



# How COSLA Negotiates Pay and Workforce Conditions on Behalf of Scotland's Councils

2023



COSLA

COSLA is a councillor-led, cross-party organisation which champions councils' vital work to secure the resources and powers they need. COSLA works on councils' behalf to focus on the challenges and opportunities they face, and to engage positively with governments and others on policy, funding, and legislation.

Every day people rely on the services that local government in Scotland delivers. Together, councils spend over £19 billion a year, and employ over 240,000 people - almost 10% of all jobs in Scotland. On behalf of Councils, COSLA acts in the capacity of "employers function" to NEGOTIATE fair and affordable pay and workforce conditions on behalf of all councils with our recognised Trade Union partners. As pay accounts for around 70% of councils' budgets, this is a key priority.

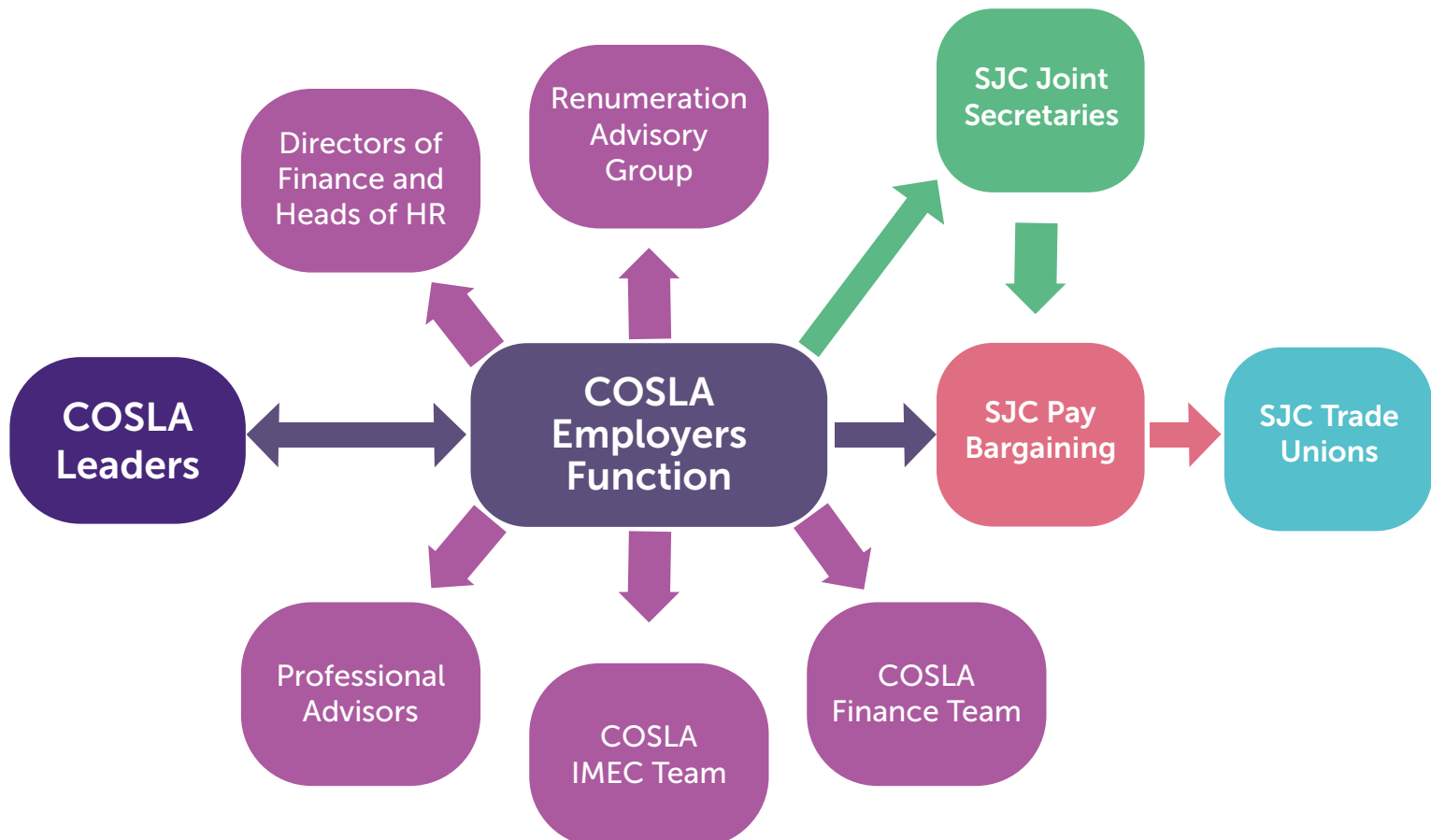
To negotiate, there are four separate bodies that work in broadly similar ways to ensure fairness and equity across our workforce and maintain high quality industrial relations nationally, supporting local relationships.

