

Workforce reform for a 21st century school: a brief for governors

Dear Governor

The purpose of this material is to provide you with an update on recent workforce reform developments. It is intended to complement the Guide for Governors IV produced in 2005 by ourselves working in conjunction with the Training and Development Agency for Schools.

The Government's White Paper, 'Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system' (published in June 2009) sets out the Government's vision for the future of the school system. The paper summary highlights the important role governors play in ensuring that every child receives an excellent, personalised education and has easy access to appropriate support and guidance.

"School governors play a vital role in our education system by holding to account the school's leadership for the performance of the school."

A well-led and highly skilled workforce is a key part of the 21st century school system. Over the past six years, workforce reforms have introduced entitlements that enable the effective functioning of that workforce. Governors have played and will continue to play an important role in supporting those reforms.

Two pieces of legislation, currently before parliament, are designed to ensure that entitlements secured through workforce reform are in place. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill proposes to extend the existing intervention powers that local authorities and the Secretary of State have in respect of schools causing concern to cover the teachers' and headteachers' entitlements set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). Revised staffing regulations propose additional duties on governing bodies to ensure that headteachers comply with the duties imposed upon them and benefit from any entitlements conferred upon them.

For reforms to be effective they need to be sustained and embedded. This material will remind you of reform successes to date and the role governors have to play in ensuring that reforms continue to deliver benefits to the school workforce and improve outcomes for children and young people.

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Workforce reform grew out of the conviction that the school workforce is key to raising standards of achievement and that teachers need to be free of tasks that are not concerned with their core job of teaching if they are to help children and young people realise their potential.

The sentiment is echoed in the recent Government White Paper 'Your child, your schools, our future, building a 21st century schools system' (June 2009).

*"It is only the workforce who can deliver our ambition of improved outcomes, with children and young people fully engaged with their education and supported to progress through it. This workforce will need to be well-led, highly-skilled, motivated and effectively-deployed."*¹

The White Paper promises to ensure that governing bodies are supported in challenging and supporting school leaders and making effective use of data and information to manage performance and ensure value for money. It also highlights planned legislation that will place additional responsibilities on governing bodies to ensure that headteachers and teachers receive the entitlements secured through workforce reform.

The National Agreement

Workforce reform began with the historic signing of 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: a National Agreement' by a group of eleven organisations representing local government employers, the English and Welsh governments and school workforce unions. The signatories of the agreement, known as the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG)² social partnership, oversaw the implementation of changes to teachers' and

headteachers' contracts, introduced in three phases over three years.

Those changes are enshrined in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).

They include:

- teachers are no longer required to undertake administrative or clerical tasks
- introduction of leadership and management time for those with leadership and management responsibilities
- a requirement for schools to respect teachers' work/life balance
- limits on the amount of cover that teachers and headteachers provide (with teachers and headteachers covering only rarely from September 2009)
- a minimum 10 per cent of timetabled teaching time for planning, preparation and assessment³
- teachers no longer routinely required to invigilate external exams, and
- headteachers to have dedicated time, which recognises their significant leadership responsibilities for their school.

What this means for governors: the purpose of the headteacher is to lead and manage the school and to work with the governing body to develop the strategic direction of the school. Since September 2005, the governing body has been responsible for ensuring that the headteacher has time during the school week in which to do so. It is important that governors take an active role in monitoring the use of dedicated headship time where headteachers have a heavy teaching timetable, or where the management aspects of the role leave little time for leadership. It is also important that governors ensure that the headteacher's overall workload is kept at a reasonable level.

Governors are not involved in day-to-day management of workforce reform. However, there

¹ Your child, your schools, our future, building a 21st century schools system summary'

² WAMG membership includes: Department of Children, Schools and Families; National Assembly for Wales; Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL); Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL); GMB; National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT); NASUWT; The National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST); Unite; UNISON; Voice.

³ In Church of England VA schools, it is expected that all teachers will take part in collective worship so PPA time should not be taken during collective worship.

may be implications for governors in terms of apportioning parts of the school budget to address workforce deployment, such as paying for cover supervisors, exam invigilator, supply teachers and so on.

The revised staffing regulations that are expected to come into force as a result of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Bill will place a duty on the governors to ensure that their headteachers both comply with and benefit from the entitlements enshrined in the STPCD.

Performance management

In 2007, revised performance management arrangements came into force for schools in England. As part of the broader reform agenda, this was a natural progression towards helping teachers and headteachers develop their careers while also creating stronger links between performance and pay, school improvement and professional development. The revised arrangements were designed to cut unnecessary bureaucracy and workload and make it easier for teachers and headteachers to engage with the process.

What this means for governors: governing bodies already have a range of duties in relation to performance management that can be summarised as:

- establishing the school's performance management policy [or directing the headteacher to do so], monitoring the operation and outcomes of performance management arrangements, and reviewing the policy every year
- appointing two or three governors to review the headteacher's performance on an annual basis. (In schools with a religious character, at least one reviewer should be a foundation governor)
- using the School Improvement Partner to advise the appointed governors on the headteacher's performance
- making decisions about pay based for headteachers and teachers on pay recommendations made by reviewers, and
- retaining a copy of the headteacher's planning and review statement (normally the Chair of Governors)

- actioning requests for evidence from the performance management process to be transferred if the headteacher transfers school mid-cycle
- ensuring the content of the headteacher's planning and review statement is drafted having regard to the need to be able to achieve a satisfactory work/life balance, and
- undertaking action in relation to appeals in line with the school's procedures.

