

Time for Standards

Welcome to the Remodelling Cover Resource Pack

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Introductory letter
from WAMG



Statutory Guidance Section 4
of the School Teachers' Pay
and Conditions Document



Guidance accompanying
the Section 133
Regulations issued under
the Education Act 2002



Guidance for Schools
on Cover Supervision



WAMG Guidance
Note 6



Cover Strategies –
Overview and Toolkit



Cover Strategies –
Good Practice



More information is available on
www.remodelling.org

Time for Standards

March 2004

Dear Colleague

This pack contains a variety of resources and information that schools may find useful in implementing phase two of the National Agreement contractual change, which states that from September 2004 there is an initial limit of 38 hours per year for teachers covering for absent colleagues. However, the Agreement makes it clear that the objective is for teachers to rarely cover at all.

Schools should be considering and preparing for this phase of the contractual change well in advance of the statutory date given, to ensure arrangements are in place by the due date. They should also be planning to meet the longer-term objective.

This pack contains:

- The Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group¹ (WAMG) guidance note 6
- Supplementary guidance on cover supervision
- A copy of the statutory guidance in Section 4 of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document
- A copy of section 133 Regulations and Guidance issued under the Education Act 2002
- A good practice overview, offering guidance on the implementation of chosen cover strategies
- Examples of three cover strategies, including case studies
- A cover analysis tool which allows schools to perform an audit of their cover provision

This pack provides a taster of the materials which are available on the National Remodelling Team (NRT) website and we would urge you to explore the further resources available on-line at www.remodelling.org

Schools operate in different contexts and need to find their own sustainable solutions to implementing the contractual change to suit their particular circumstances. Therefore, the material includes information on a variety of different approaches which can be used to implement the contractual change.

Yours sincerely

The Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group

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¹ The Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group is composed of representatives from ATL, DfES, GMB, NAHT, NASUWT, NEOST, PAT, SHA, T&G, UNISON and the Welsh Assembly Government who are all signatories to the Agreement.

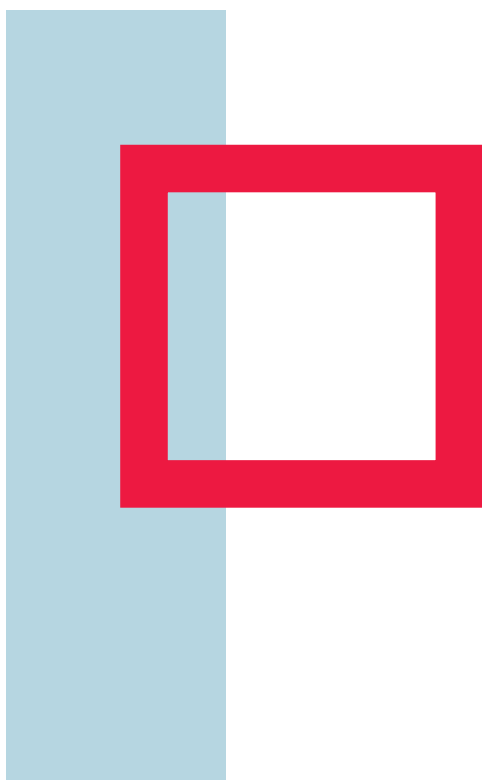
Time for Standards

School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document —Section 4

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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



2004 CHANGES

Cover

Purpose of the provisions

46. Cover for absence is not an effective use of the time of teachers at a school. In the past, many teachers have borne a heavy burden of cover for absent colleagues, but this should be increasingly unusual. Schools should be providing downward pressure on cover, before and after the introduction of the contractual change, to achieve the objective in the National Agreement that teachers at a school should only rarely cover for absent colleagues.

Definition of absence

47. Absence occurs when the teacher normally responsible for teaching a particular class is absent from the classroom during the time they have been timetabled to teach. The absence could be for a variety of reasons, including internal and external activities as well as sickness. It could be short- or long-term. All absence needs to be carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning for the pupil.

48. From 1 September 2004, the existing provisions on cover will be removed and two new contractual changes will come into effect:

- a limit on the amount of cover that can be provided by an individual teacher; and
- an amended duty for headteachers to ensure that cover for absent teachers is shared equitably among all teachers in the school (including the headteacher), taking account of their teaching and other duties and of the desirability of not using a teacher at the school until all other reasonable means of providing cover have been exhausted.

49. Schools should, as far as possible, work towards compliance with these changes prior to their statutory introduction in September 2004.

50. The contractual changes apply to all teachers at a school, including teachers on the leadership spine and ASTs whether on permanent, fixed term or temporary contracts and pro-rata to teachers on part-time contracts. A similar amendment to paragraph 54.23 will also ensure that headteachers are covered by the contractual limit.

51. Work is currently underway to establish the likely impact of the contractual limit and to agree the process and timescale for achieving the objective that teachers at a school should only rarely cover for absent colleagues and interim targets towards achieving this.

