



Workload Reduction Taskforce: Terms of Reference

Background

Workload is a longstanding and complex issue. It is consistently cited as an important factor for teachers and leaders leaving the profession. Eliminating unnecessary workload requires action by a range of actors, including the Department, Ofsted, school and trust leaders, teachers, governors, teaching unions, and MATs.

Independent researchers have acknowledged that recommendations from previous working groups and the publication of the School Workload Reduction Toolkit in 2018 have made important contributions to that reduction. Progress in eliminating unnecessary tasks from the daily lives of teachers and leaders, however, appears to have stalled since the pandemic.

Teachers and leaders should not be spending their time on bureaucracy that does not add value. Their time should be protected and used to make a meaningful difference to the outcomes of their pupils.

Purpose

The Taskforce will focus on securing workload reductions for teachers and leaders and build on the findings of the three independent workload review groups. This will include reviewing the causes of workload, the effectiveness of current measures, and existing working time rights of teachers and leaders, and recommending actions to reduce workload and working hours.

In addition, the Department will remit the Workload Reduction Taskforce to make rapid recommendations on two areas by the end of October 2023:

- Updating the list of 21 administrative tasks which do not call for the exercise of teachers' professional skills and judgement (building on unions' work with officials in March); we will ask the Taskforce to finalise the details and to develop similar wording for leaders that will be reinserted into the STPCD.
- Strengthening the implementation of the 2016 independent workload review group reports and maximising sign up to the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter.

It will make recommendations on steps that could be taken by government, school and trust leaders and other relevant actors, including Ofsted, to help reduce teacher and leader working hours and improve teacher retention and wellbeing.

This, in turn, 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. This will build on the five-hour reduction in working hours seen between 2016 and 2019. Progress towards the target will be measured by the Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Longitudinal Study.

Scope

In relation to addressing workload considerations in schools, the Taskforce will:

- examine the current evidence and possible causes of workload;
- take stock of existing actions to remove unnecessary workload and identify where gaps may still exist or where innovations may help drive workload reduction; and
- consider what measures would be required to help the Department meet its ambition to reduce teacher and leader workload by five hours per week, as measured by the Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Longitudinal Study.

As part of the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, Ofsted has committed to review whether the inspection framework is having an inadvertent impact on staff wellbeing (for example, creating unnecessary workload) and take steps to alleviate any issues. The Taskforce will consider what recommendations could be made to support this. In addition, the Department will continue to engage with unions and other sector representatives on the school inspection arrangements and whether further reforms are needed.

Any recommendations that require legislation will be decided by government.

Meeting

The initial meeting will be held in September 2023. At that meeting, the Taskforce will agree dates for subsequent meetings, the issues that the members feel the Taskforce should address, and how they wish to operate. For example, establishing smaller sub-groups to take forward activity at pace and report back to the Taskforce. Meetings will take place in person, where possible, and be hosted by the Department.

All correspondence for meetings will be sent via email. The Department will provide secretariat support and will make the necessary arrangements for each meeting including the preparation of the agenda and supporting papers.

Discussion at the meetings will be confidential. No public statements on the content of the meeting which could be attributable to an individual member should be made, through any medium, by any member of the Taskforce. All public statements will be agreed with the members of the Taskforce.

Outputs

The Taskforce is to make rapid recommendations on the clarifications in the STPCD and the implementation of the review group recommendations by the end of October 2023 and produce a full set of recommendations by the end of March 2024.

Recommendations will be shared with General Secretaries and Ministers in parallel and a meeting arranged to discuss and agree next steps. Updates will be provided to General Secretaries and ministers at suitable checkpoints.

Ministers will consider which of the recommendations of the Taskforce should be included in the 2024 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and other statutory DfE guidance, where this would strengthen their importance and implementation. Any additions would be subject to the formal School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) process for inclusion in the STPCD or formal consultation process for inclusion in statutory DfE guidance.

Membership

The Taskforce will be chaired by Heather McNaughton, Director of Teaching Workforce: Teachers and Tutors Directorate in the Department for Education. For a full membership list, please see Annex A.

All members will be expected to commit to attend and contribute to all meetings of the Taskforce.

Confidentiality and use of official information

Members of the Taskforce acknowledge that their name and any relevant details may be published on the Department's website or on any other relevant government websites. Confidential information and data associated with emerging policy may be shared with members appointed to the Taskforce. Confidentiality is vital and members must treat confidential information appropriately. Before confirming their membership on the Taskforce, members will be required to declare any possible conflicts of interest with the Department.

Annex A: Membership of the Workload Reduction Taskforce

Name	Position
Heather McNaughton (Chair)	Director of Teaching Workforce: Teachers and Tutors Directorate, Department for Education
James Bowen	Assistant General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
Cassie Buchanan OBE	Chief Executive Officer, Charter Schools Education Trust
Jon Hutchinson	Director of Training and Development, Reach Foundation
Emma Knights OBE and Emma Balchin	Co-Chief Executives, National Governance Association (NGA)
Selena Lansley	Senior Advisor for Workforce and Negotiations, Local Government Association (LGA)
Stuart Lock	Chief Executive Officer, Advantage Schools
Sinéad Mc Brearty	Chief Executive Officer, Education Support
Darren Northcott	National Official, National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
Adrian Prandle	Director of Government Relations and Workforce Policy, National Education Union (NEU)
Steve Rollett	Deputy Chief Executive, Confederation of School Trusts (CST)
Janet Sheriff OBE	Chief Executive Officer, Collaborative Learning Trust
Dr Sam Sims	Lecturer, UCL Institute of Education – Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities
Sara Tanton	Deputy Director of Policy, Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
Kate Treacy	English Teacher, Parliament Hill School

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