The changing educational landscape

The educational landscape is changing fast. Schools continue to work in partnership with other schools and with wider children's services, to provide the best education and support possible. New roles appearing in schools, such as cluster managers and parent support advisers, are helping to support children's services. There is more emphasis on appropriate staff being deployed in appropriate roles with the necessary training, skills and commitment to provide an effective personalised learning experience for children and young people.

By 2010, as a key part of the Government's commitment to improve pupil well-being and community cohesion, all schools will provide access to a core offer of services including: childcare; a varied menu of activities for young people; parenting support (including family learning); swift and easy access to targeted and specialist services; and community access.

*The White Paper outlines a vision of a school system whereby "Every pupil will go to a school that promotes their health and wellbeing, where they have the chance to express their views and where they and their families are welcomed. Every school should be a healthy school, and every child should receive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) as part of their curriculum entitlement."*⁴

What this means for governors: governing bodies already have overall responsibility for ensuring that schools provide access to the core offer and that any services provided help to promote high standards of education and meet the needs of the community.

⁴ Your child, your schools, our future, building a 21st century schools system summary

The governing body needs to work closely with the leadership team to ensure that any services support the school improvement plan and are provided in a way that is consistent with the National Agreement. Governing bodies have particular responsibilities in relation to the registration of any childcare offered by the school or cluster and the use of any profits derived from extended services.

Introducing, sustaining and embedding change

Remodelling

WAMG aims to safeguard workforce entitlements and has encouraged schools to adopt remodelling processes as a means of tackling whole school issues and creating the capacity to introduce, sustain and embed change. Remodelling was introduced in the National Agreement as a change management programme that has, at its heart, the following principles:

- Establishing a school change team
- Promoting collaboration
- Developing strong and effective leadership
- Promoting an inclusive culture
- Adopting a proven change process
- Ensuring that the rational, political and emotional aspects of change are considered

Local social partnerships

At an early stage of the reforms, WAMG encouraged the formation of 'local social partnerships' with membership made up from local stakeholders such as local authority teams eg workforce, extended services, human resources, and school workforce unions. Some local social partnerships include Governor Services and governors as additional members. There is one local social partnership per local authority area.

Local social partnerships have provided support to schools encouraging them to adopt a remodelling approach to whole school issues. Local social partnerships have also provided challenge and support to schools implementing other workforce

reforms such as performance management and the effective deployment of support staff.

What this means for governors: governors play a key role as members of the school change team and an active part in school remodelling activities and the implementation and sustainability of workforce reform. Governors are also key stakeholders of local social partnerships, working with them and LAs to embed workforce reforms through remodelling and, in particular, to resolve issues relating to entitlements in their schools.

New legislation and issue resolution

ASCL Bill

When in force, the ASCL Bill will extend the intervention powers that currently apply to schools causing concern to those that fail to adequately ensure that members of the school workforce receive their statutory entitlements. It will provide for an initial warning notice followed by other types of intervention - by local authorities and the Secretary of State - in cases of alleged non-compliance with the STPCD.

A summary of the proposals contained within the ASCL Bill can be found at: www.dcsf.gov.uk under Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill.

Staffing regulations

Proposed revisions to the staffing regulations contain a new clause, relating to the provisions proposed in the ASCL Bill above, stating that...

"...The governing body must ensure that the head teacher at the school –

(a) complies with the duties imposed upon the head teacher; and

*(b) benefits from any entitlement conferred upon the head teacher."*⁵

The School Staffing (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2009

The proposed staffing regulations can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations

⁵ The School Staffing (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2009

What this means for governors: most schools comply with their statutory duties. It is important that in situations where issues around entitlements do arise, all parties seek to resolve them at as local a level as possible. It is not the intention of the legislation around compliance that LAs start issuing warning notices to schools as soon as the powers come into force. Instead all parties at a school, local, regional or national level should refer to the national issue resolution framework. (Local protocols for the implementation of the national framework process should have been put in place before issues arise.) In the nationally agreed framework, governing bodies are involved at school level and should work with the school leadership team, school staff and school workforce union representatives in resolving issues early and locally, and escalating issues only when all local efforts have been exhausted. It should be noted that in some cases a school change team, involving a broad cross-section of the school workforce including governors, might provide the right environment and element of participation in which to work through an issue successfully.

More information about the issue resolution process can be found on the WAMG website at: www.socialpartnership.org

Workforce reform for the 21st century schools system

Workforce reform through remodelling needs to be seen as a continuing process and as a vital part of delivering the goal of improved outcomes for children and young people. The White Paper highlights the fact that a motivated and skilled workforce, effectively deployed and with good leadership is “key to the creation of the world-leading system of schooling which reflects the needs of the 21st century.”⁶ It is because of this that it is imperative that schools meet contractual obligations to support staff and that teachers and headteachers receive their entitlements. Those entitlements are not an option but a statutory right.

Further support

These further sources of information may also prove useful to your work as governors:

The National Governors’ Association (NGA)

www.nga.org

National Coordinators of Governor Services (NCOGS)

www.ncogs.org.uk

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)

- Remodelling in schools: www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling
- Performance management: www.tda.gov.uk/pm

The Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG)

www.socialpartnership.org

Every Child Matters (ECM)

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

www.dcsf.gov.uk

Teachernet

www.teachernet.gov.uk

Governornet

www.governornet.co.uk

National College for Leadership of Schools and Children’s Services (NCSL)

www.ncsl.org.uk

⁶ Your child, your schools, our future, building a 21st century schools system summary