

Enterprise and Learning Committee

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Teacher Workload Agreement

Evidence Presented by NAHT Cymru

NAHT Cymru welcomes the opportunity to give evidence to the Enterprise and Learning Committee. NAHT was a signatory to the Workload Agreement in January 2003. All but two of the teaching unions were signatories.

1. NAHT Cymru welcomed the Workload Agreement and its members have played a vital role in ensuring that it has worked for all classroom teachers. The changes in working practices has had a positive impact on the workload of the teaching staff, with resultant benefits to both teachers and pupils, although the effect on improving standards is yet to be fully quantified. The Workload Agreement incorporated contractual changes that had to be implemented in order to deliver the remodelling agenda. The issue of workload and work-life balance remain central to employment relations for NAHT members, and Estyn, in its report 'The Impact of workforce remodelling on pupils' learning and raising standards - March 2007, is clear that real concerns exist about the working hours of school leaders in Wales and the enormity of the tasks they face. This has a consequential impact on work-life imbalance. The Price Waterhouse Coopers Independent Study into School Leadership (2007) concluded that school leadership in England and Wales is "generally of high quality and has been improving consistently since the mid-1990's". One of the key findings of their report stated "The role of school leaders has become more challenging in recent years, and the complexity and range of tasks they are required to undertake has increased significantly."

2. In 2007, the NAHT commissioned Dr. Gary Daniels and Dr. Steve French of Keele University to undertake an in-depth survey on the Work-Life balance of its members. The report was published in April 2008. The data from this survey gives cause for concern.

3. During term time, less than one-tenth (9%) of school leaders work up to 48 hours per week (the legal maximum working week for school leaders as stipulated by the Working Time Regulations). By contrast, almost half (47%) of all NAHT members reported working between 49 and 59 hours per week during term time and, even more worryingly, over two-fifths (44%) work over 60 hours per week. Interestingly, there were few differences between head, deputy and assistant head teachers in terms of the hours worked during term time.

4. However, the working time of NAHT members does relent outside of term time with over half (51%) working less than 21 hours per week on average. Nevertheless, one-third (34%) work between 22 and 34 hours, nearly one-tenth (8%) work between 35 and 39 hours and 7% are working 40 hours or more per week. Head and deputy head teachers (50% and 48% respectively) are more likely than assistant heads (40%) to work, on average, 22 hours or more a week outside of term time. In terms of teaching, most school leaders are timetabled to teach each week but over one-third (37%) are not. Exactly the same proportion (37%) are timetabled to teach between 1 and 5 hours per week, with over one-tenth (11%) timetabled to teach 6 to 10 hours and just under one-tenth (8%) teaching between 16 to 20 hours. No respondents indicate that they teach between 11 and 15 hours per week but a small minority (7%) of NAHT members are timetabled to teach for 21 hours or more a week. It showed that 48% of head teachers are not timetabled to teach compared to only 4% of assistant heads and 8% of deputy heads. In fact, half of all assistant (51%) and over two-fifths of deputy (42%) heads are timetabled to teach 16 or more hours per week.

5. In addition to the evidence of long working hours and, in some cases, considerable teaching commitments, the survey findings also indicate extensive working outside of school hours. During term time, almost all NAHT members (99%) work at weekends, before school and after 6pm, with over half (53%) working, on average, between 6 and 15 hours per week.

6. Furthermore, half of all NAHT members surveyed (50%) are also required to provide cover for classroom teachers, with over four-fifths (81%) providing between 1 and 3 hours cover each week. Assistant heads are more likely to be called on to cover (54% compared to 50% of heads and 51% of deputy heads).

7. The Workload Agreement has resulted in a large number of additional support staff being appointed, which has meant an "an increase in the organisational and managerial load for senior staff and headteachers, particularly in secondary and large primary schools." Estyn Report 2007

8. Every school leadership team has the right to determine, in consultation with their staff, the most appropriate strategy for delivery of the Agreement. The Agreement is about Raising Standards and Tackling Workload. Care must be taken that implementation of the Agreement does not have an adverse effect on standards.

9. Although there has been an understandable concentration on the delivery of the 10% PPA Time, (with effect from 01.09.05), too little has been said about those aspects of the Agreement that benefit heads, deputies and assistant heads, eg 38 hours maximum cover (with effect from 01.09.04), Leadership and Management Time and Dedicated Headship Time.