Reducing the burden of cover

52. From 1 September 2004, each individual teacher will have a 38-hour limit on the amount of cover he/she can be required to do in each academic year. This limit must not be exceeded. No weekly or termly limit within the 38 hours is identified within the contractual limit. However, headteachers should seek to ensure, as far as practicable, an even spread of cover throughout each term.
53. All cover for absence undertaken by teachers at a school counts towards the limit. The Document requires cover to be allocated on an equitable basis. Where schools designate on the timetable non-contact periods specifically for cover these must count towards the 38 hour limit on the occasions when they are used. Leadership and management time can also be used for cover but should not be used disproportionately. The time used counts against the limit.
54. The guaranteed PPA time of teachers at a school will form part of the legal conditions of employment from September 2005 and cannot be used for cover.
55. Where schools are currently, regularly and significantly exceeding 38 hours, they will need to begin to plan and implement strategies for reducing cover in advance of the introduction of the contractual change.

Gained time

56. During the academic year, particularly in the summer term, teachers who take examination classes/groups are often released from some of their timetabled teaching commitments as a result of pupils being on study or examination leave. Such time is known as gained time.
57. There are activities directly relevant to teaching and learning for which it would be appropriate and desirable to use gained time and which it would be reasonable for a headteacher to direct teachers to undertake. An agreed list of these activities is listed below:
 - developing/revising departmental/subject curriculum materials, schemes of work, lesson plans and policies in preparation for the new academic year. This may include identifying appropriate materials for use by supply staff and/or cover supervisors;
 - assisting colleagues in appropriate, planned team teaching activities;
 - taking groups of pupils to provide additional learning support;
 - supporting selected pupils with coursework;

- undertaking planned activities with pupils transferring between year groups or from primary schools;
- where the school has a policy for all staff to release them for CPD during school sessions, gained time may be used for such activities.

58. If teachers are directed to cover during gained time, it must count towards the 38-hour limit.

Exam invigilation

59. By September 2005 schools will need to have made arrangements to transfer the task of invigilation from teachers to appropriate support staff. During the period up to 2005, while schools are working towards the transfer, there may be a need to continue to use the gained time of some teachers for invigilation.

Educational visits

60. Educational visits are planned activities. Where teachers are absent due to participating in such activities, the absence is most appropriately covered by supply teachers or by using cover supervision. If a teacher at the school is used to cover for such an absence the amount of cover will count towards the limit.

61. Where a teacher acquires non-contact time in the timetable as a result of a class or group they would normally have taught being absent on an educational visit, then the guidance for gained time above should apply. Activities to be undertaken by teachers in such gained time must be planned well in advance of the visit.

62. The extended roles for support staff, which are an integral part of the remodelling agenda, provide the opportunity for schools to consider the use of appropriate adults, other than teachers, to undertake educational visits.

Exceptions

63. The only exceptions to the application of the contractual limit are teachers employed wholly or mainly to undertake cover.

No detriment

64. The amount of cover undertaken by teachers currently varies from school to school. There may also be minor variations for individual teachers from year to year.

65. In some schools teachers already do considerably less than 38 hours, while in others they do significantly more. Where the burden of cover is already less than 38 hours, no steps should be taken in advance of the introduction of the contractual limit which would result in a worsening of current working conditions. Once the limit has been introduced it is not appropriate for schools to seek to increase the amount of cover to the limit.

Strategies for managing cover

66. Absence needs to be dealt with in a managed way to ensure that all possible steps are taken to enable pupils to continue to learn in spite of a teacher's absence. The strategies for managing cover will need to take account of the type of absence. For example, long-term sickness, or maternity leave, will be more predictable and, therefore, more manageable than sudden illness. In order to protect pupil standards, longer-term absences should normally be covered by a qualified teacher.
67. Schools have a range of options for providing cover, including through supply teachers, higher level teaching assistants, cover supervisors, 'floating teachers' employed for the purposes of cover, and, where other options have been exhausted, teachers employed at the school (within their contractual limit of 38 hours).

Supply teachers

68. Supply teachers can be used to cover for all types of absence. Where supply teachers are providing cover, they must, as far as reasonably possible, be actively teaching and not mainly supervising pupils.
69. It is also important that they are managed properly and effectively, with regard to their teaching and developmental needs. They should have appropriate access to CPD to maintain their standards of subject knowledge, pedagogy and behaviour management skills.
70. Schools are encouraged to adopt good practice in the use of supply teachers. These include:
- careful induction into the school using materials that are matched to their period of employment;
 - the provision of simply structured and clearly explained medium-term and short-term plans that also define the teaching expectations, the resources to be used, the demands that should be made of the class and the homework that should be set;
 - the provision of information about the abilities and prior attainment of the pupils in the class;

- effective management so that all involved understand what is required and the professional standards that must be met.

These measures were identified in an OfSTED report on schools' use of temporary teachers (December 2002).

71. Schools will also need to have regard to the Part-Time Workers' Regulations which in certain circumstances may apply to supply teachers. Those who are not casual (i.e. not employed on a day to day basis) have, under these regulations, an entitlement to pro-rata terms and conditions enjoyed by other teachers at the school. This would include access to CPD enjoyed by teachers at the school.