The four groups we have are:

# The Scottish Joint Council (SJC)

This covers the majority of the Local Government Workforce. COSLA represents the employers and our three nationally recognised unions – Unison, Unite, and GMB – represent the employees.

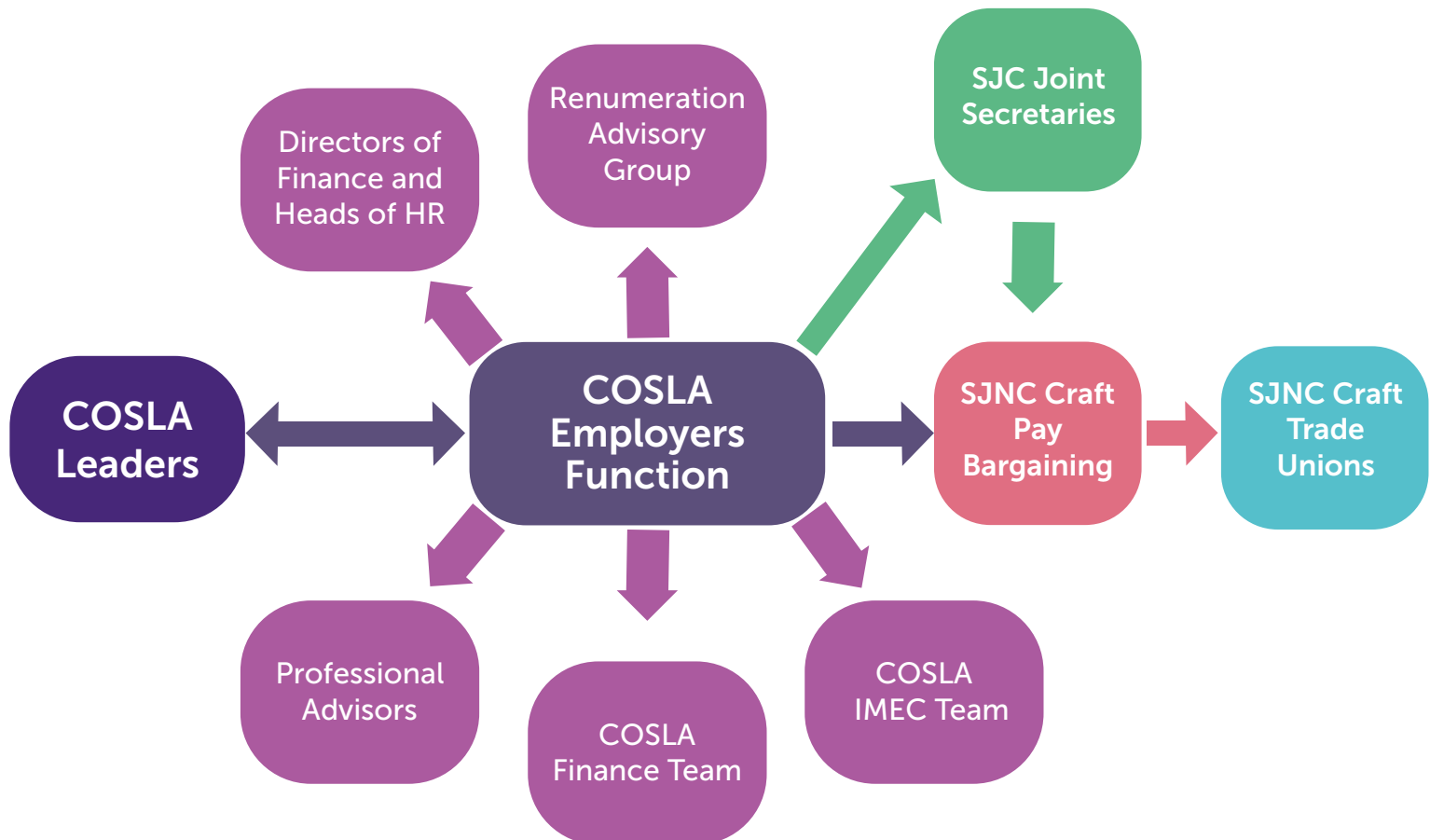
The full SJC, where each of our 32 councils has a nominated member, meets once a year in November and has decision making authority over terms and conditions that are in place nationally. In practice, decisions about financial matters, and in particular pay, are reserved for COSLA Leaders who provide a negotiating remit for the COSLA Resources Spokesperson. The main *negotiating* forum is the SJC Steering Group which seeks to meet at least four times a year, although meeting can occur more frequently, such as during the pandemic and when pay negotiations are active. The Steering Group does not have decision making authority but does enable negotiations to take place. The employers' side representation is 12 councillors, including the Resources Spokesperson, with the Trade Union representatives drawn from their full SJC membership. Like the Employers side the Trade Unions have 33 members on the full SJC with the majority being from Unison as they have the largest membership in the workforce. The councillors are proportionally representative to reflect the political make-up of COSLA Leaders.



