the Association's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

**Angus McCuaig**  
**Senior Statutory Auditor**

for and on behalf of Anderson Anderson & Brown Audit LLP  
Statutory Auditors  
133 Finnieston Street  
Glasgow  
G3 8HB

Date: 29 May 2025

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## SSTA Membership – Recruit a Colleague

All members are encouraged to recruit a colleague to join the SSTA. SSTA membership is unique in that it offers direct access to a senior official for advice and support. No other teacher union provides this service. The SSTA is the only trade union that offers this access to all members and remember the SSTA is the only teacher union that speaks only for Scottish Secondary Teachers.

### NQTs

Free Until January 2027  
(Qualified 2025)

### New Members

50% off subscription fees for  
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### Part-Time Teachers

Pay a reduced subscription  
50% off the full-time  
subscription fee

Any new members can join via the SSTA website at [www.ssta.org.uk/join](http://www.ssta.org.uk/join)

The logo consists of the letters 'SSTA' in a white, serif font, set against a solid blue rectangular background.

**SCOTTISH SECONDARY  
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

**Scotland's only specialist union for  
Secondary Teachers**

0131 313 7300 - [info@ssta.org.uk](mailto:info@ssta.org.uk) - [www.ssta.org.uk](http://www.ssta.org.uk)

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## Tax Refunds for SSTA members – update

We are pleased to tell you that since launching our professional tax review service in 2020, more than 1,300 members have taken advantage of the service, and the results continue to be eye-opening!

In the last 2 years, 78% of members using the service to check whether HMRC has sent them the correct tax codes, have discovered they had been given the wrong codes and had paid too much tax as a result.

The average amount members have recovered is £226.58 each, but some members have recovered more than £2,550.

The problem is caused because HMRC relies on you checking your tax code and informing HMRC if they give you the wrong code, but very few taxpayers realise this, or know how to check their tax codes.

The review, provided by leading employment tax specialists, The Tax Refund Company, identifies all the tax code errors that caused members to pay too much tax and helps our members get their money back from HMRC.

If you haven't used the service, please bear in mind there is no charge for this review. If you have paid the right amount of tax, the review is FREE.

If the review concludes you have paid too much tax, The Tax Refund Company will correspond with HMRC to try and recover your money. Where they are successful, there is a fee of £35+vat for amounts up to £100 or 35p+vat per £1 where the amount recovered is over £100.

This fee only relates to tax you overpaid in up to 4 previous tax years. Any money you overpaid in the current tax year will be recovered free of charge. In the rare event it looks like you have underpaid, only you will be informed. However, for complete peace of mind, if you receive an unexpected tax bill as a direct result of using this service, The Tax Refund Company will pay the bill for you. (T&Cs apply)

If you wish to take advantage of the service, please go to [www.sstatax.co.uk](http://www.sstatax.co.uk)

In a couple of minutes, you will find out if you might have paid too much tax and if so, you will be able to request a full review.

Please note – HMRC has a deadline for refunding overpaid tax so if you want to avoid losing money you could have got back, you should consider reviewing your tax affairs as soon as possible.

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## Office Bearers 2025-2027

President, Monique Dreon-Goold  
Vice President, Paul Cochrane  
Immediate Past President, Stuart Hunter  
General Secretary, Seamus Searson  
General Treasurer, John Guidi  
Minutes Secretary, Kevin Campbell

## National Executive 2025-2027

### Elected Members:

Richard Graham, Fife  
James How, Glasgow  
Grant McAllister, Fife  
Gemma Milne, Dundee City  
Catherine Nicol, Ayrshire  
Gordon West, Aberdeenshire  
Luke Wright, Aberdeenshire

## SSTA Committee & Panel Conveners

<b>ASN Panel</b>	Ruth Nicoll, Ayrshire Area
<b>Education Committee</b>	Derek Harris, Dundee City
<b>Equalities Panel</b>	Maggie Nesbitt, Central Area
<b>Finance Committee</b>	John Guidi, Renfrew Area
<b>Health &amp; Safety Panel</b>	Grant McAllister, Fife
<b>Recruitment Committee</b>	Ward McCormick, Ayrshire Area
<b>Salaries &amp; Conditions of Service</b>	Peter Brandon, North Lanarkshire

### SSTA Social Media Channels

You can follow the SSTA on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Bluesky and Instagram for updates on current issues and campaigns, publication of advice notes and information on training events.



[fb.me/sstatradeunion](https://fb.me/sstatradeunion)



[@sstatradeunion](https://twitter.com/sstatradeunion)



[@sstatradeunion](https://www.instagram.com/sstatradeunion)



[@sstatradeunion.bsky.social](https://bsky.social/sstatradeunion)



[linkedin.com/company/sstatradeunion](https://linkedin.com/company/sstatradeunion)

## District Secretaries

<b>Argyll and Bute:</b> Stephen McLaughlin	<b>Highland:</b> <i>vacancy</i>
<b>City of Aberdeen:</b> Jason Currie	<b>Inverclyde:</b> Paul Cochrane
<b>Angus:</b> Selina Ferguson	<b>Midlothian:</b> Isabelle Dupraz
<b>Aberdeenshire:</b> Luke Wright	<b>Moray:</b> Pete Kelly
<b>Clackmannanshire:</b> Maggie Nesbitt	<b>North Ayrshire:</b> Catherine Nicol
<b>Dundee City:</b> Gemma Milne	<b>North Lanarkshire:</b> Peter Brandon
<b>Dumfries &amp; Galloway:</b> Jay Young	<b>Orkney:</b> Rashka Woods
<b>East Ayrshire:</b> Ward McCormick	<b>Perth &amp; Kinross:</b> Matthew Mackie
<b>City of Edinburgh:</b> Lynn Myles	<b>Renfrewshire:</b> Raymond Kane
<b>East Dunbartonshire:</b> Jacqueline O'Kane	<b>South Ayrshire:</b> Louisa Maestranzi
<b>East Lothian:</b> Monique Dreon-Goold	<b>Scottish Borders:</b> Duncan Taylor
<b>East Renfrewshire:</b> John Guidi	<b>Shetland:</b> <i>Vacancy</i>
<b>Eilean Siar:</b> <i>vacancy</i>	<b>South Lanarkshire:</b> Karen Dickson
<b>Falkirk:</b> Chris McDonald	<b>Stirling:</b> Gavin Black
<b>Fife:</b> Kevin Campbell	<b>West Dunbartonshire:</b> Claire Mackenzie
<b>City of Glasgow:</b> James How	<b>West Lothian:</b> Lorna Webster





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Trustpilot rating correct as at 19/04/2024.

\*Terms, conditions and acceptance criteria apply. Subject to availability. See [www.cornmarketinsurance.co.uk/teachers-plus-terms-conditions](http://www.cornmarketinsurance.co.uk/teachers-plus-terms-conditions) for full terms and conditions. Cornmarket Insurance Services Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd. Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd is part of the Great-West Lifeco Group of companies. Cornmarket Insurance Services Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) registration number 308099. You may check this on the Financial Services Register by visiting the FCA's website or by contacting the FCA on 0800 111 6768. Cornmarket Insurance Services, registered in Northern Ireland, company number NI030039. Registered Office: First Floor, Boucher Plaza, 4 – 6 Boucher Road, Belfast, BT12 6HR.

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