Cover supervision

72. Cover for short-term absences may be provided by persons who are not qualified teachers. To the extent that, during the period of cover, such persons are involved in specified work, they should operate subject to the regulations made under section 133 of the 2002 Act and accompanying guidance. Many schools currently employ such staff on a casual as required basis. In future, a permanent arrangement is likely to be more manageable and effective.
73. Those providing cover supervision may be existing members of staff whose job description has been reviewed in accordance with the first joint guidance note issued by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (April 2003) or they may be new staff appointed on contracts which have a defined range of appropriate administrative or support tasks, but which include cover as one of their key functions.
74. The headteacher will need to ensure that any persons used in this way have been appropriately trained, particularly in pupil behaviour management. Such training is essential if those responsible for cover supervision are to make a real contribution to reducing the burdens on teachers.
75. Cover supervision is particularly valid where work has been set, or where pupils are able to undertake effective self-directed learning, for example within an ICT Learning Centre in a school. Strategies should be devised to ensure that the arrangements for providing appropriate work for pupils who are being supervised do not place excessive additional burdens of planning, preparation and assessment on teachers. This could include developing banks of appropriate material and/or attaching a cover supervisor to a year band, department or faculty to enable them to, for example, support the teachers in administrative tasks and to be involved in the planning and preparation of cover when necessary.

Higher level teaching assistants

76. The primary function of higher level teaching assistants is to support and assist qualified teachers. They may be deployed as one of the strategies schools choose to release teachers for guaranteed PPA time, provided that they carry out work specified in the regulations made under section 133 of the 2002 Act under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher.
77. In addition, they may be used for short-term cover, but headteachers would need to balance their use in this way against the educational desirability of regularly removing them from planned activities with the teachers to whom they are normally assigned.

Maintaining a record of cover

78. The member of the support staff administering the cover arrangements should keep a record of the amount of cover undertaken by each teacher. It would also be advisable to maintain records of cover undertaken by other staff whose contract and job description specifies that a proportion of their time will be available to provide cover supervision.

Time for Standards:

Guidance accompanying the
Section 133 Regulations issued
under the Education Act 2002





Regulations and Guidance under S133 of the Education Act 2002

The Regulations made under S133 of the Education Act 2002, and their accompanying guidance, are fully endorsed by the signatories to the National Agreement on raising standards and tackling workload¹. A copy of the Regulations can be found at <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031663.htm>

The signatories agree that these Regulations will make an important contribution to changing the way in which schools work, raising standards for pupils by increasing the range of adults with different skills and experiences in schools. They will ensure that schools safeguard the quality of pupils' education when they are working with adults who are not qualified teachers – an area which, in the past, has not been regulated and was therefore open to wide interpretation.

The aim of the accompanying guidance is to elaborate on the principles established in the Regulations in order to assist schools as they apply them. For example, the guidance provides advice on key issues such as setting up a system of supervision for staff undertaking 'specified work'.

¹ These Regulations apply in England only. Separate Regulations and accompanying guidance for Wales will be made by the National Assembly for Wales.

It is likely that the majority of support staff who are undertaking more challenging aspects of the 'specified work' with pupils will be higher-level teaching assistants (HLTAs). The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has developed a set of standards for HLTAs and a training programme to help individuals meet those standards will follow – to be piloted from Autumn 2003 with full roll-out of the training from Easter 2004. Further information will be available to schools and potential HLTAs later in 2003.

The Regulations come into force on 1st August 2003. Schools will need to consider, in advance of the start of the Autumn Term 2003, which of their staff can undertake the 'specified work' based on their skills, expertise and experience – using the HLTA standards as an indicator of the required levels. They will also need to consider the level of supervision needed by each member of staff undertaking the 'specified work', using the information set out in the guidance document.

The signatories are committed to keeping the implementation of all aspects of the National Agreement under review. In relation to the attached guidance and the regulations under Section 133, the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group will formulate any proposals for review by early 2006.

With particular reference to paragraph 10 of schedule 2 to the Regulations and for the purpose of this guidance, the term "qualified teacher(s)" should be taken to include "nominated teacher(s)".

Title: The Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003

Function: Guidance

Subject Category: Organisation and Management (Staff Management)

Audience: Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, Local Education Authorities

Status: Strongly Recommended

Date of issue: 08/2003

Executive Summary: This guidance explains the Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003 (referred to in this document as ‘the Regulations’).

Part I deals with the context and content of the Regulations. Part II explores the system of supervision that is required to be established for support staff who undertake the ‘specified work’ in schools.

The key points covered in this guidance are:

- who can undertake the ‘specified work’ set out in Regulation 6 of the Regulations;
- how the Regulations seek to preserve the status of qualified teachers and their lead role in promoting high standards of achievement; and
- the recommended format of a system of supervision.

