



Department
for Education

Mapping the availability and use of professional development for reducing teacher workload

Research report

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CooperGibson Research

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Executive Summary

The Government has been carrying out a programme of work to remove unnecessary workload in schools in England since late 2014. To help inform the Government's commitment of targeted support, CooperGibson Research was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to identify the packages of support and continuing professional development (CPD) available to schools in relation to reducing teacher workload.

Aim and approach

The aim of this project was to gather evidence on both the spread and use of professional development packages and support to reduce teacher workload in schools in England.

The project encompassed:

- A systematic online mapping exercise, exploring the nature of the support market nationally for teacher/school workload management.
- Telephone interviews with 22 users in schools who have accessed support and CPD for workload management; and with the providers of 25 packages of support.

Key findings

Overview of workload support packages

The mapping exercise identified 119 different resources or activities, provided by 55 organisations or individuals¹. These were predominantly digital and/or online resources, or formal workshops and seminars, although smaller numbers of books and tailored consultancy services were also identified. Broadly reflecting the results of the online mapping activity, the most common packages provided (and accessed) by interviewees were online resources and more formal face-to-face provision.

Online resources included blogs, articles, case studies of good practice and products such as cloud-based assessment tools for auditing staff wellbeing. The key appeal for users of these tended to be that a lot of these resources were freely accessible and could be easily shared. In addition, digital tools and software packages

¹ The subjective nature of the mapping exercise – and the specific scope of this project – means that not all resources and packages available to schools (and used by them) in managing workload will have been identified through this research.

ranged from whole-school systems (costing for example, £1,500 per school per year) through to free smaller mobile applications that teachers used on a personal basis to track their own workload levels. These ranged in cost, depending on the size, number of users and sophistication of the package. Schools also reported using generic software to assist with reducing workload (e.g. sharing calendars and documents electronically to assist with planning, assessment and feedback processes).

Formal face-to-face provision predominantly included workshops and/or seminars, with smaller numbers of courses and conference proceedings containing modules or units relating to workload management. These were most commonly delivered at external venues with a range of delegate fees according to teacher status and number of teachers attending from the same school. Bespoke training and/or consultancy support was also available at a higher cost – users of these services had appreciated support and training that was tailored to their specific context.

Resources and support packages tended to be aimed at a broad audience in terms of phase of education, school type or staff role. Three resources were identified that could specifically help support senior leaders in reviewing workload levels in their schools, but overall little was identified that was designed to help senior leaders plan how to strategically address workload levels and implement change.

Value, effectiveness and impact of resources

Interviewees of all types spoke of the budgetary constraints for schools in accessing resources, the time involved in engaging with activities such as formal courses, and the resource implications for ensuring staff cover.

There was limited evidence identified, either during the mapping exercise or the telephone interviews, on the effectiveness of resources in reducing workload. The impact of resources most commonly perceived by users related to reduced planning/marketing and data analysis, improved relationships among staff, and an increased awareness of staff wellbeing. However, no formal, controlled evaluation of the effectiveness or value of these packages was identified during the mapping process.

The overall value that users placed on resources tended to change according to resource type:

- **Membership of teaching support organisations/alliances** were valued for the ability to compare processes and strategies against other schools; the access to peer support; the range of information available in one place; the positive reputation of an organisation and the ability to receive a form of accreditation or recognition for the school (e.g. certificate, award); and access to a helpline or members' online forum.

- **Software systems** were valued for their design when streamlining planning and assessment across schools; mapping and tracking data; and running more efficient and effective data analysis and reporting.
- **Conferences/courses/workshops** were important to users for helping staff to develop a network of contacts within the sector. External courses and workshops were also regarded as skills development opportunities.
- **Social media/blogs/downloadable resources** were regarded as a valuable means by which to access quick examples of innovative or best practice, and to become part of a broader teaching community through which experiences, ideas and challenges could be shared online.

Users felt that the most effective features of support packages were personalised or contextual information and guidance; and the ability to connect with a community of peers through forums, social media accounts or face-to-face meetings.

Users felt that the ability to access information in one place, streamline data, or download ready-prepared templates and resources were all features that could save them time in an immediate way. By contrast, access to peer support, accredited training or developing networks could improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness of working practices *in the long-term* and could help with strategic aims (by helping to improve workload levels over time).

Engaging schools

When asked about effective ways to offer resources and support to schools for managing teacher workload, providers and users suggested:

1. Making use of professional associations as an established and trusted communication route for circulating ideas and examples of new initiatives, strategies or examples of good practice. These interviewees did not appear aware of DfE's current use of these channels of communication.
2. Drawing on established individuals already working in the field to offer consultancy or specialist support to schools, such as those who are current or former teachers and run popular blogs and social media accounts that share ideas/ examples of resources.
3. Increasing the use of social media and blogging to engage with the teaching workforce.
4. Improving promotion of the resources that are already available such as the DfE blogs (for example, through the professional associations mentioned above).

5. Being careful of the timing of resources such as online discussions/webinars - if these are scheduled for a Sunday evening, for example, interviewees felt it would defeat the purpose of reducing unreasonable workload.
6. Ensuring CPD events are not too generic, for example by offering breakout sessions that focus on specific contexts or offering bespoke support for individual schools.
7. Having external, objective viewpoints to draw upon can provide a perspective of workload/wellbeing issues which is perceived to be 'honest' by users.

Conclusions

It is important to note the subjective nature of the mapping exercise – and the specific scope of this project – means that not all resources and packages available to schools (and used by them) in managing workload will have been identified through this research. However, it does suggest some general features about the current provision of support and CPD available to teachers.

Overall, providers – and users – did not generally suggest that the primary intention of any single product was the reduction of workload specifically (with the exception of some software packages). Instead, a range of resources were available to support schools in addressing the key *drivers* of workload (e.g. planning, marking and data management). These were framed around a range of perspectives such as staff development/CPD, school improvement and teacher wellbeing. Thus, workload reduction was one of several potential effects highlighted by packages on offer. Furthermore, there was a general perception among users that one-off events or individual support packages were unlikely to solve the complex and multiple challenges of teacher workload.

In general, users and providers noted that they needed to remain mindful – where possible (and financially viable) – of offering or accessing resources and support packages that provided contextualised information relevant to their situation and needs. Written, published or hard-copy materials appeared to be particularly valuable to users, as these could be a continual point of reference over time (as compared to a one-off course or workshop).

Very few resources were identified that had the primary aim of helping senior leaders to plan and implement a review of teacher workload within their school. Instead resources tended to be more focused on providing aids and tips to improve teaching practice, which may then impact on workload, rather than how to manage the process of reviewing and managing workload itself. Reinforcing this, the resources for early career teachers/newly qualified teachers (NQTs) offered ideas and examples of how to balance workload, manage interruptions, and be assertive in the workplace. This suggests that there are

current gaps in the provision of resources and support that effectively address the contextual needs of a school to enable a strategic and meaningful review of staff workload and wellbeing.

1. Introduction

The Government has been carrying out a programme of work to remove unnecessary workload in schools in England since late 2014. This has included establishing three independent review groups and publishing their reports on removing unnecessary workload related to [marking, planning and resources](#), and [data management](#) in March 2016. Alongside the [Teacher Workload Survey](#) (TWS 2016), DfE published an [action plan](#). This set out progress on the recommendations for the Government from the three reports, as well as further steps to act on the findings from the survey, including a commitment of targeted support to help tackle workload.

To help inform the Government's commitment of targeted support, CooperGibson Research was commissioned by DfE to identify the packages of support and continuing professional development (CPD) available to schools in relation to reducing teacher workload.

1.1 Aims and objectives

The aim of this mapping project was to gather evidence on the characteristics and use of professional development packages and support to reduce workload – and particularly in supporting senior leaders and early career teachers to tackle workload – in schools in England. In order to achieve this aim, it was necessary to:

- Map the professional development/support activity that currently exists for schools in England to help them manage workload – including their content, geographical coverage, intended audience (e.g. phase of education, type of school, staff role).
- Understand how these activities/packages of support are delivered, who they are designed and delivered by, how they are promoted to schools, and any associated costs.
- Gather information on how resources are accessed by school leaders/teachers, and in what ways they are used to support workload management/reduction.
- Explore whether these activities are perceived to be effective by senior leaders, and whether their impact is formally monitored/measured in any way.