\*SJC has authority over all national SJC terms and conditions

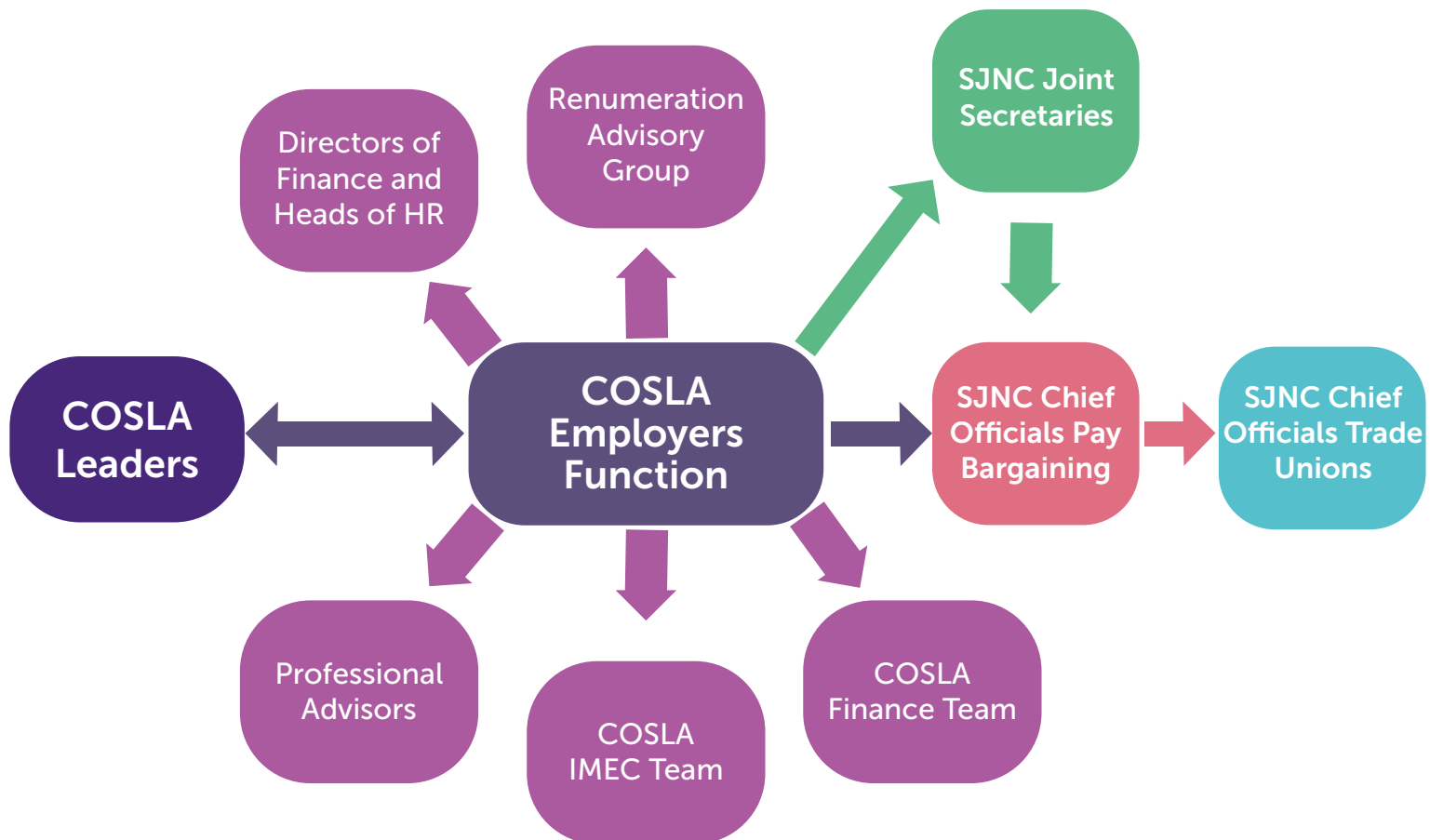
# The Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee (SJNC) for Craft Operatives