PART I – The Regulations

PURPOSE OF THE REGULATIONS

1. The underlying policy aim of the Regulations made under section 133 of the Education Act 2002 is to safeguard standards in the classroom and preserve the role, status and overall responsibility of qualified teachers in schools.
2. The Regulations clarify the respective roles of qualified teachers and other staff in schools, and specify circumstances under which certain kinds of staff without qualified teacher status (QTS) – usually support staff – may carry out ‘specified work’ related to teaching and learning, including requirements for appropriate supervision of support staff by a qualified teacher (see paragraph 17). Such requirements are not intended to be bureaucratic and should build on appropriate existing arrangements.
3. Support staff who do not undertake ‘specified work’ are not covered by these Regulations or by the requirement for a system of supervision by a qualified teacher.
4. There are now many more support staff employed in schools, working alongside qualified teachers in a wide range of roles. For some time, there has been uncertainty about what duties and activities these support staff may or may not undertake. The Regulations and this guidance reflect the developments in the role of support staff highlighted in the National Agreement signed on 15 January 2003 between the Government, local government employers and school workforce unions (referred to in this document as ‘the National Agreement’). Both the Regulations and guidance carry the support of the English signatories to the National Agreement, who were closely involved in their development.

5. A key focus of the National Agreement was on the use of higher-level teaching assistants (HLTAs) to undertake an enhanced role in the classroom. These Regulations cover this group of support staff but also apply to other adults who are undertaking 'specified work' at different levels.
6. The National Agreement states that teachers and support staff are not interchangeable and that each class or group for timetabled core and other foundation subjects and for religious education must be assigned a qualified teacher to teach them. The fact that HLTAs may be working with whole classes for some of the time does not make them substitutes for a qualified teacher².
7. Regulation 7 replaces the existing requirement for qualified teachers to register with the General Teaching Council for England. It does not introduce any new requirement but arises because of the repeal of section 218 of the Education Reform Act 1988 and the introduction of the new description of 'specified work'. The term "full registration" distinguishes the registration of qualified teachers from the proposed "provisional registration" of trainee teachers and others. The introduction of provisional registration will require a further set of Regulations.
8. Paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations concerns the appointment of instructors – persons with special qualifications or experience or both. Instructors may carry out the 'specified work' in a school provided that the LEA or Governing Body for the school to which he/she is appointed is satisfied that he/she has the relevant qualifications or experience or both. This means that the body which normally appoints staff in the relevant school, either the LEA or Governing Body, makes the necessary judgement as to the instructor's qualifications and experience. An instructor may only be appointed to teach if there is no qualified teacher, or trainee on the Graduate, Registered or Overseas-Trained Teacher Programmes available for that appointment.

² The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2003 will place duties on headteachers to ensure, save in exceptional circumstances, that a teacher is allocated to every class or group of pupils.

9. As well as clarifying the respective roles of qualified teachers and support staff, the Regulations also refer to a number of other categories of staff who work in schools. This guidance relates primarily to the group of staff undertaking the 'specified work' in Regulation 6 who are referred to in paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Other groups of staff who are not qualified teachers may also undertake the 'specified work' in regulation 6 under conditions set out elsewhere in the Regulations (see paragraph 17 below).
10. Learning Mentors and Connexions personal advisers are already doing some pastoral activities in their role of complementing and strengthening the work of teachers/schools. Connexions personal advisers and some learning mentors are not employed by schools and therefore have separate arrangements for agreeing duties, training and management including those set up as part of the partnership agreement between a school and a Connexions Partnership.
11. Nothing in this guidance overrides current employment law or regulations. These Regulations apply in England only. Separate Regulations and accompanying guidance for Wales will be made by the National Assembly for Wales.
12. The Regulations and guidance will be kept under review by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group. The first such review will take place by early 2006.

DEFINITION OF 'SPECIFIED WORK'

13. The Regulations specify the following activities:
 - a. planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
 - b. delivering lessons to pupils. This includes delivery via distance learning or computer aided techniques;
 - c. assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
 - d. reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.
14. In this list, 'pupils' includes work with individual pupils as well as groups and whole classes.

15. This list does not attempt to include all of the duties that may be required of classroom teachers (which are listed in Part XII of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document). Instead, it contains the 'specified work' involved in the planning, preparation and delivery of lessons and the assessment of pupil progress. Omissions from the 'specified work' include:

- a. the 24 tasks set out in the National Agreement, including photocopying, record keeping and other administrative and clerical work, that have traditionally been carried out by teachers but that teachers should not routinely be required to undertake from September 2003;
- b. tasks that often fall to headteachers (for example financial and premises management, procurement and sponsorship). These should also be transferred, where practicable, to senior administrative staff, business managers or site managers;
- c. supervisory and pastoral activities that require behaviour management experience and, in some cases, counselling skills but that are not directly related to classroom teaching. These range from playground supervision and exam invigilation to elements of pastoral care. Schools will clearly need to ensure that any support staff who carry them out are suitably trained and monitored.

16. Also omitted are a number of duties that *only* qualified teachers will be expected to carry out in schools – for example, appraising the work of other teachers.