1.2 Overview of approach

This review has encompassed:

- A systematic online mapping exercise, exploring the nature of the support market nationally for teacher/school workload management.

- Telephone interviews with 22 users in schools that have accessed support and CPD for workload management; and with 25 providers who design and deliver those packages of support.

1.1.1 Mapping exercise

Support activities and resources relating to workload management were mapped by conducting online searches using search terms specific to school workforce roles and providers (see Appendix 1) with other key words such as 'workload', 'reduction' and 'support'. Some examples of search term combinations include;

- '[Role] support workload', e.g. 'senior school leader support workload'.
- 'Teacher support [task]', e.g. 'teacher support planning'.
- 'School workload [CPD type]', e.g. 'school workload workshop'.

In addition, websites of key unions, initial teacher training (ITT) providers and teaching school alliances (TSAs)/support organisations were reviewed and multiple searches were conducted using broad search terms combined with secondary key words. Examples of search terms can be found in Appendix 1.

1.1.2 Telephone interviews

To support the findings of the mapping exercise, 47 qualitative telephone interviews were carried out with schools that had accessed workload support packages of different types, and providers who design and deliver those packages. These interviews were carried out with 22 users (across 22 schools) and providers of 25 support packages (Table 1).

Table 1: Breakdown of telephone interview participants

<p>Users (total 22)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixteen secondary schools; six primary schools • Fourteen academies; seven local authority maintained schools; one voluntary aided school • Ten Executives/Headteachers; eight Deputy Headteachers/Assistants/Vice Principals; two Heads of Department; one Inclusion Manager • One classroom teacher
<p>Providers (total 25)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four charitable/third-sector organisations • Four private training providers • Three trade/teaching associations • Two bloggers • Two IT providers (software/app) • Two professional bodies • Two educational publishers/publications • Two teacher support organisations • One educational consultant • One teaching school • One union • One ITT provider

1.1.3 Notes for reading this report

Alongside the findings, a number of observations were raised during the mapping exercise and the interviews that should be considered when reviewing the results reported here.

1. The mapping exercise was, by its nature, a subjective process. Whilst searching for workload-related professional development and support packages, researchers came across a number of examples that were 'grey areas' in terms of the remit of this work, i.e. they did not mention workload or wellbeing specifically, but could have been seen to be linked to these issues (e.g. a course on improving resilience could be regarded as potentially having an impact on teacher wellbeing). Wherever possible, specific mention of teacher/school workload – in the content or the

intended outcomes – was the key consideration in including materials and support packages on the mapping spreadsheet. Where there appeared to be a clear link to teacher wellbeing or work-life balance these resources were also included. The focus was only on resources aimed at the school workforce.

2. The mapping was undertaken by a group of trained researchers who had access to a list of pre-determined and agreed search terms. It is notable – given the focus of this exercise – that it was time-consuming to search through individual websites to look for relevant resources, articles and courses that specifically addressed workload management. Senior school leaders have a limited amount of time available to carry out these sorts of searches and this may make it particularly challenging to efficiently identify the appropriate resource and support activities most suitable for a school and its needs.
3. Given the large number of results that appear with any search, the mapping exercise offers an overview of first/second page results and other relevant resources accessed via these websites. For the purposes of analysis, the number of resources identified is presented in the report. It is important to note, however, that these numbers are purely illustrative and are not exhaustive of all available support packages or activities available to schools in relation to workload management and/or wellbeing. The mapping results instead provide an indication of the nature of provision available.
4. Many of the resources relating to teacher workload reference one another, meaning that there is a fairly large amount of duplication between them. This results in a smaller number of articles, books and downloadable resources containing original information than it appears in an initial search. It can also be challenging to pinpoint the original source of information where more detail may be available.
5. Some information available online is dated. For example, where a school and/or headteacher was mentioned as showing good practice, the headteacher was at times no longer at the school. This makes the information difficult to follow up for sharing or more detailed information, and means that the validity/relevance of the information is variable.
6. Some websites or organisations required registration/subscription to access their resources. This made it difficult to assess what was available to schools via these organisations without speaking to them. It also indicates that it is not always possible for schools to identify what is available to them until they have subscribed or engaged with marketing teams.
7. Telephone interviews focused primarily on the providers, and users, of formal packages of support – for example, the organisers of training, conferences or users of subscription services – rather than informal materials such as blogs and social

media feeds. It should therefore be noted that the feedback on features of support packages, and the ways in which they are accessed by schools, is indicative only.

8. The term 'users' is adopted throughout this report to refer to the members of school staff who were interviewed about the types of support packages that they (and/or their colleagues) had drawn upon in relation to workload management and staff wellbeing. Those available to take part in the interviews tended to be senior leaders who had been (one of) the decision makers in purchasing software such as video technology to be used in classrooms, or agreeing to staff members attending formal provision at an external venue. They therefore provided feedback both from their own perspective as users of materials/support packages, and in terms of how they had seen packages in use across their school.

2. The Use of Workload Support Packages

This section provides a summary of the resources that were identified during the mapping exercise, and those that interviewees said they either delivered or had accessed as users. This includes feedback on the drivers for accessing support packages, the considerations providers make when designing them, and their target audience. For a summary of each resource type, see Appendix 2.

2.1 Overview of workload support packages

The mapping exercise identified **119 different resources or activities, provided by 55 organisations or individuals**. These were predominantly digital and/or online resources, or workshops and seminars, although smaller numbers of books and tailored consultancy services were also identified.

During the interviews, providers were asked about the types of support packages and resources that they had put together to manage teacher workload issues. Broadly reflecting the results of the desktop mapping activity, the most common packages provided across the interviewees were face-to-face provision such as conferences, seminars and workshops (11 interviewees), and online resources such as blogs, social media and downloadable materials (nine interviewees).

Accessing formal face-to-face events as well as online resources was most common among the users interviewed, although seven had also drawn on technology and new software systems to streamline working practices.

2.2 The nature of workload support packages available

2.2.1 Online/digital resources

The majority of workload support packages included in the mapping exercise (79 out of 119) were online digital resources. These generally comprised:

- **Blogs** offering advice, sharing experiences and examples of workload management in practice, tips and practical suggestions for reducing workload for individual teachers and whole school approaches. These blogs were often written by current teachers or headteachers and tended to include downloadable resources/templates, online discussion platforms, and social media feeds for teachers to follow and engage with.

- **Standalone articles**; these were similar to the blogs above, but rather than offering continual or regular updates on the theme of workload through a dedicated website, these were single articles published in educational magazines or on teaching-related websites. They predominantly focused on the key drivers emerging from the Workload Challenge report - planning, marking and data management - and tended to be written in the format of a list of hints, tips and practical advice for teachers when managing their workload.²
- **Tools** such as cloud-based assessment tools to identify areas of high workload, a tool for auditing staff wellbeing and stress levels, and downloadable templates for planning a range of activities from lessons through to data tracking. There was also an app for teachers to track their own workload levels.
- **Case studies** of practice that has been implemented within specific schools, from identifying workload drivers among staff, to tackling workload issues through the development and implementation of new strategies. These included how this worked in practice, the challenges and benefits of doing so, and outcomes for schools/staff members.

Bloggers who participated in the interviews were current or former teachers. They reported that their content was driven by their own personal experiences and interests as much as it was about writing to an intended audience or aiming for a specific outcome (such as informing workload reduction). In this sense, these formats are continuously adapting and changing according to the currency of issues faced by the school workforce.

'Teacher blogging [is] how we're getting most of our ideas... [It is not about] holding it up as 'this is the way you must do it' but 'here's an example of how one school has made it work'... Many teacher blogs exist in that spirit, and we're a richer profession for it. It's kind of a cottage industry but it's a good way of getting stuff out there'. (Headteacher, secondary academy)

One blogger reported writing predominantly with an audience of early career teachers in mind, although this changed if they knew they were attending or speaking at an event targeted at school leaders. In these circumstances they would create some content around the event, thereby ensuring their online material remained applicable to current dialogues taking place in the sector. This was a marketing device, helping them to potentially attract (and retain) new followers who had attended the face-to-face events at which they were speaking.

² The writers and editors of articles published in educational magazines said that they were circulated to lists of up to 75,000 readers.

