

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	11 DECEMBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	FAIR WORKLOAD CHARTER		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR PEARCE	PORTFOLIO:	LEAD MEMBER EDUCATION
SERVICE:	EDUCATION	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	PAUL WAGSTAFF	TEL:	0118 9374717
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF EDUCATION	E-MAIL:	Paul.Wagstaff@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with a summary of discussion and the resulting agreed Reading Pledge for a fair workload agreement for school based staff. The resulting Pledge provides a set of guiding principles that underpin a fair workload for staff but that also allows for flexibility in the ways school implement strategies to achieve a fair workload, based upon the diversity of school operational practice and the individual working patterns of staff.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Reading Pledge be supported as a basis for promoting a fair workload for teachers and school based staff in Reading's schools.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 There has been increasing concern with respect of the workload facing teachers and school-based staff. Several government agencies have recognised the need to reduce workloads in an attempt to maintain and increase the number of teachers entering and remaining in the profession.
- 3.2 Ofsted have published clear statements to counter the perception that inspectors are looking for particular forms of paperwork and planning, perceptions that have been seen to have fuelled increased bureaucracy and paperwork for teachers. The DfE have similarly provided guidance on ways of reducing teacher workload, most recently in their Policy Paper 'Reducing Teacher Workload' (Nov 18). In June 2018, the DfE published a Workload Reduction Toolkit, and in November, a Reducing

Workload video was created along with the setting up of a Teacher Workload Working Group with recommendations for reducing workload associated with data management.

- 3.3 Some local authorities, notably Nottingham City, have created fair workload charters to guide a commitment across their schools to manage teacher workloads and to reduce unnecessary working practices. Following a review of such charters, Reading have consulted with schools and with teacher unions and professional associations to determine a Pledge that the local authority and schools can support and work together to implement, as a means of ensuring a work-life balance for teachers, and therefore contributing towards the broader teacher recruitment and retention strategy across our schools.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 Teacher recruitment and retention is a growing challenge nationally. However, with the cost of living in Reading along with the higher teacher salaries available on the London fringe, recruiting and retaining teachers in Reading will continue to be a challenge. Good and outstanding teaching is a significant contributory factor in ensuring that pupil achievement is strong. Whilst the most able pupils generally do well across Reading's schools, the more vulnerable, the disadvantaged, and those with special educational needs, often do not make the progress they need to be able to enter employment education or training post 16.
- 4.2 Making teaching attractive has to be a key priority for Reading if our ambitions for high achievement and progress for all pupils is to materialise. Part of this is to ensure that schools enable teachers to maintain a fair work-life balance and their health and professional well-being is supported. A significant contribution to this is the agreement of fair workload practices.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is no legal underpinning that determines the way teachers work, and how they should manage and prioritise their workload. Teachers' conditions of service outline their roles and responsibilities, but some key areas that have been perceived to be adding to teachers' own administrative work pressures have developed unchecked. Despite national discussion and guidance to the contrary, there is a perception that teachers' own administrative workload is increasing. Schools and school leaders are in a position to manage a fair workload among their staff. However, schools organise and operate in different ways. Individual teachers have preferred ways of working which are sometimes determined by external factors beyond the school including family and commitments. Therefore, to meet the diverse range of teachers' needs, any fair workload pledge needs to provide sufficient flexibility to meet the diverse range of needs.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 The purpose of this section is to ensure that proposals contained in reports are in line with the overall direction of the Council by meeting at least one of the Corporate Plan priorities:
1. Securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities

2. Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs
3. To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children
4. Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
5. Ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading
6. Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6.2 The decision to note and accept the follow up actions meets strategic aim 1, i.e. securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way".

7.2 The local authority has worked with schools and unions to agree the draft Fair Workload Agreement.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 This is not relevant.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no legal implications.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications.