PERSONS ABLE TO CARRY OUT THE 'SPECIFIED WORK'

17. There are, broadly, three groups of people that may carry out the 'specified work' set out in the Regulations (see paragraph 13 above). They are:

- a. Qualified teachers (provided they are registered with the General Teaching Council);
- b. Teachers without QTS (for example trainee teachers, instructors and overseas trained teachers). These people are not subject to the system of supervision outlined in Part II of this guidance but are subject to different arrangements. Some categories of student teachers are subject to the supervision requirements which pertain to support staff (see paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the Regulations);

- c. Support staff, who may undertake the 'specified work' subject to a number of conditions. These conditions, as set out in paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations, are as follows:
- i. the support staff member must carry out the 'specified work' in order to assist or support the work of a qualified teacher in the school;
 - ii. the support staff member must be subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the headteacher of the school; and
 - iii. the headteacher must be satisfied that the support staff member has the skills, expertise and experience required to carry out the 'specified work'.

In relation to 17 cii above schools may find, in practice, that people mentioned in paragraphs 4-9 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations, referred to as nominated teachers, (who will benefit from the contractual changes set out in the National Agreement) may need to be involved in the supervision and direction of support staff. This will be a matter for the headteacher, taking account of all the circumstances involved, including the conditions placed on employing instructors.

Further details of these conditions are set out later in this guidance document.

18. The category of "support staff", for the purposes of this guidance, ranges from teaching assistants, nursery nurses, librarians and other staff in schools such as technical support staff to, for example, business persons or members of the emergency services, who may from time to time engage with pupils e.g. the community police officer. It may be that these individuals undertake the 'specified work' for only a fraction of their time in school but, in doing so, they must meet the conditions set out in the Regulations (as repeated above). Where appropriate, this may be achieved through building on existing supervision arrangements within the school.

19. The practical effect of the Regulations is not to prevent support staff from undertaking the 'specified work', but to ensure that they do so within a proper system of direction and supervision by a qualified teacher. The headteacher will determine how the system of supervision is provided and by whom.
20. Under the Regulations, a key responsibility of the headteacher will be to ensure that the support staff member has the skills, experience and expertise required to carry out the 'specified work'. 'Specified work' may cover a range of activities at different levels – including, for some support staff, work with whole classes. Where more demanding aspects of the 'specified work' are carried out by support staff, and particularly where they are working with whole classes, it is strongly recommended that the headteacher should have regard to the standards for HLTAs in determining whether those staff have the necessary level of skills and expertise. Details of the HLTA standards and training are available from the Teacher Training Agency (www.tta.gov.uk).

PROTECTING THE ROLE AND STATUS OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS

21. Teachers are highly-skilled professionals whose expertise and judgement is essential to effective teaching. They make the leading contribution to teaching and learning, reflecting their training and expertise. Accountability for the overall learning outcomes of a particular pupil will rest with that pupil's qualified classroom/subject teacher and, to that end, the National Agreement states that each class or group for timetabled core and other foundation subjects and for religious education must be assigned a qualified teacher to teach them (subject to the unqualified teacher provisions in the Regulations).
22. Teachers and support staff such as HLTAs are not interchangeable. The fact that HLTAs may be working with whole classes for some of the time does not make them substitutes for when pupils need a qualified teacher, bringing the extra range, experience and complexity of understanding reflected in their greater professional training. The use of HLTAs to undertake 'specified work' is not intended to worsen pupil-teacher ratios but should improve pupil-adult ratios.

23. However, it is neither practical nor desirable for qualified teachers to carry out all of the activities that are required to fulfil their overall responsibility of promoting high standards of achievement. There is a distinction between the role of the teacher and the kind of activities that appropriately trained and supervised support staff, such as HLTAs, could undertake. For example, “assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils” could include anything from the formal assessment of coursework to marking and collating scores from a multiple-choice test. Clearly, the former is a more complex and demanding task that requires the skills of a qualified teacher, while the latter could be delegated.
24. In deciding on the level of supervision needed, headteachers will therefore need to take account of both the skills, expertise and experience of the support staff member, and the level of challenge in the work being undertaken. They should also consider whether the support staff member has undergone relevant training.
25. The Regulations do not prevent support staff from undertaking more challenging activities. Teachers, using their professional judgement, are best placed to determine which activities can be delegated to support staff who have been identified as appropriately skilled by the headteacher. Accountability for the overall learning outcomes of a particular pupil will rest with that pupil’s qualified teacher.
26. In any circumstances where an unqualified teacher or instructor is employed under the provisions set out in the Regulations, the headteacher must exercise their professional judgement about the best way of promoting high standards in ways that are consistent with the objective of reducing the workload of qualified teachers. Following the workforce reforms, and the continued expansion of new routes to QTS, it is likely that the number of instructors employed in schools should reduce over time, and many schools will choose to encourage existing instructors to enter a route towards qualified teacher status.

PART II – Establishing a system of supervision

DEFINING A SYSTEM OF SUPERVISION

27. A system of supervision is required for each member of support staff who undertakes the 'specified work' set out in the Regulations. The system should not be bureaucratic and may build on existing arrangements where appropriate. It should include:

- a. which elements of the 'specified work' can be carried out by the particular member of staff (the job description);
- b. which qualified teacher is responsible for supervising that work and how that supervision will be delivered (the supervision arrangements). As set out in paragraph 17 cii above schools may find, in practice, that people mentioned in paragraphs 4-9 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations (who will benefit from the contractual changes set out in the National Agreement) may need to be involved in the supervision and direction of support staff. This will be a matter for the headteacher, taking account of all the circumstances involved, including the conditions placed on employing instructors and based on their knowledge of the skills and experience of the unqualified teacher or instructor.

