

Raising Standards and Tackling Workload

Implementing the National Agreement

June 2003

Department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

The purpose of this note is to inform schools on the progress being made on the implementation of key provisions in the National Agreement.

Contractual change on course

Note 1 issued by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG)¹ in April 2003, gave practical advice on the steps schools could take to prepare for the changes to the teacher's contract, specifically **those which all schools in England and Wales are required to implement with effect from September 2003**. These are:

- the transfer of 24 of the 25 administrative and clerical tasks which teachers should not routinely be requested to undertake to appropriate support staff (in accordance with the process detailed in Note 1);
- the introduction of a reasonable work/life balance; and
- the provision of a reasonable amount of time during the normal school day to support those with leadership and management responsibilities.

Initial feedback from schools indicates that the advice in Note 1 has proved helpful and that preparations are well underway.

Consultation on the draft contractual changes and interim guidance concluded on 7 May. The responses have been analysed and discussed by the WAMG. The final draft wording and detailed guidance will be issued for statutory consultation in June 2003.

Support staff regulations nearing completion

Regulations and accompanying guidance, made under Section 133 of the Education Act 2002, will provide, for the first time, a regulatory framework for the role and deployment of support staff.

Following the end of the consultation, regulations and guidance for England are in the process of being finalised and will take effect from 1 August 2003. The consultation on the National Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants runs until 7 July.

The Welsh Assembly Government will be drafting similar regulations and guidance for Wales under Section 133 and expects to consult on those, and the National Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants, before the Summer.



NASUWT

NEOST

PAT

SHA

T&G

UNISON
the public service union

¹ The Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group is composed of representatives from ATL, DfES, GMB, NAHT, NASUWT, NEOST, PAT, SHA, T&G, UNISON and the Welsh Assembly Government who are all signatories to the Agreement.

Funding the Agreement

In England changes in the national funding system, local variations in funding formulae and a number of additional financial pressures have resulted in some schools and LEAs facing significant budgetary difficulties.

There has been intense activity at national and local level to address these issues. On 15 May 2003 the Secretary of State announced a package of measures to support schools facing severe financial problems. The Government has given a firm undertaking that detailed discussions on funding the National Agreement in 2004-06 will take place as quickly as possible in the WAMG.

Implementation Review Unit (IRU) Practitioners' Panel appointed

A key feature of the Agreement was the introduction of the IRU. It features a Practitioners' Panel which will make a concerted attack on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucratic processes for teachers, heads and all who work in schools.

The Panel of serving heads and teachers and a school bursar has now been appointed. Its members are drawn from schools across all regions in England.

In its early days the IRU is starting to scrutinise DfES initiatives, calling on other key national bodies such as OFSTED, the QCA and the LSC to establish what they are doing to minimise burdens of policy implementation and gathering evidence from visits to schools.

The Welsh Assembly Government is in the process of developing arrangements, to be agreed with the WAMG, to establish a similar body.

NOP cover survey commissioned

The Agreement committed the WAMG to establishing the likely impact of the contractual limit on cover, which will take effect from September 2004.

The WAMG has commissioned the National Opinion Poll (NOP) Organisation to undertake a survey of 2,000 schools in England to collect data to inform discussions to agree the process and timescale for achieving the shared objective that teachers at a school should only rarely cover for absent teachers and identifying interim targets to achieve this.

Heads and school representatives of the teacher unions who are signatories to the Agreement will receive questionnaires to complete during this term.

Change management programme underway

Under the terms of the Agreement, provision was made for school leaders and governors to be supported by a national change management programme, to assist them in achieving the necessary reforms for remodelling of the school workforce.

A National Remodelling Team (NRT), led by Pat Collarbone, which will work closely with WAMG, has been established and is currently developing materials for schools and making initial contact with the officers in each LEA who are leading on the implementation of the Agreement.

The Welsh Assembly Government is introducing a seconded post specifically to take forward a change management programme in Wales. The postholder will work closely with the NRT in England to share experiences and expertise.