11. Annex 1

11.1 The attached Annex is the result of negotiations and consultations across schools, the local authority and professional associations and unions. The Annex outlines the suggested Reading Pledge on fair workload for teachers and school based staff. It provides a set of guiding principles and some suggested 'good practice' examples in

place in some schools which can be used and added to by schools over time to continue to provide an appropriate work-life balance for staff.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None



Fair Workload Commitment for Schools

Introduction

Reading Borough is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of staff within our schools. As part of this, we have been working with schools and professional associations to establish a framework of guidance, and a core set of principles governing a fair workload charter for staff working in schools. This guidance reflects a commitment to ensuring that workloads are reasonable but that the way this manifests itself is flexible to meet the diverse needs and working patterns of schools and teachers.

The Reading Pledge

The work-life balance of staff in schools is a high priority for school managers, staff, the local authority and also Trades Unions. It is an area that needs to be monitored and managed, with individual schools feeling supported in finding strategies that work for them.

This pledge has been consulted on with headteachers, the local authority and Trades Unions to demonstrate a commitment to finding and maintaining a fairer work and life balance for all staff. It provides flexibility for schools to find what works best for their staff and their school ethos.

The aim of our pledge is to achieve a consensus of staff who feel valued and supported, and who feel they have control over managing their workload. This will help support the well-being of staff, and will contribute to the recruitment and retention of staff.

The pledge provides a set of core principles that all parties have committed to, and these are:

- Senior leaders of schools will monitor and review workload, and help staff identify ways to reduce or eliminate unnecessary tasks, including work specifically for senior leaders themselves
- Any new strategy, for example a change in the schools' marking policy and approach, will be assessed in the context of the overall workload demand on staff, and any adverse impact will be reduced or removed
- Staff will be encouraged to manage their own working time, for example by agreeing a reasonable time to go home, and being mindful of individual commitments such as journey times and family

- Schools have the flexibility to use strategies that fit the staff and the culture of the school
- Schools are committed to using the guidance from the DfE around marking, planning, and pupil performance data, and to working collaboratively with staff to develop, embed and support these strategies
- Any member of staff who may be struggling with their workload feels able to discuss this openly with managers. Equally a manager who may have concerns about a member of staff feels able to discuss this constructively
- Workload will be kept under regular review at individual, team and school level so that any emerging issues that have an impact on workload and working patterns can be handled early

Good Practice Examples

The following initiatives provide a few examples of current practice that are in place and that have been gathered from headteachers in the Borough, across both primary and secondary schools. Such strategies are offered as examples that may be adopted and adapted to fit the ethos of individual schools, to support a fair workload culture for staff and to promote a positive work-life balance. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, and schools will continue to adapt and are free to identify approaches that work for them. These examples include:

- Provision of guideline limits on teacher working time outside of directed time with a focus on quality rather than quantity;
- Encouraging and promoting team planning and the sharing of resources, with clear identified and sign-posted resources available to support teachers with planning and teaching;
- Organising PPA time in useful blocks of time, and allowing PPA time to be used at home where both possible and practical;
- Scheduled time for shared planning, with lesson planning not being monitored unless there are concerns to be managed;
- Allowing the format of planning to be left to individual teachers and year groups rather than a standard format being dictated by the school;
- Additional non-contact time being provided for activities such as assessment and report writing;
- Limiting staff meetings within a set duration and to one per week, ensuring that meetings are carefully planned and managed to ensure that there is no duplication of discussion elsewhere and that they do not over-run;
- Agreeing guideline times within which e-mails should be sent and responded to;
- Operating a centralised detention system thereby reducing time given by individual teachers to monitoring pupils independently in their own classrooms;

Annex 1

- Building in a system whereby extra days given to work, e.g. covering a class or extra-curricular activity on a Saturday, are off-set by a planned in day off in lieu;
- Looking at marking selected pieces of work rather than everything, or marking in depth a sample of books per lesson and pacing the marking of a cohort's books over a period of time, with the use of symbols or colours used to quick mark;
- Homework being provided which is based on students learning knowledge and not automatically marked by teachers but exploring other ways of valuing and checking, for example, peer reviews; and
- Avoiding the collection or expectation that teachers produce individual lesson plans or teacher planners being completed each day;