28. It is inevitable that different members of support staff will undertake the 'specified work' to different levels, depending on their skills and experience. The level at which they are working should determine the level of supervision needed. For example, an inexperienced teaching assistant would require direct supervision and should not be left alone with a class, while an experienced teaching assistant who has undergone training and meets the national standards for higher level teaching assistants would not require the qualified teacher assigned to that class to be present at all times.
29. For some support staff, particularly those involved in 'cover supervision', their work with pupils may be purely supervisory in nature and therefore may not involve elements of the 'specified work'. However, even 'cover supervision' may involve elements of the 'specified work' such as supporting pupils by answering questions about the work they have been set. It is recommended that, when in doubt, headteachers should include such staff in the formal system of supervision.
30. The headteacher should determine which of the activities within the 'specified work' fall within the competence of each member of support staff and should ensure that an appropriate arrangement for supervising those tasks is in place. The arrangements should not be bureaucratic and must be consistent with the objective of the National Agreement in making progressive reductions in teachers' overall workload.
31. For those undertaking the 'specified work' at a higher level, especially where this includes delivery of lessons to whole classes, it is strongly recommended that the headteacher should have regard to the standards for HLTAs and that they should take account of whether the individual has received training to meet those standards or has undertaken other training or qualifications of an appropriate standard such as Foundation Degrees for teaching assistants, the Specialist Teaching Assistant Course, and early years qualifications awarded by accredited bodies.

ESTABLISHING THE SYSTEM OF SUPERVISION

32. Many of the support staff carrying out 'specified work' will already be employed by the school. Others may be newly appointed and as for all new support staff, the headteacher will need to ensure that the standard checks for anybody working in a school are carried out. These cover identity, academic qualifications, references, previous employment history and a criminal record/List 99 check. Given the nature of the work likely to be carried out by staff working regularly with children, it is strongly recommended that an enhanced disclosure, the same as required for teachers, is requested from the Criminal Records Bureau. Further information on carrying out pre-appointment checks can be found in DfES guidance issued in May 2002 (reference DfES/0278/2002). The headteacher will normally be expected to lead in making support staff appointments, and will need to work within the wider arrangements for staffing matters (see School Staffing (England) Regulations 2003 and guidance).
33. In addition, the headteacher should ensure that each member of the support staff is aware of his/her responsibilities relating to health and safety and the duty of care towards the pupils. This could include the provision of training in first aid and the safe use of equipment within the school – of particular importance for those undertaking practical work with pupils. Other training, in behaviour management and in the use of physical contact and when and how restraint should be used, will also be appropriate. It is also important that the school's insurance policy covers the member of staff to a level appropriate for the work that they are undertaking and schools should liaise with their LEAs to ensure that this is the case.

The job description

34. For those support staff who are employed by or regularly work in the school, the headteacher should put together a job description including details of the 'specified work' that the member of support staff is expected to do. This will take account of the individual's experience, training and qualifications and the particular needs of the school. For individuals, such as volunteers, who are not employed by the school, it will still be necessary for the headteacher to ensure that there is clarity about the work to be undertaken according to the experience and skills of the person involved.

35. Paragraph 10(3)(b) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations suggests that headteachers may have regard to LEA/employer guidance on contractual matters when deploying staff to undertake 'specified work'. In drawing up job descriptions the headteacher should refer to advice and agreed job profiles provided by the LEA and the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. This may have implications for pay and grading. Community, voluntary controlled and community special schools must select an appropriate grade from those in use at the LEA. All schools should ensure that the pay and gradings selected for each job reflect the level of responsibility, expertise and skills required in that particular role.
36. Any revision of job descriptions of existing staff should normally be agreed between the headteacher and the member of staff, taking account of any requests for additional or refresher training the individual feels they need to fulfil their role. An extension of working hours must be by agreement. Taking on additional roles and responsibilities should not be compulsory but many staff may wish to do so with the necessary training and appropriate pay and grading.

The supervision arrangements

37. The National Agreement states that each class or group timetabled for a core and foundation subject and for religious education must have assigned to it a qualified teacher to teach it (subject to the unqualified teacher provisions in the Regulations). This teacher will be responsible for the progress of the pupils in the class/group which they have been assigned to teach over the course of the academic year. Such teachers may be assisted in their work by support staff, some of whom will carry out 'specified work'. All support staff who carry out 'specified work' must do so under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher (see paragraph 17). Having assigned a qualified teacher to teach each class/group does not prevent other teachers from being deployed on the timetable to take that class/group for particular activities or lessons.

Supervision arrangements

38. Support staff who assist assigned teachers may have two distinct types of supervision:
- a. supervision of activities relating to teaching and learning; and
 - b. line management.