One senior school leader reported that where blogs and good practice examples had been highlighted by the DfE through case studies, this had provided them with the 'reassurance' that the approaches they were taking in their school were positive ones. However, they did not believe that online resources, blogs, and examples of good practice and case studies were adequately promoted and shared across the profession.

Users acknowledged that some ideas of good practice circulated via social media could be 'too' innovative to suit the specific and current circumstances of a given school (e.g. policies of 'no marking'). Nonetheless, these ideas could still be of interest to readers, and one interviewee suggested that they could help to create the foundations for much longer-term goals for senior leadership teams (SLTs) even when suggestions were not immediately relevant.

'We looked at [no marking] and thought 'that looks really amazing', but it's a bit too far for us, too innovative for us... But maybe a few more years down the line, it's stuff that's of interest to us. It's out there and we're aware of it, but it's about us having the confidence as leaders to say: 'this is the approach we think is right for us now'. [It's good to be] aware of the choices that you've got. There isn't one right way...it's [important to be] selective of those that are effective for your context'. (Headteacher, secondary academy)

The popularity of social media and blogs was highlighted by one provider who quoted figures on their visitors and page views; approximately 1,200 individual visitors were accessing their blog each week and they received approximately 100,000 page-views over the course of a year. Another blogger reported receiving 200,000 views per month. Some of these visits were repeat views from the same readers, reinforcing the point that users made during the interviews: often, school leaders and teachers appreciate having resources that they can return to and use as a point of reference throughout the year/period of change.

Software packages

The results of the mapping exercise included only a small number of software packages/mobile applications (apps) where it was very clear that the intended outcome from the package developers was a reduced, or more efficiently managed, workload.

During the telephone interviews, users identified software packages that they found helpful in addressing workload issues. These varied in terms of size, sophistication, audience and cost. They ranged from systems designed to integrate school processes, streamline data analysis and reporting, or support marking and assessment, through to smaller mobile applications used by individual teachers to track their own workload on a personal basis. In addition, several providers offered video technology platforms for use

in classrooms as part of personal development and performance management for teachers.

An Executive Principal of a secondary academy was one of six users interviewed who had introduced video technology to assist staff with lesson observations and reflective practice. Although this technology was not designed with the central aim of reducing workload, the six users all felt that the use of this technology had reduced workload over time by assisting with performance management, CPD and internal mentoring processes. It was not made prescriptive that all members of staff used this technology, but those who did were reported to have identified areas for development in their own teaching approaches, and had found new strategies to improve practice. As a result of the advances in new technology, another senior leader said that they were reducing the amount of external CPD being undertaken by staff (thereby reducing time out-of-school and the workload involved in attending these sessions). Instead, they were giving preference to investing in sophisticated software systems or membership of teacher support organisations that would provide bespoke, personalised resources and services to the school year-round.

The benefits of video technology platforms

One user noted that video software had reduced supply teaching costs for covering lessons, because staff development using the videos had enabled them to train other members of staff to be redeployed where cover was required. Another school had used video technology to record meetings so that staff members unable to attend could review what happened at a later time rather than relying on feedback from others, thereby improving clarity of communications across the workforce. The lesson videos also created a bank of examples of good practice that both existing and new staff members could access, providing an ongoing, internally-accessible CPD resource '*at no additional cost*'. (Executive Headteacher, LA Maintained primary)

In terms of informing the design of these systems, the developer of an app to help teachers track their work/life balance and workload had spoken to occupational therapists to ensure the appropriate focus was placed on supporting wellbeing in the workplace. Other software developers had spoken to cognitive neuroscientists, data scientists and software engineers to develop packages that aimed to support the delivery of teaching and learning.

It was clear from the interviewees that those providers designing and hosting software packages for schools, aimed to:

- 1) Support whole-school approaches to a range of issues, from marking and assessment through to data analysis, behaviour management and setting/tracking

homework. These sorts of packages were generally intended to streamline *and* integrate systems so that there was no duplication of data entry. They were also designed to ensure that the bulk of assessment, analysis and reporting could be handled through the technology available, rather than a teacher having to physically mark each book and input every piece of relevant data.

- 2) Create spaces for individual teachers to track their own personal workload, identify the pressure points and communicate with others in terms of how to deal with them (see 'apps for tracking workload' below). These resources were designed to be motivational (e.g. awarding a 'sticker' when users had reduced their weekly working hours by a certain target), or supportive, in terms of offering suggestions as to where hours could be saved (e.g. adding a reminder of the time a teacher should leave school in the evening).

Apps for tracking workload

The developer of one app had worked with a team to develop a 'scoring system' to measure work/life balance, which is broken into a traffic light code of red, amber and green. Teachers are asked to answer a series of simple questions about their working day (e.g. the time they left the school in the evening), and the algorithm will then produce a score for that day. The provider said that the simple visual of *'being able to see work/life balance on a screen, on a phone, is sometimes enough to alert the struggling teacher to a better way of doing things'*. (Founder, app for teachers)

Teachers can then view their scores over a week or a month to highlight where the balance is, or if there are regular patterns in their workload that they could address. Lower overall scores highlight to users that there may be areas of their work/life balance that they could improve.

One teacher interviewed was using a mobile app on their personal device to record their level of workload, such as the hours they worked and how many times each week they stayed late, to help them identify where the heaviest workload occurred. They felt that this had made them more aware of their workload patterns, and therefore more proactive in changing their approach.

'It is four weeks now since I did work at home. I have changed the way that I plan and teach. I am trying to be smarter with my time, I am spreading my marking out and using more resources that are already there instead of making my own...It is about [changing] the mentality of the way you have been working...The app encourages you [to change and try new things]'. (Teacher, LA Maintained primary)

This teacher felt that proactive encouragement and support from social media outlets such as Facebook, and forums linked to the app they were using, were positive ways of ensuring that they remain engaged with the ideas being promoted.

The provider who developed the app for teachers to use to track their work/life balance had recently launched their product to a wider audience, having tested it with a core group of 200 teachers for the previous six months. Following the launch, 10,000 new users signed up to the app and began to input data on their work/life balance – *'the average weekly scores plummeted... Those teachers that don't use [the app] shared work/life balance [data] and it is worse than current users'*. (Founder, app)

2.2.2 Face-to-face provision

Face-to-face provision comprised formal sessions delivered at an external venue for a general audience of teachers (all types), and bespoke training and/or consultancy tailored to the needs of a specific school and delivered on-site to staff.

Formal sessions for general audiences

After online and digital resources, face-to-face sessions were the most common form of workload-related resources and support packages to be identified throughout the mapping process. Over one-quarter (32) of the 119 support packages recorded were delivered in face-to-face settings. These were predominantly workshops and/or seminars, with smaller numbers of formal courses and conference proceedings containing modules or units relating to workload management.

- Nineteen workshops and/or seminars contained reference to teacher workload. These were delivered by a range of providers including unions, private training providers and teaching schools. They predominantly focused on the three key workload drivers identified by the Workload Challenge – marking and assessment, planning, and data management. Although they tended to cover broad techniques around these drivers (such as time management, prioritising tasks, managing interruptions), five workshops explored marking, assessment and feedback strategies more specifically. This involved working through different approaches and models with delegates to demonstrate the practical implementation and implications of each approach. Three were aimed at NQTs or early career teachers with less than five years' experience; two were aimed at those stepping up into senior leadership positions; the remainder were aimed at all teacher types.
- Eight face-to-face courses were identified as including an explicitly-stated workload management element as part of a broader skills development programme. All of these courses were delivered by one private training provider and were aimed at members of school support staff and technicians (e.g. science and technology technicians) rather than teachers.³ The core focus of the courses was time and workload management, and the development of effective teamwork skills.
- Four conferences were identified as including a workload element. Three were regionally-based, and one was based at a local university. They were offered by a range of provider types: a private training provider, a teaching union, a

³ Some of the content in these courses may be relevant to the wider workforce (for example, time management to address workload), and therefore they are included in the overall mapping figures.

professional body, and a further education college. Two of the conferences were solely focused on addressing teacher workload and creating a healthy work-life balance. The other two were offered as part of CPD and focused on learner engagement and learner-led teaching and feedback; both providers marketed these strategies to potential delegates as a means through which their workload could be reduced. One conference (delivered by a professional body) was aimed at early career teachers/NQTs – the rest were stated as being suitable for all.

