

Raising Standards and Tackling Workload

Implementing the National Agreement

April 2008


 department for
 children, schools and families

Effective operation of local social partnerships

Introduction

This note outlines a number of initiatives undertaken by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group¹ (WAMG) in response to feedback from members of local social partnerships gathered at the recent Local Social Partnership Conference held in Wales and from the online survey of local social partnerships conducted in England. WAMG would like to thank local social partnership members for their involvement and for the valuable feedback that has helped define and develop ongoing support and assisted in determining WAMG's future priorities. This also builds on feedback gained from previous conferences held in England and reported on in Note 18.

This feedback indicates that local social partnerships wish to develop their ways of working and ensure greater effectiveness in progressing local challenges in a way that is consistent with WAMG's thinking and priorities. Conference delegates reported that this should include reinvigorating the work of their local social partnership by ensuring regular meetings, inclusion of all relevant partners (including support staff unions), and by a renewed focus on the key implementation issues ahead.

There was a clear demand for further guidance to assist local social partnerships in developing their role in a way that was consistent with other local social partnerships but which also reflected local needs and priorities.

In response to this feedback WAMG has therefore developed:

- further guidance on effective working for local social partnerships (the guidance);
- a model remit and protocol to inform the organisation and work of local social partnerships in England and Wales;
- a framework process for issue resolution.

WAMG encourages local social partnerships to consider these materials in their next meeting and discuss how they can be used to support them in working more effectively in the future. The materials can be found at: www.tda.gov.uk/wamg.

2008 Guidance on effective working for local social partnerships

WAMG has updated its guidance for local social partnerships on effective working. The guidance introduces:

- a focus on fair play and rewards for support staff;
- a broader minimum remit, additionally covering: better communications; the establishment of school workforce change teams; monitoring issues arising from compliance with relevant statutory regulations; and extended services and performance management in England;
- additional topic areas for discussion on operational effectiveness, including providing feedback to WAMG on the effectiveness of local social partnership working.

WAMG encourages local social partnerships to review the guidance at their next meeting and to develop their remit and protocol(s) accordingly.


 I Llywodraeth Cymru
 Welsh Assembly Government


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

Remit and protocol

The minimum remit in the 2008 guidance and model protocol document are intended to:

- encourage good practice;
- provide a basis for more consistent approaches to the work of local social partnerships;
- provide a stimulus to assist local social partnerships in reviewing their ways of working and to refine their practices in light of national and local conditions.

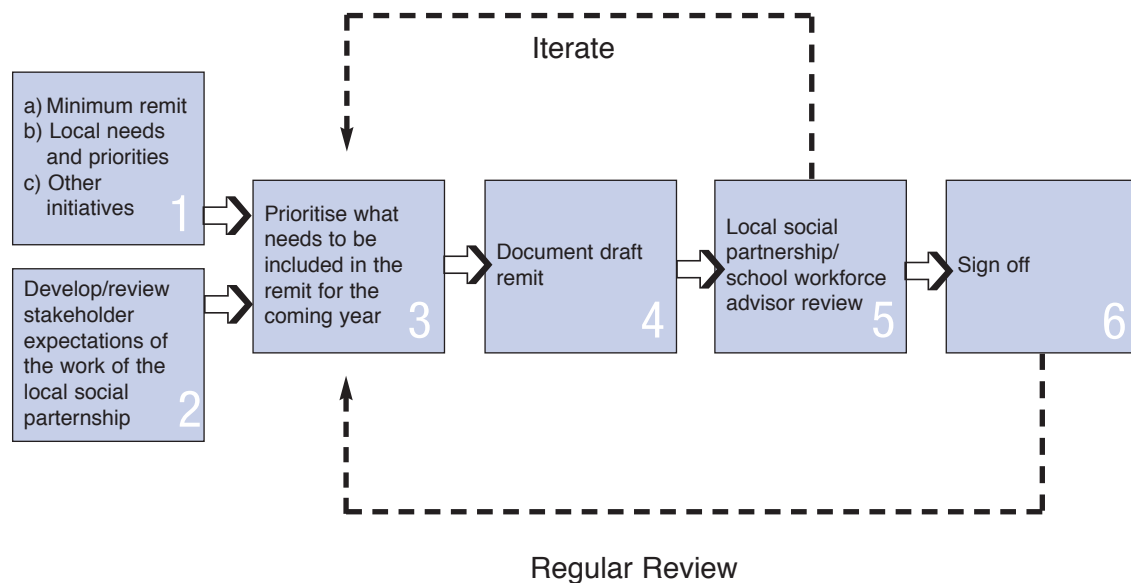
It is not WAMG's intention to be directive nor is it expected that local social partnerships will adopt these models verbatim.

The guidance includes a minimum remit for all local social partnerships but many wish to go beyond this.

Suggested approach to developing the remit

In order to establish a remit, local social partnerships should follow a process that:

- involves all relevant stakeholders;
- prioritises issues with which to engage in the remit;
- is based upon local agreement;
- provides for regular reviews of the remit in its entirety to take account of changing local and national priorities.



Model protocol

The purpose of the model protocol is to:

- promote clarity, openness and a positive working culture that allows the local social partnership to function effectively in order to deliver its remit;
- promote an open working relationship with schools and the local authority in order to support the implementation and monitoring of workforce reform and, in England, Performance Management and Extended Services.

The model protocol has been developed from the 2008 Guidance and covers the key themes of focus/participation, ways of working, communication and dissemination, and processes. WAMG has provided this model protocol to stimulate debate. Any protocol should be informed by local requirements. If you do not have a protocol, a similar process can be followed as for developing a remit.

Issue resolution process

WAMG believes that, wherever possible, issues that arise from implementing the National Agreement and, in England, revised Performance Management arrangements should be resolved at as local a level as possible.

The issue resolution process outlines how local, regional and national colleagues can work together to achieve this. It suggests who might be involved in resolving issues at each level, and to where an issue can be escalated if such efforts fail. Local social partnerships should refer to this outline when issues arise.

WAMG will be working to develop further the capacity of local social partnerships to play this key role in issue resolution. The aim is to build confidence in the system that:

- any party at each level can escalate an issue if this becomes necessary; but
- issues should be resolved at the lowest possible level and should not be escalated until options for resolution have been exhausted at the previous level.

It is important to note that this process does not apply to individual contractual disputes. Unions and professional associations will still deal with casework outside of this process.

The local social partnership should review the issue resolution process and consider how issues are currently being handled.