Supervision of activities relating to teaching and learning

39. Support staff undertaking specified work will be directed and supervised by a qualified teacher. If they undertake this work with a number of classes/groups they are likely to be subject to the direction and supervision of several teachers. The nature of the direction and supervision may vary according to the level of 'specified work' undertaken.
40. Support staff who are less experienced and undertake only limited aspects of 'specified work' will require more close supervision and support from the teacher with regard to the materials to be used and the nature of the tasks they can undertake with pupils. Experienced support staff, with appropriate training and qualifications, may be given greater autonomy to identify suitable materials and manage tasks within the framework set by the qualified teacher.
41. Supervision arrangements for all support staff undertaking activities to support teaching and learning should include time for teachers and support staff to discuss planning and pupil progress within the contracted hours of the support staff.
42. The headteacher may determine that a member of the support staff has the appropriate qualification or experience to be used to release a teacher for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. In these circumstances, if difficulties arise the member of support staff should use the school's usual referral system in the same way as a qualified teacher would in the case of an emergency. A teacher who is on PPA time must be treated as not available and their PPA time must not be encroached upon.

Line management

43. Line management of support staff is distinct from direction and supervision by a qualified teacher for activities relating to teaching and learning. Line management covers the more general, day-to-day matters relating to the management of support staff. Whilst support staff may be supervised and directed by several qualified teachers for work related to teaching and learning activities, they should have only one line manager.
44. It should not automatically follow that because qualified teachers direct and supervise one area of support staff work they are required to undertake any aspects of line management of support staff.
45. It is recommended that support staff should be integrated into the school's appraisal arrangements. Line managers who co-ordinate the work of the support staff and provide support should undertake appraisal. Qualified teachers who direct and supervise support staff should provide feedback to the line manager on progress, to inform the appraisal process.
46. Regular review will also allow an assessment of the training and development needs of support staff so that they can develop professionally and improve the level of support that they can offer to qualified teachers.
47. The DfES booklet "Working with Teaching Assistants – a good practice guide" (reference DfES 0148/2000) provides useful information on the effective management and deployment of support staff in and beyond the classroom.

EXISTING SUPPORT STAFF

48. Many schools already use support staff, such as teaching assistants and nursery nurses, to undertake some aspects of the 'specified work'. It is expected that the grading, pay and conditions of such staff should reflect the high level of the work they are undertaking. Those who are already undertaking aspects of the 'specified work' may continue to do so, subject to the provisions in the Regulations. The headteacher must ensure that 'specified work' is subject to a system of supervision and that individuals have received the training appropriate to the level at which they are working. Where these staff have clear job descriptions and arrangements for their management, this should not require additional bureaucracy on the part of the school.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES LED BY SUPPORT STAFF

49. The Regulations cover support staff who carry out the 'specified work' as part of the delivery of the school's curriculum, whether in school or away from the school. Such a regulated system of supervision is not required for extra-curricular activities. Schools will need to ensure that extra-curricular activities are of high quality and add value. The member of support staff undertaking these activities will need to be aware of their responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of the pupils.

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GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON COVER SUPERVISION

Introduction

- 1 This guidance is designed to provide assistance to schools who are considering using cover supervision, along with a range of other strategies, in order to deliver an effective and tailored school policy for dealing with cover. It outlines issues around determining the circumstances in which cover supervision will be appropriate, what the role of the staff who provide cover supervision might be and the skills and knowledge needed to carry out that role successfully. It also suggests ways in which schools might access appropriate training and identifies sources for case studies of schools which are already making effective use of cover supervision.
- 2 'Cover supervision' occurs when there is no active teaching taking place. Pupils would continue their learning by carrying out a pre-prepared exercise under supervision. The precise nature of 'cover supervision' is further developed in paragraph 9 of this guidance. Cover supervision does not involve carrying out 'specified work' as outlined in the Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003 and accompanying guidance.¹
- 3 Cover supervision by effectively deployed support staff with appropriate skills and training will be a fundamental part of an effective cover strategy, increasing the options available to headteachers and allowing them to deal with teacher absence in a way which is compatible with the standards agenda and the efficient use of resources. In addition, permanently appointed staff providing cover supervision will be known to pupils, will be familiar with the school's policies and procedures, and can provide continuity when the class' usual teacher returns.

Context

- 4 The term 'cover' refers to any occasion where the teacher normally responsible for teaching a particular class is absent from the classroom during the time they have been timetabled to teach.² One of the aims of the National Agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' is to reduce significantly the amount of cover for absent colleagues which teachers at a school are required to carry out. Cover is not an effective use of their time. From September 2004 there will be an initial contractual limit of 38 hours per year. The National Agreement makes clear that the objective in the longer term is for teachers at a school to rarely cover at all. To achieve this objective, schools will need to find new ways of managing cover.
- 5 Guidance on changes to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document resulting from the National Agreement³ outlines the full range of cover strategies, of which cover supervision is one that schools should consider in preparation for the introduction of the contractual limit from 2004 and to meet the longer-term objective. Schools should refer to this guidance and, once they have decided on a strategy, should publicise the cover arrangements so that staff, pupils and parents are clear about the cover policy of the school.

¹ Guidance on the regulations is available via <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/>. These regulations apply in England only. The Welsh Assembly Government is currently consulting on regulations and accompanying guidance for Wales (available at <http://www.wales.gov.uk>).