- One consultancy offered in-house face-to-face policy reviews, reviews of staff and workload issues in schools, discussions with SLTs on issues identified during the review, and the development of proposed actions for moving forward.

When talking to providers (and as found during the mapping exercise), face-to-face events tended to be convened by teaching associations, teaching schools, unions and private training providers. Events were reported by providers to be attended by up to 80 delegates for short regional workshops (e.g. half-day in local venues), and typically between 20 and 30 delegates for full day workshops or conferences.

To design the content of their events, most providers of face-to-face support packages drew on findings reported by the DfE and Ofsted in relation to issues affecting teacher workload; they also tended to be reactive and responsive to the latest trends in workforce research. As one provider said: *'We identify current and consistent themes in the education sector and model our training solutions around our in-depth knowledge of the best approaches used to tackle key issues'*. (Director, third sector training provider)

Organisers of workshops and conferences reported gathering feedback directly from current teachers – e.g. by asking *'what do you wish you had known [when you were starting your career]?'* – and then building on the ideas received to populate the content of CPD sessions. However, providers were aware that a 'one size fits all' approach does not generally suit the needs of the teaching workforce, because school contexts can differ so widely. Therefore, those offering conferences and other face-to-face events would offer some generic content such as strategies for time management, marking and planning, plus breakout sessions or question/answer panels that enabled delegates to explore issues specific to their own school context.

Subjects that interviewees said were covered in their workshops included:

- Time management.
- Marking and assessment strategies.
- Approaches to planning.
- Financial planning: balancing budgets, using resources effectively, cost effectiveness of subjects/classes.

- Developing whole-school CPD programmes.
- Delivering new specifications.
- Effective leadership strategies.
- Resilience, health and wellbeing.
- Subject-specific training.
- Myths of Ofsted – challenging the assumptions related to inspections.
- Behaviour management.

One TSA was planning to deliver a half-day conference focused on wellbeing. This had been designed to look at how the ‘mindset’ of teachers needed to change, i.e. – *‘that the number of hours spent in the job does not equate to being the best teacher’* (Lead Tutor, TSA). This event was targeted particularly towards NQTs and early career teachers.

The main drawback noted by providers for face-to-face packages was the low number of teachers being reached via this format.

‘The downside [of face-to-face sessions] in terms of reducing teachers’ workload...is that you’re not getting enough people. At an event...you’re not reaching out to as many people as you could potentially be reaching out to, because of things like affordability for schools [and] the numbers involved. The implications of getting teachers out of school mean that trying to deliver CPD in this way is not something that people always access’. (Director, TSA)

Promotion of events was therefore felt to be key. Any large events being planned, or those that may have a broad appeal or a notable presenter/speaker, needed to be advertised well in advance (e.g. at least a term ahead) to attract a range of delegates from a geographically diverse area.

Two providers specifically acknowledged the time that attendance at seminars and workshops took out of the school timetable. However, they were also emphatic that attending formal provision was important for changing mind sets and attitudes alongside implementing new ideas and skills.

[Teachers] feel they are too busy to attend a course, or find time to reflect on their practice or trial a new teaching method. The irony is that accessing CPD can play a key role in enabling them to adapt positively to changes in their work or the education sector’s requirements...From our perspective it is difficult [because] what we are asking them is adding to their workload’. (Learning Manager, teaching union)

Bespoke consultancy/training

Providers that offer bespoke packages of support to schools tend to incorporate multi-method approaches into the support that they offer, which will commonly include:

- Staff surveys (including all staff types, not just teachers).
- Reviews of school policies and processes.
- Reports and suggestions for improvement.
- Assisting users with the compilation of action plans and reviews of progress (e.g. six-monthly, annually) against those plans.

'I offer in-school consultancy on reducing workload using a case-study model. Before I arrive I read the school's policies on teaching and learning, marking and assessment, performance management...I come in for a day and a half [and have] meetings with staff...I try not to create cover issues, so they are 20 to 30 minute interviews on a one-to-one basis...Part of the questioning is what they find are the pressures'. (Private independent consultant for schools)

One school had created a career progression map for all staff based on the results of a CPD audit they had undertaken:

'This looks at different roles in the school and maps them out over a number of years – it is based on what our and their expectations are...We tried to map that out so that at every stage [of a career] there are options available'. (Assistant Headteacher, LA maintained secondary)

Accessing consultancy support

One primary academy brought in consultancy support to help manage its change of marking policies (whereby they moved to peer marking in lesson time and reduced teacher marking to very minimal activity). They also opted to reduce planning. This came with its concerns and the Deputy Headteacher noted that: *'We didn't want to just take marking away and the children not get any feedback'*. Therefore, the consultancy support was felt to provide both the *'push we needed to change'* but also a level of assurance that radical changes in approach were based on the expert knowledge of others.

Where the school may not have invested in consultancy services, some users were opting to develop support packages and resources in-house that were more specific to their schools' contexts; three users reported that their school had developed their own internal research projects related to staff CPD, workload and wellbeing. These projects

had been designed in order to develop new strategies for workload management (e.g. planning and marking frameworks). They had involved members of the SLT or middle managers/teaching staff who had formed working groups, each designated with an area of focus and about which they were to devise plans for development and improvement.

As a result of the materials produced through their own research, one school in a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) was also planning to circulate these to others, once they had formulated a strategy for creating templates from the information which would then enable other leaders to tailor the resources to their own contexts. For example, one secondary academy (and teaching school) was starting to create an online hub on which all its materials were being stored for future circulation to others. The benefit of this – as with other printed or published materials – was felt to be that there would be a ‘bank’ of materials available to the school and its staff that would support its internal CPD over the long-term (thereby perceived to reduce workload by having efficient and time-saving access to resources internally).

2.2.3 Books

The remainder of support packages identified during the mapping exercise were books (eight of 119). These had been written by a variety of organisations and/or individuals including consultants, teaching unions and associations, and current/former teachers. None of the interviewees involved in the fieldwork reported that they had used these books for their own reference.

The books were marketed as practical guides for teachers, including:

- The shared experiences of others, including case studies, examples and approaches rated ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted in relation to workload management.
- Example strategies for individuals to put into place in order to help them manage time, plan effectively, and reduce their workload.
- Suggested techniques to help teachers develop skills in a wide range of areas related to workload management including, pupil engagement, effective feedback and collaborative working.
- The signs of stress and low morale, along with ideas to help promote positive work-life balance.

The books were all on general sale, as well as being available through the unions/associations commissioning them.

2.2.4 Workload Challenge Review Group reports

One of the support packages that was identified during the mapping exercise drew on the DfE's [Workload Challenge Review Group](#) reports to some extent in its content (this resource was only accessible via subscription, but was noted as outlining DfE guidance on reducing workload around lesson planning). More commonly, resources tended to use the three key drivers of teacher workload as identified in the Workload Challenge as the headline focus for their resources. Thus, courses and workshops focused on how to implement new planning strategies, or mechanisms for feedback and assessment – however, the summaries of content did not suggest that the materials would be based on the detailed information included in the Review Group reports.

This being said, some individual users did note using the reports to inform their work in schools, which is discussed in more detail below.

Using the Workload Review Group reports as a starting point

Five users spoke during their interviews about using the Workload Challenge Review Group reports as a springboard for their own work in schools.

'We made a big fuss [of the workload review reports] in the workplace. We made them very visible and we shared them with leaders. We created credit-card sized summaries that we gave to every member of staff, which just [provided] top tips for [reducing workload]. It is just something that [teachers] can have available to them'. (Headteacher, secondary academy)

Another secondary academy headteacher regarded the reports as being particularly useful because they were a physical document that could be referred to over time. This headteacher viewed reports and other publications as being more beneficial in the long-term over a standalone course or a webinar, because these could be used as ongoing tools that they could draw upon and make reference to when required.

One Vice Principal of a primary academy spoke of drawing on the Workload Review Group reports plus their own online research to *'put together a proposal...with ideas [for workload reduction] that schools [in the Trust] could take away'*. They also implemented working groups of staff members to explore specific issues such as new marking strategies and reducing email volume as a direct result of reading the reports and using them as a starting point for their own work: *'[we used] the case studies from the workload review...to give us some ideas'*.

