

PE1711/O

EIS submission of 20 August 2019

Thank you for your letter (by email) dated 1st July 2019 on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition PE1711. The Committee has asked for the Institute's views on the following:

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to: -

- 1. Ensure that all primary schools in Scotland incorporate basic first aid as an integral part of their curriculum; and*
- 2. Provide funding in order to develop high quality teaching materials on what to do in common emergencies, as well as to establish training and support for teachers to enable them to deliver these skills during short, interactive first aid workshops.*

The EIS has around 55,000 members in Scotland, representing the views of 80% of Scotland's teachers and lecturers and has members in almost all schools, colleges and universities in Scotland. The aims of the EIS are to promote sound learning, advance the interests of education in Scotland and advance the interests and welfare of teachers in Scotland. The EIS is the third largest trade union in Scotland and is an active member of the STUC and TUC.

The EIS is pleased to share its views to the Committee on First Aid Training within schools:

Whilst the EIS believes that it is a laudable ambition for schools to incorporate basic first aid as a part of their curriculum, we do not believe that teachers are the appropriate persons to deliver first aid training to pupils.

Teachers are professional educators with specified competencies set out by the profession's regulator, the GTCS; they are not trainers. Most teachers are not certified first aiders and lack the competency to deliver meaningful first aid training. It is the view of the EIS that teachers would not be comfortable delivering first aid training to pupils simply on receipt of some "teaching materials". Whilst this might be seen as a cost-effective approach by some, it undermines the concept of professional learning which is being encouraged throughout Scottish education.

Additionally, the increased workload involved in becoming a certified first aider in order to carry high quality training to pupils is prohibitive, especially at a time of increased workload problems within the profession. The Scottish Government has recently written to the EIS stating: "*We have a shared desire to reduce the workload of teachers...*"

Further, it has generally been accepted that the primary curriculum is currently overcrowded, indeed the DFM has pledged to protect primary schools from further additional demands being made. If implemented, this proposal would certainly exacerbate this challenge.

If the consensus is to push ahead with this initiative, therefore, the EIS believes that the issues raised above would need to be addressed. Responsibility for the resourcing, planning, and delivery of the programme would lie outwith schools, whose involvement would be limited to accommodating the necessary visiting experts, as they already do with

other initiatives. This is likely to mean that any first aid training model for pupils would utilise certified and experienced First Aiders to deliver that training, for example persons from St Andrews Ambulance and similar organisations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries.