



Department
for Education

Workload Reduction Taskforce

Initial recommendations

January 2024

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Foreword

The Workload Reduction Taskforce was remitted with agreeing recommendations on specific areas by the end of October and we are pleased to confirm acceptance of these initial recommendations, noting the Government's additional decisions below. These recommendations are an important milestone of the work of the Taskforce and along with the final set of recommendations in March, they will help support the Government's ambition to reduce working hours for teachers and leaders by five hours per week within three years, enabling them to focus on what matters most – high quality teaching.

We welcome the breadth of recommendations across the areas remitted and would like to take this opportunity to re-state our commitment to the implementation of the 2016 independent review groups' recommendations on marking, planning and data and to the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter. Though important and still relevant, these reports are not enough alone. Further clarity will also be provided by the reintroduction of, and update to, an illustrative list of administrative tasks which should not be undertaken by teachers, the renewal of Ofsted's mythbuster, and a drive for discussion in all schools to tackle their particular workload concerns.

We recognise members' concerns around the administrative and workload burden of Performance Related Pay (PRP) and its impact on teaching and learning. We want to ensure that school leaders are able to support, develop and reward their staff in the least burdensome way, removing the bureaucratic requirement to run the PRP system. We accept the recommendation that the requirement for PRP should be removed and replaced with a less bureaucratic way to manage performance fairly and transparently. We will conduct a rapid government and trade unions review of current guidance surrounding appraisal and performance management to facilitate a replacement for PRP being in place from 1st September 2024. By communicating any changes in Spring 2024, schools will have sufficient notice to enable them to prepare during the summer for September 2024 implementation.

The Government has fully considered remitting the STRB to include an additional, workload-focused INSET day and strongly recognises the importance of schools dedicating time throughout the year to address their specific workload concerns. The Government has concluded that a further INSET day is not the right course of action, but remains committed to working in partnership with unions and the wider sector to embed a culture of sustainable workload in schools. The Government and unions will work together to encourage schools to make use of the existing five INSET days for workload reduction, and to support this important work over the long-term.

Through its ongoing work, we recognise that the Taskforce is considering a broad set of drivers of high workload and working hours, informed by the best available evidence and a diverse range of views in order to protect against unintended consequences on the workforce. We have heard the profession clearly saying that accountability – including

inspection – and supporting pupil needs are significant drivers of workload. We note that between now and March, the group will examine several important themes including: the impact of accountability on workload, in-school practice, contractual provisions in the STPCD, technological solutions, the impact of pressures on wider public services on schools, parental expectations and complaints, and culture across the education system.

These initial recommendations are testament to the Taskforce's commitment to making meaningful and pragmatic recommendations that support a material reduction in workload and working hours for teachers and leaders in England. We look forward to considering the final recommendations in March.

The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Minister of State for Schools

Geoff Barton
ASCL General Secretary

Daniel Kebede
NEU General Secretary

Dr Patrick Roach
NASUWT General Secretary

Paul Whiteman
NAHT General Secretary

Workload Reduction Taskforce: Initial recommendations

Background

The government launched the Workload Reduction Taskforce alongside the pay award in July 2023, as part of a commitment to reducing teacher and leader workload. The Taskforce is focused on securing workload reductions for teachers and leaders, and builds on the findings of the three 2016 independent workload review groups on [marking](#), [planning](#) and [data management](#). Its work will support the government's target to reduce working hours for teachers and leaders by five hours per week within three years to enable them to focus on what matters most – high quality teaching. The group will make final recommendations to government, Ofsted, and school and trust leaders by the end of March 2024.

The Taskforce was remitted by the department to make rapid recommendations on two areas by the end of October 2023:

- Updating and reinserting the previously removed list of administrative tasks that do not require the professional skills of a teacher into the school teachers' pay and conditions document (STPCD).
- Strengthening the implementation of the 2016 independent workload review groups' recommendations and maximising sign-up to the education staff wellbeing charter.

Process for agreeing recommendations

At the first meeting of the Taskforce on 20 September 2023, the members agreed to set up a subgroup to look specifically at the initial recommendations required by the end of October. The subgroup met on 5 October and developed the following recommendations, which were subsequently reviewed and agreed by the full Taskforce membership. They have since been ratified by the Minister of State for Schools and the general secretaries of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), National Education Union (NEU), National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT).

Recommendations

Performance Related Pay

- In addition to the original remit for the initial recommendations, the Taskforce also considered the significant administrative / workload burden of Performance Related Pay (PRP). There are also concerns that PRP works poorly in practice

and does not have a commensurate positive impact on teaching and learning. The Taskforce, therefore, recommends a formal commitment to consult with statutory consultees on PRP with a view to removal in line with the School Teachers' Review Body's (STRB's) observation and in time for the 2024/25 academic year.¹

Administrative tasks

- A revised annex should be reinserted in the STPCD with an updated list of examples of administrative tasks that teachers should not be required to carry out. It should be re-emphasised, as currently stated in the STPCD, that teachers and school leaders should not be required to carry out activities that do not require their professional skills or judgement. The draft proposed list of tasks and revised preamble is included in the **annex** at the end of this document.
- Particular attention is drawn to the preamble and the questions it poses, most especially and fundamentally, does a task need to be done at all? This applies to both teachers and leaders.

General recommendations for strengthening implementation of the 2016 workload review groups' recommendations and maximising sign-up to the charter

- The Secretary of State and teaching and leadership unions, working with organisations such as the Confederation of School Trusts, Local Government Association and National Governance Association, should remind all schools of the importance of the recommendations from the 2016 independent workload review groups and [2018 Workload Advisory Group](#), and raise awareness of the education staff wellbeing charter. Communications should be aimed at teachers, leaders, governors, trustees and local authorities.
- The DfE should continue to embed the review and advisory groups' recommendations and the charter throughout initial teacher training (ITT), the early career framework (ECF) and the national professional qualifications (NPQs), including through working with providers.
- The DfE should amend guidance to governors and trustees so that the core function of strategic leadership includes consideration of staff workload and wellbeing when setting the school's / trust's strategic priorities.
- All school and trust governance bodies should publicly commit to and actively promote the recommendations of the workload review and advisory groups, as part of a renewed drive to reduce workload around planning, marking and data management.

¹ The STRB's observation was that 'the obligation on schools to use the current model should be removed'.

- Schools and trusts should consider the merits of assigning a senior leader with dedicated responsibility for improving wellbeing and reducing workload, working with union representatives and staff. The senior leader could be a trust leader or headteacher. The DfE, working with the Taskforce, should consider the merits of promoting a named leader responsible for wellbeing and workload.

Recommendations for strengthening the implementation of the 2016 independent workload review groups' and the 2018 Workload Advisory Group's recommendations

- Ofsted should update and re-publish the 'Clarification for Schools' document as a separate document, to include re-emphasising what is not required around marking, planning and data (as highlighted by the independent reports), and communicate it clearly to schools and trusts as well as publicly via social media to improve reach to all audiences.
- The DfE should provide comms / guidance to parents on what the review group recommended on marking and feedback.
- Schools should consider working throughout the year with all relevant stakeholders, such as teaching unions, on the specific workload concerns of their setting, using the recommendations of the reports wherever relevant. Schools may want to consider using INSET time to look at addressing workload issues and the DfE should consider remitting the STRB to include an additional INSET day, at the earliest opportunity.
- The DfE should commit to enhancing knowledge and accessibility of the [School Workload Reduction Toolkit](#), including improving the design for users and ensuring that case studies and resources remain relevant and include new, impactful, solutions that schools and trusts have implemented.
- The DfE and Ofsted should publish a joint update on their success in maintaining the commitments they made to accept and implement the recommendations for their respective organisations.

Recommendations for maximising sign-up to the education staff wellbeing charter

- The DfE should explore how to celebrate and recognise signatories to the charter, once further awareness of the charter is raised, including publishing case studies that demonstrate the positive impact of signing up and using the tools available.
- The DfE, schools, trusts, local authorities, and teaching and leadership unions should each promote the value of union health and safety representatives and workplace health and safety committees in improving wellbeing, facilitating charter sign-up, and ensuring the benefits of signing up are felt across the workforce.
- We draw attention to the DfE governance handbook which requires boards to have due regard for the wellbeing and mental health of senior leadership teams

and teaching staff and states that they may want to consider having a designated governor as a wellbeing champion.

- The DfE, alongside partners involved in the original Expert Advisory Group on Wellbeing, should commit to reviewing the content of the charter by 2025 – with a task and finish group established in 2024 – to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
- The DfE, working with trade unions and employers, should continue to promote and embed a diverse range of flexible working opportunities in schools. This should include raising awareness of the support available, including the funded programme of webinars and bespoke coaching offered by [Flexible Working Ambassador MATS and schools](#) (FWAMS) and the [Flexible Working Toolkit](#). It should also involve developing additional case studies on effective flexible working solutions that schools and trusts have implemented.

Next steps

The Taskforce is committed to making meaningful and pragmatic recommendations that support a reduction in workload and working hours for teachers and leaders in England within the next three years.

These recommendations are the first step towards achieving that and respond to the specific areas the Taskforce was asked to advise on by the end of October.

