

Extended services

ATL strongly supports the Every Child Matters agenda and the principles of the Extended Services programme. However, extended services have created many challenges in schools around professional responsibility and accountability for provision, workload and meeting pupil needs. To ensure the programme operates effectively for staff, pupils, families and communities, ATL has a number of recommendations.

Reaching the vulnerable

Aspects of the current Extended Services programme do not adequately reach those who most need it, reflecting flaws in need identification and funding.

- The government must carry out a comprehensive equality impact assessment of the Extended Services programme, including its current funding arrangements, and publish an action plan identifying relevant strategies and targets for improvement.

Responsibility for provision

The existing schools-based focus of extended services creates overwhelming workload pressures and impedes professional collaboration.

- Local authorities (LAs) must take the central role in co-ordinating extended services. Accountability and support structures must be developed at LA level, building on the Children's Trusts structures.

A fully comprehensive and properly coordinated provision cannot be achieved with schools increasingly falling outside of the LA family.

- Clearer guidance must be given regarding the place and accountability of academies and trust schools, and the responsibilities of independent schools, in relation to extended services.

Day-to-day management of the extended services core offer currently occurs at school-level. Having specific extended services related roles at school-level will result in more effective and manageable working practices whilst leaving accountability at LA level.

- Where school capacity allows, a non-teaching member of the senior leadership team should have responsibility for co-ordinating extended services at school level. In smaller schools, the responsible staff member requires dedicated time to deal with these responsibilities.

- Governing bodies should nominate a link governor for extended services.
- These roles need to be supported with appropriate guidance and training.

School clusters

School clusters are a key part of extended services. However, cluster-working can be problematic due to policies on school choice and competition, logistical issues and the importance of strong staff-parent-community relationships in achieving objectives.

- The government should analyse the impact of school cluster-working on extended services and whether any resulting expansion of services leads to greater take-up of services by those most vulnerable. Full consultation with schools and stakeholders on school cluster-working relating to extended services is required, with the results informing guidance documents.

Sustainability

Funding and accountability must be considered in the drive to make extended service provision sustainable.

- The government must develop a stable funding regime for extended services to ensure consistent and sustainable provision across the country.
- Extended services provision, particularly the physical space requirements for family and community participation, should be included in programmes for building new schools.

There is a danger that the good principles of extended services could be used to facilitate further marketisation and privatisation within state education. Public provision for public services is overwhelmingly the best and most effective.

- ATL calls for a fundamental re-examination of private provision.

Extended services (continued)

- In the meantime, the government must ensure rigorous public accountability in terms of the quality of service and value for money of private providers engaged in extended services.

Multi-agency working

Multi-agency working is a key part of extended services, often creating huge demands on the school workforce and confusion over role boundaries and accountabilities.

- Multi-agency working practices and arrangements must be reviewed by professional teams at LA level with cross-sector input.
- The Lead Professional role must be reviewed, to clarify the responsibilities and boundaries of the role and any specific situations in which a member of school staff might become the Lead Professional.
- Any gaps in professional knowledge and understanding in relation to multi-agency working, particularly at leadership and Lead Professional levels, need to be identified and appropriate professional development programmes developed.
- Organisations of accountability such as Ofsted and the DCSF must make clear the expectation that other professional sectors will either take on or support the lead professional role when the context indicates.
- The Common Core should make clearer its application to different professional contexts and should contain standards about working in partnership.
- The government should undertake regular reviews of data-gathering systems to ensure that relevant information about needs and service provision is provided effectively.

Impact on staff

While many staff welcome the benefits of extended services such as pupil engagement, there are heavy costs in terms of workload, time for other responsibilities and activities.

- Extended services provision must be reviewed in consultation with stakeholders and trade unions, particularly in relation to the impact on workload, the school-day and professional role responsibilities.
- The development of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes in relation to extended services, and ensuring access to this CPD for all staff, should become a top priority for the TDA and local CPD coordinators, particularly in relation to cross-sector working and identification of need. This is especially important for support staff, as a lack of working-hours flexibility can mean their access to CPD is limited.
- Specialist roles should be established in schools to support extended services, e.g. the Parent Support Adviser role.
- A core group of multi-skilled and multi-agency specialist staff should be established at LA level with the key responsibilities for assessing pupil need across schools and developing school staff in these areas.

ATL's recommendations strive to make extended services work better for all concerned.

- **For teachers, leaders and support staff, this means clearer professional responsibilities and accountabilities, more effective partnerships, high-quality and extended services-relevant ITT and CPD and rationalised workloads.**
- **For LAs, as central partners, this means receipt of sustainable funding and stronger links with existing Children's Trust structures.**
- **For those most in need, it means better identification of their needs, resulting in access to more joined-up and relevant support.**



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