

# Raising Standards and Tackling Workload

## Implementing the National Agreement

October 2004

department for  
**education and skills**  
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The notes issued by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG) represent the agreed position of all the signatories to the National Agreement.

### Implementing the Contractual Changes – September 2004 – Cover

On 1 September schools should have implemented the new contractual changes on cover. The change is statutory so it is neither optional nor voluntary.

Although most schools planned the change in the Summer term there may be some schools which have not. Cover arrangements should have been reviewed in all schools.

Phase two of the National Agreement contractual change states that from 1 September 2004 there is an initial limit of 38 hours per year for teachers covering for absent colleagues, with the longer term objective that teachers at a school will rarely cover at all. Details of this change, and the other phases of contractual change, can be found in Section 4 of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) which can be viewed at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/payandperformance/pay/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/payandperformance/pay/).

The WAMG has produced a Remodelling Cover Resource Pack which contains a variety of resources and information that schools may find useful in implementing this phase of contractual change. The Pack includes a good practice overview offering guidance on the implementation of cover strategies, model case studies and a cover analysis tool which allows schools to perform an audit of their cover provision.

The Resource Pack also contains guidance for schools that are considering using cover supervision, along with a range of other strategies, in order to deliver an effective and tailored school policy for dealing with cover. Key points to note from this guidance include:

- cover supervision occurs when there is no active teaching taking place;
- cover supervision should only be used for short-term absences;
- cover supervision by effectively deployed and appropriately graded support staff with appropriate skills, training and pay will be a fundamental part of an effective cover strategy, increasing the options available to headteachers and allowing them to deal with teacher absence in a way which is compatible with the standards agenda and the efficient use of resources.

Schools should note that any time teachers cover from 1 September 2004 will count against the 38 hours for the year ending 31 August 2005.

The headteacher has a contractual duty to take account of teachers' teaching and other duties and of the desirability of not using a teacher at the school until all other reasonable means of providing cover have been exhausted.

The Remodelling Cover Resource Pack and the Cover Supervision Guidance, along with further resources, are available online at [www.remodelling.org](http://www.remodelling.org).

### Planning for the Contractual Changes – September 2005 – Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA)

The WAMG welcomes the fact that schools are beginning to prepare for the third phase of the National Agreement contractual change well in advance of the statutory dates given within the STPCD of September 2004. Early planning is essential to allow schools to consider the resources they require to introduce a minimum of 10% guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment time for all teachers.

The WAMG has produced a Resource Pack containing advice, examples of best practice and a toolkit to support schools in choosing effective and sustainable strategies to implement this change. It also contains guidance on higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) roles for school support staff. This forms part of the package of materials that is intended to help schools to decide the type and how many staff they need as they plan their workforce.

The guidance reflects the arrangements in England. Similar guidance reflecting the practical and legislative position in Wales will be issued to accompany the Education (Specified Work and Registration) (Wales) Regulations which were made on 6 July 2004.



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A copy of the PPA Pack, containing the HLTA Guidance, has been distributed to every school. The pack is also available to download at [www.remodelling.org](http://www.remodelling.org).

## Changes in Training and Development for School Support Staff

Every school needs to consider what roles are appropriate for members of their workforce and what training and other support is needed so staff can undertake these roles effectively.

The DfES has revised and improved induction course material for teaching assistants, adding new modules on understanding how children learn, and on ICT in teaching and learning for primary, and, for secondary, a new module on science. The SEN secondary module has also been rewritten to carry a wider range of age groups. This induction training material was sent to LEAs in early September and should now be available.

The DfES introductory course for support staff other than TAs has also been reissued for LEAs and schools.

A new vocational qualification at **level 2** in Support Work in Schools is available from September 2004 with an award or certificate for school support staff. This will be a two-year pilot. This is a flexible, generic qualification, which will enable all school support staff to receive recognition of their existing skills and experience, with tailored training provided where needed to increase their knowledge and skills. Work is in hand to develop a generic qualification at level 3.

Local LSCs and LEAs are working together to support a significant increase in the number of support staff in receipt of LSC-funded training, from 1,000 to 10,000 (including TAs) over the next 7 months. The new level 2 qualification is expected to form a key part of that delivery. Funding will be either on a 50:50 match-funding basis between the LSC and LEA/school, or fully subsidised for a first level 2 qualification in Employer Training Pilot and level 2 entitlement areas.

The NVQ level 2 and 3 awards for TAs are still well subscribed. A new apprenticeship framework has been approved, so new entrants under 25 can be supported to work through an apprenticeship to gain the NVQs.

The Employers' Organisation has updated its helpful booklet, *Qualifications for Teaching Assistants*. This can be found on their website: [www.ig-employers.gov.uk/skills/teaching/guidance.html](http://www.ig-employers.gov.uk/skills/teaching/guidance.html).

## Higher Level Teaching Assistants in Wales

Following consultation in Wales, the Education (Specified Work and Registration) (Wales) Regulations were made on 6 July 2004. These Regulations came into force on 1 September.

Guidance on these Regulations and the standard for higher level teaching assistants will be made available to schools shortly.

The Welsh Assembly Government is developing an assessment process for school support staff who are to undertake higher level teaching assistant roles within their school. It is planned that this assessment will be available early in 2005. Officials will be working with the WAMG and other partners in Wales to establish this mechanism.

## Developing other Opportunities for Support Staff in Wales

Developments such as the vocational qualification pilots and the apprenticeship framework apply equally to England and Wales. A wide range of training opportunities suitable for school support staff is already offered in Wales. However, it is not always clear how to access information about these opportunities and provision is sometimes patchy.

The Assembly is about to establish a task and finish group drawing on the expertise of the WAMG and a range of individuals with expertise in the employment, deployment and training of support staff in Wales. This group will be asked to look at the policies and practices that currently have an impact on school support staff and to recommend improvements.

## Work Under Way

The WAMG has a full programme of work planned for 2004-2005. Current activities include:

- continuing to ensure coherence between remodelling and the implementation of the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' in England;
- ongoing review of Circulars 2/98 and 22/98 which provide Government advice on ways in which schools can tackle excessive internal bureaucracy;
- working with the NRT and external partners to develop exam invigilation guidance to support schools in implementing the September 2005 contractual changes.