In addition, two users reported that they had surveyed their staff members at the time of the DfE's workload survey, and had then developed a series of actions in response to their own findings. For example, both had identified that some members of staff were considering leaving the teaching profession as a consequence of the levels of workload. As a result, one had drawn together research from online sources to summarise quick actions that could be taken to reduce workload. Another brought in a consultancy to review marking policies specifically, which helped to implement change for staff across the school.

2.3 Focus and coverage of support

When asked what their packages and resources were intended to focus on, providers gave a wide range of responses that did not tend to specifically mention workload. These included:

- Developing skills.
- Addressing mental health and wellbeing across the teaching workforce.
- Offering tailored support and guidance to specific cohorts such as early career teachers or those in leadership positions.

Table 2: Aims of support packages (as reported by providers during telephone interviews)

Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help teachers manage their time, behaviour, planning/marketing etc. more effectively (nine providers). • Focusing on leadership skills to support change and help encourage confidence across SLTs to implement new strategies (four providers). • Promoting the importance of CPD more widely, and improving the quality of information then likely to be circulated internally within schools (three providers). • Improve learning outcomes for pupils (two providers).
Addressing health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address mental health issues and promote positive wellbeing across the teaching workforce directly (nine providers). • Bring teachers together and create a supportive network/community of peers (two providers).
Tailored support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses and resources aimed at specific cohorts of the teaching workforce, e.g. trainee teachers, NQTs, early career teachers, senior leaders. These resources were predominantly for trainees/early career teachers. (eight providers). • Providing summaries of current political or popular issues that have relevance or interest to teachers (particularly blogs/social media); including examples of good practice, news, and commentary (nine providers). • Bespoke support that fits individual school contexts (four providers).
Reduce workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software packages and IT tools designed to streamline reporting, data-inputting and help administrators and senior leaders to integrate school systems. (six providers).

Similarly, resources identified through the mapping exercise most commonly provided an *overarching* view of a range of workload drivers (42 of 119), or a focus on general work-life balance/wellbeing (32 of 119) rather than specifically focusing on reducing workload. Those that did, tended to look specifically at workload in relation to:

- Marking and feedback processes (19 resources).
- Planning and resources (12 resources).
- Administration (three resources) and data management (two resources).
- Other elements, such as collaborative working, building confidence or resilience, effective leadership, using technology effectively (nine resources).

Reflecting the providers' aims in designing support packages, the reasons for schools accessing them were not all primarily workload-focused. Rather, workload reduction was a long-term goal which users hoped would be assisted by accessing support packages, implementing new strategies, and installing new technologies.

Users reported drawing upon these support packages and resources for a variety of reasons, including:

- For staff development and improvement generally – this tended to relate to the use of face-to-face workshops/course/seminars and conferences (nine users).
- To streamline working practices and reduce duplication of effort; engage with parents/carers more effectively or consistently; or implement new tools for teacher development and assessment/data tracking. These tend to be the key reasons for drawing on new technologies and software packages (seven users).
- To support the implementation of new strategies or policies, providing assurance that the move would be effectively managed and not have a detrimental effect on outcomes. This is akin to 'external verification' and is particularly reflective of the reasons for schools using tools and services that help them to audit their CPD provision, or review their policies and processes, such as consultancies or teaching support organisations (six users).
- As part of training/INSET days or staff mentoring, with the intention that any specific information or materials are cascaded to wider members of the workforce during internal CPD – particularly where external courses/conferences have been attended by one or two members of staff (five users).
- Memberships and subscriptions suit those who like to access support 'little and often' rather than large chunks of advice or guidance – for example when asking advice when developing staff job descriptions or changing policies. (three users)
- To specifically address staff workload and wellbeing (three users).

2.3.1 Geographical coverage

The majority of support packages identified during the mapping (89) offered national coverage, as these were mainly online/digital resources accessible remotely from any location.

Five of the support packages (four workshops and one seminar) were delivered in a specific local area – for example, a workshop delivered by a teaching school for NQTs in their local district. Eight were delivered directly in individual schools so that the package could be tailored to meet the needs of support staff in that institution. Seventeen were regionally-based (again, these comprised workshops and seminars or conferences).

2.3.2 Audience

In terms of intended audience, 38 packages identified during the mapping exercise were aimed at all school staff types, 35 to teaching staff, 16 to senior leaders, and 11 to early career/NQTs.

Three of the resources aimed at senior leaders were specifically focused on helping them to review or strategically manage workload reduction in their school. The resources for early career teachers/NQTs tended to offer ‘hints and tips’ or examples of strategies that could be used to balance workload, manage interruptions, and be assertive in the workplace (e.g. learning when to say ‘no’ to taking on an additional task).

A further 15 resources were aimed at ‘other’ categories of staff including technicians and support staff,⁴ NQT mentors and those aspiring for leadership roles in the future; 11 at NQTs and/or early career teachers, and three at multiple audiences (e.g. a software tool marketed at headteachers and IT leaders).

The majority of the packages aimed at senior leaders were online/digital resources, and those for staff in ‘other’ categories were generally formal courses. However, there were few patterns identified in the intended audience for resources according to resource type.

2.3.3 Phase of education and school type

There was little variety in the phase of education targeted (and the type of resource aimed at each phase): 99 of the resources were targeted at all phases of education; six to primary school staff, and 14 to secondary school staff.

⁴ Some of the content in these courses may be relevant to the wider workforce (for example, time management to address workload), and therefore they are included in the overall mapping figures.

The large majority of resources (116 of 119) were aimed at all types of schools. The remaining three were aimed specifically at schools in the independent sector, examining workload and work/life balance as part of leadership roles in these specific contexts and providing advice in relation to school policies and legal frameworks

Offering resources in tandem

None of the resources identified in the mapping or during the interviews were reported by users to be used in isolation, and nor did providers tend to create them as single solutions. Indeed, providers sometimes collaborate or draw on the work of each other in ways that create mutual benefits.

For example, the organisers of conferences and workshops tried to book speakers who were already 'high-profile' individuals from the sector. These included those with a large following on teaching-related social media accounts and/or blogs. Therefore, the bloggers drew on public engagement events organised by training providers/TSAs to promote the work that they did online; meanwhile, the organisations putting on conferences and workshops benefited from the 'draw' of having speakers that are already familiar among the teaching workforce and have a pre-existing base of potential delegates to market events to.

Simultaneously, users spoke of the value in attending an event with a speaker that has validity and trust across the sector as a result of the relationships that they have already formed through online interactions.

Furthermore:

- Software packages were generally be complemented by the availability of downloadable written resources.
- Teacher forums could be accessed by those who subscribe or join organisations that offer online support/advice.
- Printed books have been developed to complement the material available in online blogs.

Downloadable resources (such as mapping templates) were commonly offered by providers as small free resources to encourage schools to purchase a larger or more sophisticated piece of software or consultancy service.

Workload reduction was one of several potential effects highlighted by packages on offer. Thus, providers reported that any impact on workload was regarded and promoted as an *additional* benefit created by skills development, learning/implementing new strategies or identifying areas of work that could be managed more efficiently. During the interviews, providers generally spoke of addressing a range of factors that could be a 'trigger' to high workload - or increased levels of stress or poor work/life balance (e.g. marking, planning, reporting) - rather than workload itself.

3. Value and Effectiveness of Provision

This section examines the cost of support packages, and the perceived value and effectiveness of workload support packages as reported by interviewees.

3.1 Costs of support packages

During the mapping exercise, 32 support packages were found to provide upfront information about associated costs; these ranged from being freely available to download, to software systems costing approximately £1,500 per school per year. The financial costs of resources delivered or accessed by interview participants varied, and interviewees were not always able to provide information at the time of discussion. However, quoted costs ranged from resources being free (e.g. downloadable planning templates) to £33,000 for two and half years, although the latter was an individualised and contextual support package for all members of staff, delivered across an entire school or cluster of schools. This package focused on helping schools to ensure that they are able to evidence all practice, and ‘align systems and processes’ across all levels to ensure consistency in approach.

