

# Raising Standards and Tackling Workload

## Implementing the National Agreement

April 2006

department for  
**education and skills**  
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

### FURTHER IMPROVING OUTCOMES, FURTHER IMPROVING WORKING LIVES SCHOOL WORKFORCE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES FOR 2006-2008

1. Since the signing of the National Agreement '*Raising Standards, Tackling Workload*' in 2003, the social partners – ASCL, ATL, DfES, GMB, NASUWT, NEOST, PAT, T&G, UNISON and the Welsh Assembly Government – have worked together to ensure that our shared aims of raising standards and tackling workload are achieved. As a result there are some real successes to celebrate.

#### RAISING STANDARDS, TACKLING WORKLOAD – SOME SUCCESSES

Contractual changes for teachers, including:

- guaranteed PPA time;
- limiting cover;
- emerging career pathways for and increasing numbers of support staff (269,000 (FTE) support staff now compared to just over 225,000 in 2003);
- improved recruitment, retention, and job satisfaction;
- the School Workforce Development Board's three-year plan.

2. There is also a strong commitment to continue to work together – in partnership – to secure more benefits for pupils and the whole school workforce. Social partnership is a unique and effective way of working. Policies and strategies for both implementation and support at local level are agreed. Inevitably, because schools started from different positions, rates of progress have varied. However, the key focus now is to ensure that the progress made is both sustained and embedded across all of our 23,000 schools to enable all pupils and members of the workforce to receive the benefits to which they are entitled.
3. The National Agreement heralded a new way of working and created the capacity for schools to respond to the changing context.

#### THE CHANGING CONTEXT FOR SCHOOLS

In 2003, **Every Child Matters** began the reform of children's services nationally and locally.

In 2004, **the Children's National Service Framework** and **Choosing Health** highlighted the need for better working with health services.

In 2005, **White Papers for 14-19 and for Schools** signalled substantial changes to deliver personalised and tailored learning for all pupils.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



**NASUWT**

**NEOST**

**PAT**  
Professional Association of Teachers



**UNISON**  
the public service union

4. The social partners are committed to:
  - a) securing full compliance with all aspects of the National Agreement;
  - b) ensuring that existing reforms – such as PPA – are sustained and sustainable in the long term;
  - c) identifying and tackling the new workforce challenges.
5. There are a number of critical issues on which the social partners will need to focus:

### **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM THE 2003 NATIONAL AGREEMENT**

- to maintain downward pressure on teachers' and headteachers' overall hours by ensuring that all elements of the teachers' contractual changes are implemented fully and that the knock-on effects for the rest of the school workforce are carefully considered;
- to ensure that support staff pay fully reflects their level of training, skills and responsibilities;
- to move to a position where teachers only rarely cover for absent colleagues;
- to complete further work to reduce bureaucracy, working with the Implementation Review Unit and including revising Circulars 2/98 and 22/98; and
- to complete a review of school closure (INSET) days.

6. Progress made so far will count for nothing if it is not sustained. Expensive sticking plaster approaches adopted by some schools will not be sustainable. Neither will approaches based on inappropriate deployment of support staff, led by short-term budget considerations, without adequate training or remuneration.

### **SUSTAINABILITY AND SHARING BEST PRACTICE**

The Training and Development Agency (TDA), incorporating the National Remodelling Team, which has played a crucial role in helping schools, local authorities and social partners to manage change, will be the *modernisation agency for schools*. It will work with the social partners to identify, share and embed the best strategic and practical solutions schools have found. These strategies will need to be both evidence-based and cost-effective. The TDA will be responsible for monitoring progress, including in terms of both the sustainability and quality of approaches taken by schools, across all aspects of the National Agreement. Where appropriate, in order to ensure whole school approaches are in place, the TDA will need to work with NCSL.

7. Successful implementation of the Government's reform agenda for children and young people will mean both different ways of working and a different mix of skills in schools, as well as more collaboration between schools and between schools and other providers. These developments all need to be worked through – to understand the workload implications. The social partnership provides the forum for these discussions.

8. To ensure a thorough, up-to-date understanding of what is happening in schools a research strand will be an important element of the work of social partners.
9. A better understanding of who in schools is doing what, and a fuller understanding of how some schools are doing things really well will inform our approach. We will strive to identify ways of working more efficiently and effectively – not more or longer hours. Smarter, rather than harder.

### **WAMG SIX-POINT PLAN – PRIORITIES FOR 2006-2008**

1. Delivering the Schools White Paper commitment to fair play and rewards for support staff.
2. Delivering the Schools White Paper commitment to improving the performance of the whole school workforce.
3. Developing and extending the school workforce, and thinking through the workforce implications of schools providing an increasing range of services.
4. Ensuring improved work/life balance for all school staff with a particular focus on headteachers.
5. Ensuring schools have a high-quality capacity building programme at local and national level.
6. Ensuring sustainability of remodelling and pay/restructuring reforms (seeing through the National Agreement changes).

10. As well as supporting and contributing to local partnerships, which will continue to have a crucial role to play by offering support for workforce reform that is both aligned with guidance from WAMG and sensitive to local circumstance, the social partners, at a national level, over the next six months, from April to September 2006, will:
  - complete work on support staff rewards, following the initial report to Ministers;
  - complete the work that is under way on new professional standards for teachers and initiate the follow-on work for support staff;
  - issue further advice for schools on the roles and deployment of HLTAs and cover supervisors;
  - develop and distribute guidance on:
    - a. extended schools and the role and responsibility of the headteacher, of teachers and of support staff maintaining the commitment that extended schools will not mean extended hours for teachers and headteachers or the inappropriate use of support staff;
    - b. more effective performance management for teachers and headteachers.

11. And in the six months from October to March, we will:

- support and complete the implementation of Teaching and Learning Reviews in the context of improved performance management for teachers;
- review progress against the three-year plan for school support staff;
- review further the roles and responsibilities of teachers;
- work with the review of personalised teaching and learning to ensure that implications for the school workforce are properly considered;
- take stock of the outcomes of the Independent Study of School Leadership;
- work with the TDA on capacity building at school, local and regional level;
- review progress on numbers of people securing HLTA status and being employed as such; and
- review the pay and conditions of support staff, particularly those in new roles.

12. And, looking ahead to 2007, we will be:

- assessing the challenges – and paving the way for the successful introduction – of the specialised 14-19 diplomas;
- actively engaged in monitoring progress against commitments;
- considering how to put into action any recommendations to arise from the working party on Support Staff Rewards;
- working through RIG to improve the way in which performance management and pay systems support our best teachers and challenge poor-quality practice;
- improving opportunities for continuing professional development for all staff, with a particular focus on support staff; and
- maintaining pressure throughout the system to drive down excessive working hours and/or unpaid overtime and to improve the work/life balance of everyone in schools.