The Taskforce intends to continue to build on the work carried out for these initial recommendations, including:

- Exploring, as a matter of urgency, further options for strengthening the implementation of the 2016 independent review group recommendations, as consensus on a full set of recommendations has not yet been reached.
- Looking at non-administrative tasks that do not require teachers' professional skills or judgement.
- Considering changes to the contractual provisions of the STPCD, specifically those which may have an adverse impact on workload.

The Taskforce may wish to include further recommendations on these areas in its final report. If changes to the STPCD are accepted, they will go through the usual process of consultation with statutory consultees.

The Taskforce will also continue with its broader remit to investigate the wider drivers of high workload and working hours and will make further recommendations by March 2024, in line with its [Terms of Reference](#).

Whilst the Taskforce's priorities continue to evolve, members intend to consider the following areas between now and March:

- The unintended consequences of accountability, including school inspection
- School culture and leadership
- In-school practice e.g. behaviour policies, curriculum planning, marking and assessment
- Technological solutions
- Parental expectations and complaints
- The impact of pressures on wider public services on schools
- The range of statutory requirements that apply to schools.

Revised preamble and list of tasks to insert in the STPCD

Defining administrative tasks (preamble)

6. Some administrative tasks are straightforward – filing pupil records, recording absence data, and collecting money. Others, such as administering examinations, ordering equipment, and compiling and submitting bids require more expertise, but not necessarily that of a teacher.
7. Many activities in schools require a mixture of professional and administrative input. For example, writing reports on pupils' progress requires the expertise of a teacher. But that expertise is not required for many of the processes involved in producing the report – for example, “topping and tailing” reports or collating them either manually or using an ICT-based system. These elements should not routinely be done by teachers. To note, tasks do not have to be done on a daily basis to be classed as routine. Many tasks, such as collating reports, may only be done once per year – this would still be classed as routine.
8. Tasks and activities related to the safeguarding of pupils will often require the professional expertise and input of teachers, e.g. if a safeguarding disclosure is made to a teacher, it is part of their role to record the details of that disclosure.
9. For the purposes of paragraph [xxx], the key tests for any task must be:
- a. Does it need to be done at all?
 - b. Is the task of an administrative or clerical nature?
 - c. Does it call for the exercise of a teacher's professional skills or judgment?
10. If the answers to a) and b) are yes but the answer to c) is no, then the task should not be carried out by a teacher. The list at Annex X in the document contains a number of examples. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

Principles for leaders: whilst the list at Annex X applies to classroom teachers, the same principles outlined in paragraph 9 also apply to leaders. The key tests for any task must be:

- a. Does it need to be done at all?
 - b. Is the task of an administrative or clerical nature?
 - c. Does it call for the exercise of a leader's professional skills or judgment?
11. If the answers to a) and b) are yes but the answer to c) is no, then the task should not be carried out by a leader.

Annex X – updated example list of administrative tasks

1. Managing data and transferring data about pupils into school management systems (e.g. Question Level Analysis) or printing electronic records for paper filing.
2. Reformatting data or re-entry of data into multiple systems.
3. Production of photographic evidence of practical lessons e.g. for assessment purposes or to 'evidence' learning.
4. Creation or duplication of files and paperwork perceived to be required in anticipation of inspection, such as copies of evidence portfolios, or regularly updated seating plans.
5. Administration or data analysis relating to wraparound care and preparation of food / meals.
6. Administration of public and internal examinations.
7. Collating pupil reports e.g. reports of pupil examination results.
8. Producing and collating analyses of attendance figures.
9. Investigating a pupil's absence
10. Responsibility for producing, copying, uploading and distributing bulk communications to parents and pupils, including standard letters, school policies, posts on electronic platforms.
11. Administration relating to school visits, trips and residentials (including booking venues, collecting forms and recording lunch requirements) and of work experience (but not selecting placements and supporting pupils by advice or visits).
12. Organisation, decoration and assembly of the physical classroom space e.g. moving classrooms, moving classroom furniture, putting up and taking down classroom displays.
13. Ordering, setting up and maintaining ICT equipment, software, and virtual learning environments (VLEs), including adding pupils to VLEs and online subscription platforms.
14. Ordering supplies and equipment.
15. Cataloguing, preparing, issuing, stocktaking, and maintaining materials and equipment, or logging the absence of such.
16. Collecting money from pupils and parents.
17. Administration of cover for absent teachers.
18. Co-ordinating and submitting bids (for funding, school status and the like).
19. Administration of medical consent forms and administering of medication on a routine or day-to-day basis.
20. Taking, copying, distributing or typing up notes (e.g. verbatim notes) or producing formal minutes.
21. Producing class lists or physical copies of context sheets.
22. Keeping and filing paper or electronic records and data e.g. in school management systems or physical office files.
23. Bulk photocopying.



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