‘For example, we’re [working with] one large Multi-Academy Trust, so we’ve got system level [content] operating with their CEO and their key structural team, and [then the training] for the SLT to do on the evidence into action programme. [This is] where they’re starting to evidence their decision making and their alignment. Then there’s a teachers’ process that mirrors that in the classroom where they start to evidence their practice’. (Private training provider)

Interviewees of all types spoke of the budgetary constraints for schools in accessing resources, the time involved in engaging with activities such as formal courses, and the resource implications for ensuring staff cover. Furthermore, concerns were commonly raised during the interviews that support for workforce development needed to be complemented by schools having time to embed practices.

The types of resources that most commonly tended to include a financial charge were: conferences, workshops/seminars, face-to-face courses, bespoke training and/or consultancy books and software packages. Conversely, much of the digital/online content was accessible for free – particularly the blogs, articles and many of the downloadable resources that were found. This was mentioned by users during the interviews; the freely accessible nature of these materials was one of the key reasons for their appeal.

Specialised software packages and tools were usually available to test via a free trial, although costs for a long-term subscription were not always clearly identified during the mapping exercise. Where one provider did include this information on their website, a

workload audit tool aimed at schools (including articles and strategies to address workload management) cost between £530 and £1,500 per year plus VAT. The costs of other software packages as reported during the telephone interviews are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Cost of software and subscription services, as reported by users and providers

Type of service	Cost
Subscription service to access information and advice on a range of issues, from human resources (HR) through to policies and procedures	£250 per year (reported by user)
Software system for tracking planning, learning and assessment.	£2,000 for three years (reported by user)
Software system to support lesson planning, learner independence and data analysis.	£5,000 for up to six users (discounted rate for a tester school – reported by user)
System providing marking and assessment tools, homework tracking, flipped and blended learning, plus training on the system.	£5,000 - £10,000 per academic year, depending on number of users (reported by the provider, and said to have been taken up by approximately 30 schools)
Package offering tracking for learning and assessment, data analysis/reporting, and access to targets/performance indicators.	£1,000 per year (reported by the provider, and said to have been taken up by 25,000 schools)

Where a range of costs were charged by providers for the same resource, this was for a number of reasons:

1. **Size of school or phase of education.** For example, a delegate fee to attend a one-day conference on staff well-being was listed as £299 + VAT for a primary school teacher; attendance at the same conference for a secondary school teacher was listed as £379 + VAT (with representatives from Local Authorities or other institutions charged up to £479 + VAT). It was not clear from the information available why the charges were different according to phase of education/type of delegate.

2. **Local or multiple teachers.** Discounts were offered by some course providers where more than one teacher from the same school attended an event, or where a teacher was based at a school local to the provider.
3. **Teacher status or membership.** Some providers offered lower delegate fees for trainee teachers or NQTs.

As the mapping exercise identified, interviewees also noted that discounts on support packages were available. For example, a cluster of schools received consultancy support for £100 rather than £500 due to the number of schools taking up the package. Furthermore, membership of teaching support organisations or similar could be taken out at different rates depending on the level of support being accessed (e.g. a rate for access to online resources and preferential conference fees, but a higher rate if bespoke training/support was required). One school had invested £1,000 in a bespoke face-to-face CPD audit and review of processes. One provider of an auditing service reported that 230 schools subscribed to its service, with 80 using this full face-to-face review process.

When asked, not all providers offered details on the costs of their formal face-to-face sessions, but they ranged from:

- Low-mid range cost: £20 - £60 fees to attend conferences/workshops (these often included discounts or free places for members of unions/alliances, or for trainee or early career teachers).
- Higher costs: £150 - £500 per delegate to attend workshops (these included covering venue hire, speaker costs, hospitality, materials).

There was a broad range of costs quoted by providers who offered bespoke training that was delivered on-site at a school, from £450 through to £2,000 per day.⁵

The books available ranged from approximately £11 to £24, with e-Book formats generally costing less than paperback prices.

Four users noted that there was also a time cost in terms of enabling a cohort of several members of staff to be off timetable for the duration of a training session (which could be up to a full day). One said that they preferred members of SLT to cover these classes

⁵ This included: two hours of bespoke CPD (related to time and priority management) for £450 plus travel expenses; health and wellbeing training within a school: £600 - £800 per day. On-site courses tended to be offered by providers on a sliding scale depending on the volume and depth of topic coverage, or the numbers of staff attending (e.g. for up to 10 members of staff £600 per day, through to over 100 members of staff at £2,000 per day).

where possible, rather than also paying the cost of supply teachers – and that this use of SLT members also provided ‘continuity’ for students as well.

3.2 Perceived value of provision

Evidence of the efficacy of support packages through the mapping exercise was very limited, and where it was found this tended to rely on customer testimonials and user feedback. As it was generally included as part of marketing and promotional tools, this feedback was biased towards positive commentary and encouraged others to engage with support packages. No formal, controlled evaluation of the effectiveness or value of these packages was identified during the mapping process.

3.2.1 Value by resource type

The value that users reported placing on resources tended to change according to resource type.

Membership of teaching support organisation/alliance

When joining these, users said that they had found value in the ability to compare processes and strategies against others (e.g. carrying out a CPD audit to check standards); they appreciated accessing peer support when implementing new strategies; there was perceived value for money in these services (e.g. as there was perceived to be a lot of information quickly available in one place); the positive reputation of an organisation across the teaching workforce was important to subscribers/members, as was the ability to receive a form of accreditation or recognition for the school (e.g. certificate, award); users also appreciated being able to access a helpline or members’ online forum where they could ask questions and receive advice directly about a wide range of workforce and school-related issues.⁶

Software systems

Users adopted these in schools in order to streamline planning and assessment across schools, map and track data, and to run more efficient and effective data analysis and reporting. They placed value on this as they felt that as a consequence this would support endeavours to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and reduce workload levels in the long-term. The use of video technology was adopted in schools so

⁶ The provider of a telephone helpline for schools reported receiving 30,000 calls per year. The provider of downloadable resources and other tools via a subscription service reported to be working with 10,000 schools.

that SLTs could enable more bespoke CPD, mentoring and performance management processes for individual members of staff.

Conferences/courses/workshops

These were important for users in helping staff (and the school) to develop a network of contacts within the sector (which was important for peer support). Where a speaker was a familiar name in the education sector, they appreciated the opportunity to be able to ask questions to a speaker/panellist about a specific school environment. External courses and workshops were also regarded as skills development opportunities for specific teachers or departments; one or two members of staff would attend and then be required to cascade the information they had gathered back to colleagues via internal CPD sessions and staff meetings.

Social media/blogs/downloadable resources

Not all schools interviewed had accessed what they considered 'formal' support packages, but the majority had undertaken their own research, drawing mainly on articles and research freely available online. This was due to perceived time and resource constraints in terms of attending face-to-face sessions or bringing in bespoke support. However, online resources were regarded as a valuable means by which to access quick examples of innovative or best practice, and to become part of a broader teaching community through which experiences, ideas and challenges could be shared.

From their reading and research, three users had gone on to create internal resources for staff in their own schools to use, including:

- Short lists of 'top tips' to reduce workload that teachers could keep to hand (one academy headteacher called this a 'menu of techniques').
- Bulletins/written briefings to teachers, written by different members of teaching staff each time, and including examples of good practice, useful links, latest updates and ideas of curriculum and pedagogy (these are circulated regularly, for example, weekly or fortnightly).
- Teaching and learning 'briefings' as part of staff meetings – teaching staff briefly present an idea of practice that has been effective in their classrooms and share this with all colleagues.
- Highlighting examples of good practice happening internally and identified through peer observations and book reviews or from feedback directly from students – short written pieces (150 words) summarising the approach and being published to all via internal websites/emails.

3.3 Features of effective support

Users were asked about the effective features of the support packages that they had accessed, and there were two aspects that featured most prominently (mentioned by nearly half of interviewees each). These both related to networks and communities of support and being able to develop ideas and approaches that could be applied in a specific school context.

1. **Personalised support** that is also responsive and efficient, i.e. being able to ask questions directly and receive bespoke or tailored responses that help to meet the needs of a school/individual teachers (ten users).

'I'm just revising job descriptions with my leadership team...I left a question with [the subscription service used] and within four days I got an email back from them saying...the answer to your question will now appear in an article, follow this link...It gave me what I needed. It would have taken hours and hours of work otherwise'. (Headteacher, secondary academy)

2. **A community of teachers** from whom others can learn, share ideas and experiences, and receive support (ten users).