10. Clearly the funding of PPA time has impacted most heavily on primary schools but there have been additional burdens facing secondary and special schools, eg the additional cost in relation to invigilation of external examinations. Lack of resources raises concern over the long term sustainability of PPA arrangements

11. In the Estyn report The Impact of Workforce Remodelling on pupils' learning and raising standards March 2007 positive features

were reported. However there were also issues of concern. Estyn reported that in a quarter of the primary schools sampled, standards of pupils' behaviour had deteriorated in the periods when specified work was being delivered by support staff during PPA time. They also found that in a few primary schools headteachers themselves cover PPA time.

12. Governing bodies are under a statutory obligation to ensure a reasonable work/life balance and reasonable hours for their head teachers. From September 2005, no head teacher should be teaching for more than 50% of the school timetable. This is not the case in many small schools, Federated Schools and for Head teachers responsible for running two schools.

Leadership And Management Time

13. Members of the leadership group need time to focus on their leadership responsibilities and be supported in leading the reform agenda and managing change in their schools.

14. Head teachers are also legally entitled to a reasonable allocation of Leadership and Management time. Provision for dedicated Headship time was introduced from 1 September 2005. This again is not the case in all schools. Lack of resources is often given as the reason why.

15. The provision of leadership and management time is intended to be a contribution to the time needed to discharge the relevant responsibilities. Subject to that qualification some time for leadership and management must be allocated within school sessions, taking account of the nature and extent of the responsibilities of each member of staff and the management structure of the school.

16. Some schools, particularly in the primary sector, do not currently provide time for leadership and management responsibilities within school sessions. In its 2007 Report Estyn noted that in 25% of the schools sampled, there was little or no leadership and management time for senior staff.

Dedicated Headship Time

17. Head teachers must have dedicated time to lead their schools, as well as manage them. Governing bodies have a statutory duty to ensure that head teachers have dedicated headship time, having regard to resources in the school. A lack of resources is being cited by some Governing Bodies as a reason not to meet their statutory duty. We are not persuaded that LEAs have been assertive in advising Governors of their full statutory obligation in that regard. The same rationale is not applied in relation to PPA time for the class teacher. There is a distinct problem where head teachers with significant teaching loads (for example those who teach for more than 50% of the school timetable) have inadequate time during school sessions for their leadership and managerial role. This is particularly the case in small primary schools.

18. In around a third of secondary schools there is little or no dedicated headship time for some members of the School Leadership team. In Primary Schools, just over 60% of headteachers have little or no dedicated headship time.(Estyn - 2007)

19. NAHT Cymru concludes that the Keele University 2007-8 survey findings continue to tell a story of cause and effect, with weak and ineffective regulation of workload and working time leading to problems of workload control, stress and ill health. This survey highlights a persistent culture of excessive hours and expanding workloads, which are clearly not being effectively regulated by working time legislation or by the arrangements arising out of the National Workload Agreement. The absence of effective legal and collective regulations has not been compensated for by employers instituting policies to address work-life balance issues.

Crucially, the findings highlight the problems NAHT members face in finding ways to discuss and regulate workloads within the school setting. In the survey members were asked about performance management and appraisals. Responses were again consistent with other questions about the formal regulation of workload:- work-life balance issues are not covered in the appraisals of most NAHT members.

Given the problems and limitations of formal regulation of workload, it is no surprise that the vast majority of NAHT members are finding it difficult to manage their working lives and their family and private lives

School leaders are committed to their jobs and generally find their work enjoyable and rewarding. The spill-over of work into family and private time is undermining the ability of head teachers to undertake their jobs effectively. This has implications for the retention of existing head teachers and the future recruitment of school leaders and especially head teachers. These concerns have been expressed previously by NAHT Cymru. The problems of long working-hours, the ineffectiveness of the Workload Agreement and the problems of controlling workload remain consistent and are, if anything, increasing for school leaders whilst diminishing for other members of the teaching profession.

It is important, therefore to note (again) the issues that school leaders identify to improve their working environment. The need for less cost-cutting and additional resources to address the full workload reform agenda; far greater formal participation in structured discussion of workload management issues; a system-wide recognition that contractual change covers all members of the teaching profession.

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