This covers employees in “trades” roles – electricians, plumbers etc. COSLA represents the employers and our two nationally recognised Craft unions - Unite and GMB - represent the employees. While constitutionally, the SJNC should meet annually, in practice all parties have been comfortable for negotiations to be taken forward by the Joint Secretaries and the COSLA Resources Spokesperson working to a remit agreed by COSLA Leaders.



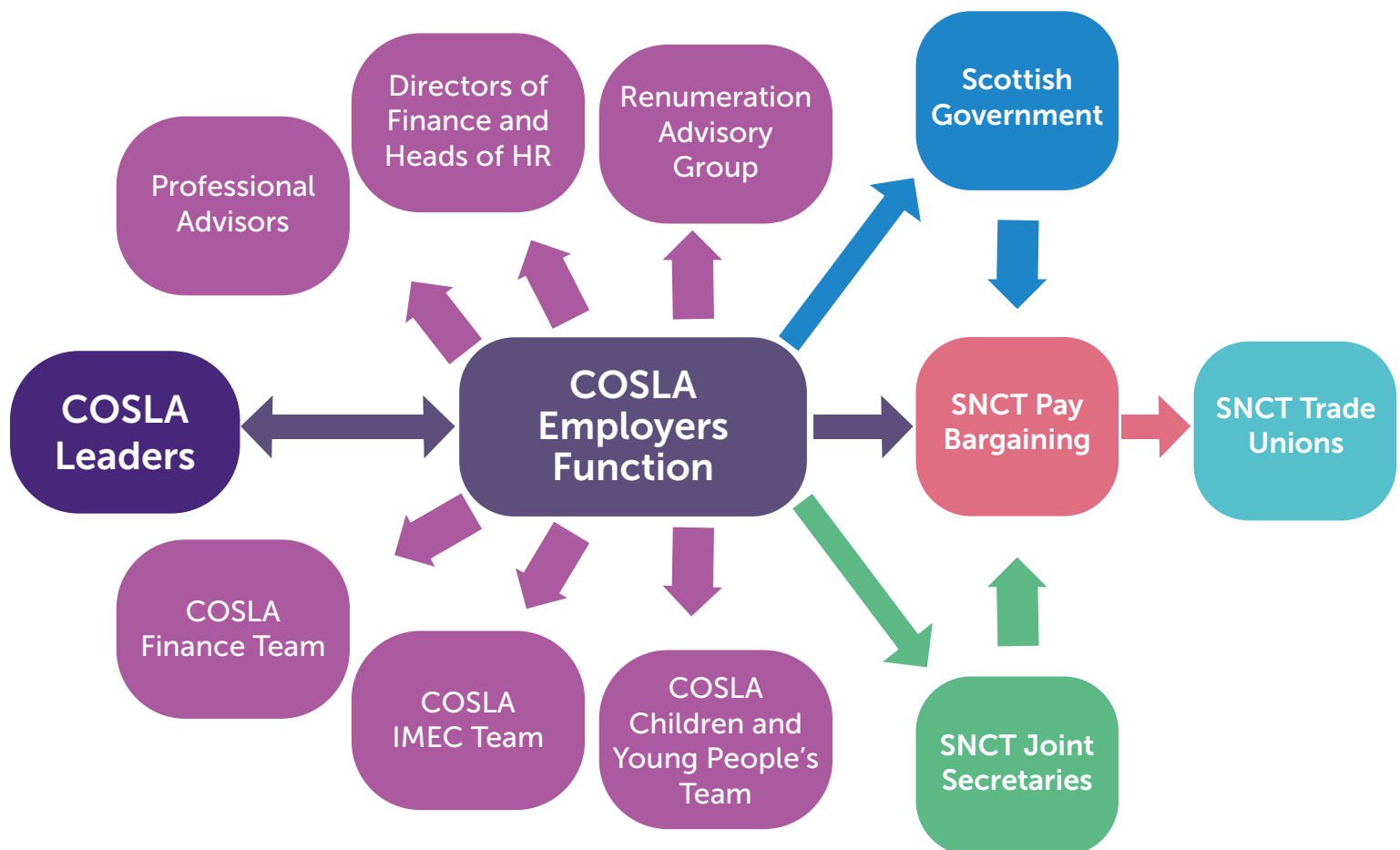
# The Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee (SJNC) for Chief Officials

This covers Chief Executives and Senior Managers (whether senior managers are employed on chief official terms and conditions varies from council to council), COSLA represents the employers and our three nationally recognised unions - ALACE, Unison, and GMB - represent the employees. While constitutionally the SJNC should meet annually, in practice all parties have been comfortable for negotiations to be taken forward by the Joint Secretaries and the COSLA Resources Spokesperson working to a remit agreed by COSLA Leaders.



# The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT)

This covers teachers and other associated professionals, for example, Educational Psychologists. The SNCT is a tripartite (three party) negotiating body with the Employers, Scottish Government and a range of teaching unions represented, including the EIS, SSTA, NASUWT, SLS and AHDS\*. The SNCT has 22 members, appointed annually, from COSLA, Scottish Government and teaching unions. COSLA has 8 representatives, with substitutions allowed. The SNCT has decision making authority. In practice however, positions on financial matters, and in particular pay, are reserved for COSLA Leaders who provide negotiating remits. The SNCT has an Annual General Meeting and a schedule of three additional meetings is agreed throughout the year. The Resources Spokesperson also represents the employer's interests at SNCT Joint Chairs Meetings where much of the detail of negotiations occurs.



# Glossary

**AHDS** – Association of Heads and Deputies Scotland

**ADES** – Association of Directors of Education in Scotland

**COSLA IMEC Team** – the Image, Media and Communication Team at COSLA

**EIS** – Educational Institute for Scotland

**Remuneration Advisory Group** – an informal advisory body consulted during pay negotiations and consisting of Local Government professional advisers from various organisations such as ADES, SPDS, and the Directors of Finance Section.

**SLS** – School Leaders Scotland

**SPDS** – Society of Personnel and Development Scotland

**SNCT** – Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers

**SJC** – Scottish Joint Council

**SJNC** – Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee

**SSTA** – Scottish Secondary Teachers Association




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