'You don't know when working in isolation as a school if what you are doing is good enough'. (Deputy Headteacher, secondary academy). A primary school headteacher reflected this view, saying that having a *'shared conversation with other schools'* was interesting but had also challenged staff to reflect on their own practice. This appeared to be a particularly appealing aspect of teacher blogs, social media feeds, and written reports that highlighted good practice examples and ideas for strategic reform.

Other features of support packages that were noted by users to be particularly effective were:

- Being able to access a wide range of information in the same place, thereby saving time; this was particularly noted for software systems that helped reduce duplication of effort (three users).
- Objectivity and impartiality of external training providers and/or consultants, which can encourage more open engagement with these resources among staff members (three users).

'The staff have been much more open since the training...they open up a lot more than they would in a performance management observation. Having those objective eyes at the back of a classroom goes a long way to

improving delivery...it goes back to trust, which is so powerful'.

(Headteacher, Voluntary Aided secondary)

- Benchmarking to track future development – this also helps to monitor the effectiveness of the resources being drawn upon for support, highlighting what the progress has been since the support was first accessed (one school leader).

The six users who spoke of videoing lessons as part of reflective practice felt that this use of technology enabled teaching staff to create personalised CPD based on the areas for development that could identify with mentors/coaches. They also felt it was positive for staff members to be able to look back at their own lessons and approaches, and share good practice/ideas with others. Over time, they felt that this reduced workload as it helped support the development of more efficient working practices, as well as an easily accessible internal bank of good practice examples which were relevant to a school's context (e.g. effective lessons/questioning of students) – rather than staff having to spend time researching these examples from external sources.

Providers tended to emphasise the importance of ongoing and consistent development; accessing articles and blogs was not considered to be an adequately in-depth level of engagement to instigate a change in practice or mindset. Indeed, one editor of teaching-related publications underlined that *'the advice we give [in articles] is all well and good, it's all professionally delivered. But in terms of workload CPD, I wouldn't say that reading a few articles on workload should or would constitute a workload strategy for a school'*. (Editor, education publication)

3.4 Engaging schools

Providers were asked how schools learn about the support packages they make available to them. They most commonly responded that they used online promotion, social media feeds, and set up websites for products and events (eight providers). Indeed, nine users mentioned carrying out their own internal research - including online searches and engaging with social media - as a key tool for identifying support packages, resources and CPD opportunities relating to workload management. In turn, these had then been used as tools for communicating their own workload reduction ideas, techniques and experiences to other schools/teachers once they had engaged with resources available to them. For example, one headteacher working within a MAT had created a blog based on their workload reduction processes, including implementing changes to marking and planning.

Other promotional strategies mentioned by providers included:

- Sending promotional materials and calls directly to schools (six providers).

- Attending education-related conferences, and visiting teacher training institutions (five providers).
- Word of mouth from schools, and promotion courtesy of other organisations and teaching alliances (four providers).
- Email bulletins to members (three providers).
- Advertising in teaching publications (two providers).

Providers emphasised during their interviews that teachers have a right to access CPD and keep up-to-date with pedagogical and curriculum change – and that this forms an important part of effective teaching, including personal strategies for workload management. One provider suggested that the importance of engaging with continuous development/support in the first place was not widely promoted enough to teachers in order to raise their awareness of ways in which they could better manage workload.

'I think ultimately, given that people go into teaching to improve outcomes for [students], they need to see that professional development is going to have an impact on that. That's I think where [the concept of CPD has] become a little unstuck and tricky. There's probably work to be done to make people aware...It's about engaging with people why you should improve what you do. It's quite tricky.'
(Editor, private provider of CPD toolkit/support)

Generating buy-in to workload support packages across the school workforce

One Director of a TSA (based within an academy) noted how it was very challenging for SLTs to find the time, due to their workload levels, to identify and source the appropriate support for staff: *'[they are being] bombarded with lots of opportunities and they haven't got time on top of their other jobs to filter through what's relevant [and] have we got the funding for it'*. They also thought that it was important to promote any resources or packages in a way that frames them as an opportunity to improve outcomes, or in some other way have an impact on student progress or addressing gaps in attainment. They felt that this was more likely to generate buy-in and interest, rather than stating that a resource will improve the practice of individual members of the workforce.

Word of mouth and hearing of providers with positive reputations were clearly important to users in terms of identifying and choosing to invest in support packages. This included receiving recommendations from others, but also drawing on the knowledge and experience they had gained in other school environments and then applying them to new roles/contexts. For example, one senior leader had previous experience of working with a

private education consultant on a past project and so felt confident to bring them in to work on implementing change in a new setting. Levels of awareness of the resources available more widely however, were thought to be low by one provider:

'Schools need to be more aware of what support is out there. A directory would be a good idea, as they don't have time to start searching through the web. Their time to find things is limited, so the more they are made aware would be helpful. That could be through their MATs, social media, the DfE'. (Director, third sector training provider)

Support packages and resources were perceived by users to either be of immediate relevance to the current circumstances of a school (e.g. addressing a specific gap in staff skills), or of interest to users in terms of informing long-term development strategies (e.g. moving to implement new approaches to assessment feedback across a whole school).

Where schools had subscribed to be members of teaching support organisations and/or alliances, users reported that this had consequently made additional services - such as bespoke audits of provision and school processes - both visible and available to member schools. Furthermore, such membership packages also opened them up to invitations to attend conferences/workshops, either for free or at discounted rates, as well as downloadable resources or teacher forums that they had previously not be able to access. This highlights that without paying for membership and subscription services, it is not always possible for schools to identify the different types of support that are available. Furthermore, workload management issues are inherently tied up with broader issues such as CPD in the way that support packages are designed, meaning it may not always be easy for users to identify the most appropriate packages for the school and personal needs.

Researching support packages in schools

Four users involved in the interviews were working in schools that had applied successfully for funding grants (e.g. from the National College for Teaching and Leadership fund for research work) to carry out set projects relating to workforce development and workload management. For example, one secondary academy ran a project focusing on developing new planning frameworks with the aim of reducing teaching workload across the MAT whilst improving learner outcomes. A Head of Department in a secondary academy was running a comparative project with two other local schools to compare outcomes of the use of different software packages. The aim of this was to identify which package had the greatest impact on the school and workforce by the end of the year, thereby assessing overall value for money with a view to making longer-term commitments to the most effective package (and whether this differed by school context).

3.4.1 Effective ways of engaging schools

Users and providers were asked about the most effective ways to offer resources and support to schools, in order to reduce and manage teacher workload. Where they could, they offered a range of suggestions, including:

1. Making use of professional associations as an established and trusted communication route for circulating ideas and examples of new initiatives, strategies or examples of good practice. They did not appear aware of DfE's current use of these channels of communication, suggesting a need for increased promotion of this.
2. Drawing on established individuals already working in the field to offer consultancy or specialist support to schools. This includes those who are current or former teachers and run social media accounts and blogs offering downloadable resources, sharing ideas and experiences through popular online networks.
3. Increasing the use of social media and blogging to engage with the teaching workforce; this included the circulation of regular email bulletins highlighting new initiatives, links to case studies or relevant articles.
4. Improving promotion of the resources that are already available – for example the DfE blogs (teaching.blog.gov.uk): some users said that they had not been aware of these until they were signposted by a colleague. These could be promoted via the professional associations above.
5. Being careful of the timing of resources such as online discussions/webinars – if these are scheduled for a Sunday evening, for example, it was felt to defeat the purpose of reducing burdensome workload.
6. Ensuring CPD events are not too generic: offering breakout sessions that focus on specific contexts (e.g. phase/type of school), or offering bespoke support for individual schools.
7. Having external, objective viewpoints to draw upon helps staff to feel more comfortable in sharing their thoughts and ideas, and was felt to provide an honest perspective of workload/wellbeing issues.

There was a general perception among users that one-off events or individual support packages were not going to provide adequate solutions in terms of addressing the complex challenges of teacher workload. Instead there was a sense from these interview participants that there needed to be a broader cultural change across provision by making resources more context-specific, and offering different ideas to teachers at different stages of their careers (i.e. the needs of NQTs vary widely from those of teachers who have been in the profession for many years). Likewise, when asked about engaging and offering support packages to schools, providers felt that it was important to

offer a range of resource that addressed a variety of aspects of school life, which could then contribute to workload reduction as a result.

