

Raising Standards and Tackling Workload

Implementing the National Agreement

Autumn 2009


 department for
 children, schools and families

Workforce reform agenda update and local social partnership priorities

This note sets out the main priorities that the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group¹ (WAMG) has identified for consideration by local social partnerships over the next 12 months. It builds on our commitment, referenced in Note 18, to maintain an ongoing dialogue with local social partnerships.

Introduction

Recent government policies in England and Wales have significant implications for the workforce and will help to develop further the reform agenda in schools. Within this context, the contribution of the workforce, working as a team around the child, is central to the success of the reforms.

The ever-changing needs of the education system can only be fully met through a children's workforce in schools that is continually evolving through a process of remodelling, building on the workforce reforms that have been implemented over a number of years following the signing of the National Agreement in 2003. Local social partnerships will continue to play a key part through providing appropriate support and challenge to schools where it is needed and by working together with their local authorities (LAs).

WAMG update

Recent focuses have included:

- considerations and implications of legislation contained within the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act;
- setting out the basis for implementing the provisions that teachers should rarely cover for absent colleagues from 1 September 2009;
- WAMG Note 24: Threshold and Performance Management Arrangements for Teachers in England from September 2009;
- feeding back from the 2008 local social partnership membership effectiveness survey (England and Wales);
- developing and issuing the 2009 local social partnership membership effectiveness survey (England and Wales);
- working with the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to draft the TDA children's workforce in schools modernisation and development grant 2009-2010 (England). The purpose of the grant is to help LAs assist schools to recruit, develop and effectively deploy their children's workforce in schools. An LA plan identifying how the TDA grant will be spent during 2009-2010 should have been discussed with the local social partnership;
- the recently formed School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) (England) held its inaugural meeting on 7 July 2009. Some of the work previously taken forward by the Support Staff Working Group (SSWG) is being taken forward by the new body, with those residual matters that fall outside of the remit of the SSSNB continuing to be addressed through WAMG arrangements.

You can also find a comprehensive program of WAMG work priorities on the social partnership website www.socialpartnership.org.


 Llywodraeth Cymru
 Welsh Assembly Government


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

Local social partnership priorities

Following on from WAMG Note 19, which listed the workforce reform priorities for 2008, and WAMG Note 20 on effective local social partnership, local social partnerships should consider the following activities over the next 12 months:

- Promoting remodelling as a means for schools to tackle whole school issues and address new initiatives.
- Working with local authorities in their monitoring, support and challenge of school workforce reform and development programmes – including a review of LA workforce planning and modernisation plans and covering, for example, training provision for a broad range of support staff.

In this respect, developing effective communications that:

- a. ensure that the benefits of workforce reform and examples of good practice are communicated widely and consistently; and
 - b. disseminate agreed messages clearly and consistently to schools and members and ensure that the role of the local social partnership is understood by school staff and governors.
- Working with LAs to assist schools to raise the quality of implementation of workforce reform, identifying any issues and ensuring that processes for addressing them are in place. In particular, monitoring and supporting the implementation of 'rarely cover' – see Rarely Cover Implementation Process Guidance (available on www.socialpartnership.org).
 - Monitoring the effective and appropriate deployment of support staff, including in relation to the recent developments around 'rarely cover'.

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act

- Local social partners might want to begin discussions with their LA colleagues and with governors' representatives about the implications of the new legislation contained within the ASCL Act (www.dcsf.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsskillschildrenandlearningbill) to ensure LAs and governors have a good appreciation and understanding of the changes effective from early in the new year. The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 (SI 2680) (www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/uksi_20092680_en_1); and The Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 (www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2009/wsi_20092708_en_1), which came into force on 2 November 2009, are also worthy of discussion.
- The ASCL Act introduces provisions such that:

'A local education authority may give a warning notice to the governing body of a maintained school where the authority are satisfied that –

 - a. the governing body has failed to comply with a provision of an order under section 122 of EA 2002 (teachers' pay and conditions) that applies to a teacher at the school, or
 - b. the governing body have failed to secure that the head teacher of the school complies with such a provision.'

Self-evaluation and inspection

- Self-evaluation associated with the inspection process focusing on leadership and management should include consideration of compliance with statutory provisions. Local social partnerships should consider how to promote awareness of these expectations to schools:
 - in England, the leadership and management section of the self-evaluation form (SEF) includes questions about the statutory provisions that should be in place;
 - in Wales, in the existing inspection framework, this is considered under the management of resources. Estyn will advise on how this will be included in the new inspection framework due to be implemented in 2010.

School Support Staff Negotiating Body (England)

- Given that agreements reached by the SSSNB could take effect in England some time during 2010, social partners should begin discussions with colleagues in preparation for the implementation of these agreements in schools.

- For information, in Wales, there is a commitment in the One Wales agreement to develop a national structure for classroom assistants. This has been expanded to cover all support staff. Discussions between the key stakeholders and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) over arrangements in Wales continue.

Ways of working

- Ensuring that there are effective means of evidence/data collection to show:
 - a. impact of workforce reforms; and
 - b. how to engage with schools' priorities relating to workforce reform in conjunction with the LA.
- Promoting broader participation of school workforce unions/professional associations in local social partnerships.
- Ensuring that there are locally agreed issue resolution protocols (see national framework circulated with WAMG Note 20) in place to resolve local issues over implementation of the National Agreement and related workforce issues.

Regional events

Regional local social partnership events are being planned by regions in England between Autumn 2009 and Spring 2010. These are valuable sharing events and local social partnerships are strongly encouraged to ensure that they are properly represented. Contact your local Regional Delivery Partnership for a list of events currently planned.

WAMG will provide key messages about workforce reform at these events as part of its communications strategy on 'refresh and renew'. An important element of these messages is that there is still work to be done by local social partnerships to monitor the implementation of workforce reform by schools and to challenge issues of non-implementation.

Local social partnerships in Wales are also encouraged to consider arranging regional events to share experience and develop mutual support.

Available support

WAMG remains committed to providing appropriate support and guidance to local social partnerships. In England, the TDA is available to support effective local social partnership. Arrangements in Wales are currently under review and support continues to be available from LA Change Managers. WAMG would also strongly encourage colleagues to visit the social partnership website www.socialpartnership.org, where they will find all the latest guidance materials, notes and case studies and also the TDA website www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling. The following WAMG guidance provides specific advice and information.

Latest WAMG Notes

- 20 – Effective operation of local social partnerships (April 2008);
- 21 – Threshold and Performance Management from 2009 (July 2008);
- 22 – The Appropriate Deployment of Support Staff in Schools (July 2008);
- 23 – Threshold and Performance Management in England from September 2009: change in timescale for assessment applications (February 2009);
- 24 – Threshold and Performance Management Arrangements for Teachers in England from September 2009 (July 2009).

Rarely cover guidance

- 2009 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document;
- Rarely cover – WAMG statement (April 2009);
- Rarely cover – WAMG LA letter (April 2009);
- Rarely Cover Implementation Process Guidance (April 2009).

