



it's about **time...**

ATL'S
WORK-LIFE
CAMPAIGN

Tackling workload together

The key drivers of excessive workload and working hours are school and college wide. Any actions to tackle this issue will be more effective if taken together, across the whole workplace, with staff and leaders working collaboratively to make a positive change.

Many ATL/AMiE reps and members have taken the lead in tackling work-life balance in their schools and colleges with great success. You and your colleagues will know what works best in your school or college, and what is practically possible. You don't need to know all the answers to start asking questions and to initiate a conversation with colleagues about workload and its impact.

As you gather evidence of workload levels using the resources provided – as well as evidence of the impact it has on staff and students/pupils - it is worth reflecting on the weight of that evidence, the strength of staff feeling and the likelihood of success or partial success in achieving change together.

This toolkit takes you through a number of ways in which you can identify the problems you face and the likelihood of success. While it focuses on workload, these methods can be used to tackle a variety of issues in your workplace.

Your ATL rep

The first step is to discuss the issue with your ATL rep. If there is no ATL rep or contact in your school/college, decide who will take on this role (this can be more than one person) and email membership@atl.org.uk to let them know.

For guidance or support on the role of rep or with electing reps in your workplace, ATL have an organising team who can be contacted via email at organise@atl.org.uk. Please give your name, workplace postcode and contact details so we can get back to you.

If you are an ATL rep or contact and haven't attended a rep training course in the last four years or so, enrol on our reps course or health and safety reps course to develop your confidence and skills – find out more at www.atl.org.uk/repstraining.

For more advice on tackling your workload check out www.atl.org.uk/abouttime.

Your first point of contact is the ATL rep in your workplace. Your local ATL district or branch are also available to help, or you can contact ATL's member advisers on 020 7930 6441, email info@atl.org.uk.



Assessing the viability of a workload campaign in your workplace

Next, you and your colleagues could use the following checklist to help you consider if the issue of workload will:

- be widely felt by colleagues?
- be deeply felt by colleagues?
- winnable or partly winnable?
- result in a real improvement on the lives of colleagues if change is achieved?
- be easy to understand by all involved?
- be non-divisive amongst staff/ATL members?
- bring staff/ATL members together?
- increase the visibility of ATL

You should also consider if there are there other reasons why it would be good to organise around this issue.

Putting the plan together

Once you've assessed the strength of the workload issue in your workplace, the following general 'problem, information, plan' approach is a useful way to help develop a plan to tackle this issue.

Problem, information, plan (PIP) checklist

Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the problem - what is it?• What are the causes?• Why is it a problem?• What is the impact?• Have you spoken to colleagues who are concerned?• Is it an individual or collective problem or both?• Who is involved or affected by this problem?• Is this partly or wholly an issue which can be dealt with at workplace level?
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Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can you gather information to assess the scale of the problem and its impact (see below)?• How can members get relevant information from the employer, ATL and other organisations?• How can ATL work-life campaign resources help?• What do workplace/local/national agreements say?• Is there a relevant procedure or employer policy?• Is the problem covered by law?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ health and safety○ employment○ equality• What is the union's policy and advice?• Has it happened before, and what was the outcome?• Have other reps also dealt with this issue? How would you find out?• What do other members feel about the issue and would they support, get involved or help?• What do the terms and conditions of employment/contract of employment say?• Is there any other information you may need?
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you plan to tackle this issue together?• What are the specific things you want to change?• Who will you need to work with to resolve this issue?• What avenues are there to raise this issue in the workplace?• What would be a realistic aim and approach?• What advice, assistance and support do you need from other reps, members, the district/branch, ATL?• If other members are concerned how will that influence your plan?• Can you take this up as a collective issue?• How can you keep other members involved?• How does your plan aim to attract and involve new members of ATL?• As you try to resolve the problem, what could you ask members to do to get them more involved?• Anything else?

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Identifying the problem

As outlined above, the first thing to consider in your plan is how you can gather evidence about the scale of the workload issue and its impact.

The workload tracker on ATL's website (www.atl.org.uk/abouttime), plus surveys and questionnaires which you devise yourself or for which ATL can provide templates, are practical tools to help you identify and quantify the:

- work-life balance issues in your school/college
- key drivers of excessive workload in your workplace
- impact they have on staff
- impact they have on your students and the school/college.

Identifying these drivers is an important step towards being able to develop practical solutions that could be implemented to reduce workload and create a healthier workplace to the benefit of staff, pupils and the school/college.

Next steps

Consider the following:

- Share the results of the workload track and any other surveys with colleagues to demonstrate the drivers of excessive workload and its impact.
- If you are the school/college rep or contact, consider calling a members meeting to discuss the issue and gauge the strength of feeling.
- Identify volunteers to help collect and collate evidence and information from colleagues.
- Use the evidence to initiate a discussion with colleagues to develop solutions and concrete suggestions for changes in practice that will reduce workload.
- Have informal and creative discussions in the workplace, maybe during coffee breaks or lunch periods, which are solution focused.
- Perhaps raise the issue at a suitable staff meeting or through other communication systems.
- If you have a structure for staff consultation in your school/college, raise the issues at your joint negotiating committee or joint consultative committee, or other relevant staff committees (eg health and safety).
- If there is no consultation forum for staff reps and leaders in your school/college, consider asking for one and establishing a regular consultation meeting to open the lines of communication.
- Take a collaborative approach, using negotiation and consultation forums to discuss the evidence and solutions with school/college leaders. Prioritise the most important aspects, and work together to reach an agreement on practical steps which can be taken to reduce excessive workload and create a healthier, well workplace.

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You might also want to:

- download ATL's workload resources and display the materials on your notice board and in your staffroom
- find out about other ATL resources, including advice guides and model policies, which might be helpful; go to www.atl.org.uk to see what publications and resources are available
- consider what professional development might be needed to help tackle this issue (see www.atl.org.uk/learningzone for more); circulate a learning needs survey, elect a union learning rep or consider becoming one yourself (see www.atl.org.uk/repzone).

Consultation and collaboration is the key to success in tackling workload. Where available, find case studies of successful work-life balance in other workplaces. These may carry weight with your school/college leaders and can be helpful in identifying examples of good practice and potential solutions to the problem.

You could also make contact with other ATL reps and members in your area to share ideas. And keep an eye on www.atl.org.uk/abouttime for more resources, information and case studies, which ATL will be developing throughout the campaign.

Finally, ATL can support your school/college in developing your workload campaign. If you feel that you need support in your workplace to tackle workload then please contact organise@atl.org.uk with your full contact details.

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