One user suggested regional 'hubs' being set up which would tap into local examples of best practice and which would support the dissemination of this sort of information across schools in a locality.

3.5 Perceived impact of resources

Interviewees were asked about the perceived impact on their workload of accessing and using support packages and resources. It should be noted that these were changes noted by individual users rather than the results of formal assessments. Indeed, users and providers generally could not describe any formal measurements they had in place to identify the specific impact of resources used in schools or by teachers.

However, one senior leader was in the process of implementing a more formal evaluation of the changes that they had made in approaches to planning and assessment.

'We've got a group of three middle leaders whose job it is this year... to evaluate the impact of this [across the whole school]...to quality assure the individual consistency of each Department's approach. And then to look for commonalities across the school. That's a fairly lengthy process, as there'll be work sampling, lesson observing, learning walks... [To determine if] we can see the students are making more progress in [one subject] than they are [in another]... Is that something to do with the types of feedback they they're getting or is it do with other factors?' (Headteacher, secondary academy)

Where they did report that the use of resources had made a difference, workload reduction did not tend to be the main perceived change reported by interviewees. Instead the broader impacts of engaging with support packages (e.g. reducing levels of marking or planning) were felt to have had a positive impact on workload in the longer-term.

'When I first arrived here [the teachers] were doing massive lesson plans [that took] three hours. I told them to stop...The technology has lifted them out of having to create all this paperwork for a lesson. It has helped them grow and develop. So I would say yes, it does help reduce workload, but it is much more than that'. (Executive Principal, secondary academy)

Despite the general lack of formal evaluation, users reported that by accessing resources and support packages, they had perceived:

- Reduced levels of marking and/or planning (particularly through implementing new strategies), reduced data analysis, improved time management (nine users – relating to software packages, consultancy support, accessing online resources).
- Improved relationships with, and between, staff – e.g. increased collaborative working, use of coaching models, clearer communications across the school workforce about expectations, approaches to tasks and school vision and ethos (seven users – relating to consultancy support, face-to-face provision).
- Increased awareness across the workforce of the broader issues related to promoting and looking after staff wellbeing (seven users – relating to face-to-face provision, accessing online resources).
- Improvements in staff practice, teaching and learning and behaviour management – as evidenced through learner outcomes and positive results during departmental/subject reviews (five users – relating to video technology platforms).
- Streamlined processes and reduced duplication of effort, particularly as a result of installing new software systems (five users – relating to software packages).
- Improved outcomes for students including soft skills such as confidence and independent learning (five users – relating to video technology platforms, software packages).
- Increased ambition/target-setting across the school by having goals such as achieving a ‘gold’ standard for staff CPD (three users – relating to subscription service including audit of CPD provision).

Five users also reported that as a result of using new resources or support packages, levels of workload had increased rather than reduced, due to the effort involved in planning, designing and implementing new systems. However, they hoped that improvements were starting to be seen and that this would continue so that in the long-term overall workload rates would decrease.

‘The trouble is my workload has doubled just getting involved with all this, but at least I can see we will all benefit eventually’. (Head of Department, secondary academy)

Appendix 1: Methodological Approach

The following notes provide additional detail in relation to the mapping exercise and telephone interviews.

Mapping exercise

Table 4 below provides a range of example search term combinations that were used during the mapping exercise.

Table 4: Example key search terms

Audience	Workload-related terms	Description/ outcome	Support type
Senior leader	Workload	Reduction / reduce	Workshop
Middle leader	Bureaucracy /unnecessary tasks	Unnecessary	Seminar
Teacher	Assessment / feedback/ marking	Burdensome	Conference
School leader/ship	Planning / resources	Improve / improvement / improved	Consultant / consultancy
Head of Department	Administration	Better	Training / CPD / Professional Development
Head of Year	Data/ data management	Good practice	Support
Early career teacher	Work-life balance	Development	Blog
NQT/ newly qualified teacher	Resilience / stress	Effective	Guidance
Classroom/school	Well-being / wellbeing	Efficient	Technology
			Digital

Overall, the searches revealed a large number of results, which varied widely depending on the terms used. The relevance of results was mixed (for example, resources that turned up in search results did not always specifically mention workload management/reduction). The results were reviewed for content, the primary aim of the resource and the type of organisation authoring the resource. Each resource was logged individually using a framework agreed with the DfE, containing the following categories:

- Provider Name
- Type of provider
- Title/name of provision/activity
- Nature of delivery
- Primary delivery mode (and other modes of delivery)
- Target market
- Method to monitor effectiveness
- Costs (set-up/delivery/buy-in)
- Ease of finding course/activity
- Content/modules/focus
- Geographic coverage
- Target phase
- Target school type
- Practices promoted
- Workload focus
- Linkage to strategy
- Evidence of success/ effectiveness
- Perceived value for money

The resources included in the resulting mapping spreadsheet were those that mentioned or addressed workload reduction and/or management within their contents. For example, a conference or workshop holding a session that covers workload issues, a course containing a module or topic based around workload, or a resource that had been designed with the clearly stated intention of reducing workload. The mapping also included resources that considered work-life balance and teacher wellbeing.

It should be noted that a much broader range of resources is available to teachers and schools to help support their work on specific tasks that they may perceive as contributing to high levels of workload. This includes online homework-setting systems, data tracking packages, or more generic pieces of software that schools/teachers have adapted to use as part of their working practices. However, these resources are not specifically designed for reducing teacher workload. Therefore, they were excluded from the mapping spreadsheet. They are tools however, that teachers may find helpful or supportive in certain tasks and subsequently find that their workload is reduced.

Additional notes on telephone interviews

Interviews were undertaken with users/schools and providers that were identified during the mapping exercise as either accessing or delivering support related to managing teaching workload. Some of the schools were contacted via the providers they had worked with, and the providers were often the gatekeepers for contact with the schools (e.g. they passed on information about schools that were perceived to have used their resources effectively/successfully, thus making it more challenging to identify potential barriers to using resources).

Users represented a range of schools by type and phase of education (refer to Table 1). Likewise, a variety of provider types were interviewed, from those offering formal face-to-face provision through to bloggers and independent educational consultants.

The interviews were designed as semi-structured discussions that could be tailored to the type of resource provided/accessed by each participant. Primarily they aimed to explore the uses of materials/activities available, how they were designed, promoted to and accessed by schools, the features that schools find most valuable or effective, and how schools can best be encouraged to engage with the resources that are available to them.

Appendix 2: Key Information by Resource Type

Table 5 provides a summary of key information related to each resource type developed by providers and accessed by users taking part in the interviews. Please note that the frequencies total more than the number of interviews due to participants offering multiple responses (e.g. users accessing more than one type of resource each).

Table 5: Types of resources most commonly offered by providers and accessed by users (as reported during telephone interviews)

Resource type and typical contents/design	No. of providers (base: 25 interviews)	No. of users (base: 22 interviews)
Face-to-face provision: conferences, seminars, workshops, courses delivered at an external venue (rather than bespoke training delivered on-site at school).	11	5
Social media/ online resources: searchable and downloadable resources, sharing examples of good practice, compiling links to resources, connecting with other practitioners, blogs describing experiences and how strategies have been implemented in schools.	9	8
Software systems/mobile apps: software packages that can be tailored to meet an individual school's context and requirements; training sessions for staff in using new software; apps for teachers to use to track their own personal levels of workload; integrating systems (e.g. assessment, tracking, reporting, communications); automating data; video technology platforms for in-classroom use as part of staff development.	6	7
Publications: books, research reports, journals, bulletins (the latter published more regularly, e.g. termly or fortnightly).	6	4

Resource type and typical contents/design	No. of providers (base: 25 interviews)	No. of users (base: 22 interviews)
<p>Bespoke consultancy/ training: face-to-face support on-site in schools, including reviews of policies and processes; bespoke guidance on where changes can be made to increase efficiencies or improve staff wellbeing; identifying opportunities for pedagogical development and mentoring, and delivering this to staff members within the school context; managing staff surveys to gather feedback on working practices; support with senior leadership team (SLT) action planning, often linked to the aims of the School Development Plan.</p>	4	6
<p>Members of teaching organisations/ subscription services: tailored advice and support for a range of school-related queries; forums of members creating a network of peers.</p>	4	5



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