² As outlined in the guidance on the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (accessed via <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/paydoc/>).

³ See <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/paydoc/>.

What is cover supervision?

- 6 The headteacher will need to use his/her professional judgement to determine the precise responsibilities of staff carrying out cover supervision duties. Needs may differ depending on particular classes and whether the setting is a primary, secondary or special school. In whatever context, cover supervision is likely to include some core elements:
 - a) supervising work that has been set in accordance with the school policy (see 7 below);
 - b) managing the behaviour of pupils whilst they are undertaking this work to ensure a constructive environment;
 - c) responding to any questions from pupils about process and procedures;
 - d) dealing with any immediate problems or emergencies according to the school's policies and procedures;
 - e) collecting any completed work after the lesson and returning it to the appropriate teacher (see 7 below);
 - f) reporting back as appropriate using the school's agreed referral procedures on the behaviour of pupils during the class, and any issues arising.
- 7 Work should be set in accordance with the school's strategy. It is good practice to seek to agree this strategy with staff. It should be devised to ensure that the arrangements for providing appropriate work for pupils who are being supervised do not place excessive additional burdens of planning, preparation and assessment on teachers – this could include developing banks of suitable material. Work set should be relevant to the age group and the point the pupils have reached in the curriculum to assist with continuity.

When is the use of cover supervision appropriate?

- 8 Cover supervision should only be used for short-term absences. These might be known in advance (for example, where a teacher has a medical appointment or is undergoing professional development) or unexpected (for example, absence due to illness). Longer-term absence – e.g. due to long-term sick or maternity leave should be covered by a teacher.
- 9 Headteachers will exercise their professional judgement in determining what should be regarded as a "short-term" absence for these purposes. There will be a number of considerations which the headteacher will need to take into account when deciding whether the use of cover supervision is appropriate or not. The key factors are:
 - a) the extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained;
 - b) the length of time a particular group of pupils would be working without a teacher;
 - c) the proportion of the total curriculum time affected in a specific subject over the course of the term.
- 10 For example, in a setting where a class is predominantly led by one teacher for the majority of the day, it is likely that cover supervision will very quickly become "specified work" and active teaching would be required. This would therefore fall under the Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations.⁴ In any case, it would clearly be inappropriate in such settings for a class to be 'supervised' for more than three consecutive days.
- 11 On the other hand, where pupils are only timetabled for occasional lessons which are affected by teacher absence, the use of cover supervision over a longer period of time may be appropriate.

Who should be deployed to undertake cover supervision?

- 12 Headteachers will determine the appropriate system for delivering cover supervision. Headteachers could employ new staff to the school and/or deploy existing staff to provide cover supervision. In either case, they must be satisfied that a member of staff has the necessary training and skills.

⁴ See paragraph 2 above and footnote.

- 13 When existing members of support staff are carrying out cover supervision duties, formal recognition should be given to the extended role and the terms of their contract should be reviewed in accordance with the first guidance note issued by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (April 2003).⁵ Any revision of job description should normally be agreed between the headteacher and the member of staff. Factors which the head should consider are the suitability of the task to the member of staff's current role, the impact on their workload, whether additional training is needed and any implications for pay and grading.
- 14 When considering the grading of staff undertaking cover supervision, headteachers will want to seek advice from their local authority before advertising a post or regrading an existing one. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services has produced model job profiles for support staff.⁶ These assume that those undertaking cover supervision and who are carrying out the kinds of tasks set out in paragraph 6, would meet level three within a range of four skill levels.
- 15 There are a number of possible ways of deploying staff to undertake cover supervision which may be the basis of a role in its own right, although it will usually be more appropriate as an element of a wider role within the school. A clear and well-publicised system should be put in place to outline which members of staff should be approached – and at what stage – to provide cover supervision:
 - a) schools may wish to employ staff for whom cover supervision and possibly other types of supervisory activity forms the core part of their role. On occasions where they are not needed for cover, they might be released to provide additional support to teachers in classrooms, or to carry out administrative tasks, or they may have management responsibilities within the school;
 - b) schools may want to employ staff for whom cover supervision is only one element of a wider, more varied, range of duties. This approach will require particularly careful handling to make sure that the requirement to provide cover is not at the expense of other elements of their job. One option might be to ensure that the job description includes some tasks which can be deferred if the member of staff is required for cover duties. Alternatively, a limit could be agreed on the amount of cover that can normally be expected by one individual member of staff;
 - c) small schools may decide to employ staff to undertake cover supervision on a shared basis between a cluster of schools – schools may wish to seek advice and support from their LEA to facilitate such arrangements;
 - d) some schools have chosen to use appropriately qualified persons who are available on a casual, as required, basis. However, such provision may present problems of availability at short notice and lack of familiarity with the pupils and school policies and procedures.

Skills, knowledge and training

- 16 Cover supervision is a responsible role, involving as it does taking sole charge of a group of pupils. Schools should therefore take care to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge before being given charge of a class. Given the nature of the work likely to be carried out by staff working regularly with children, it is strongly recommended that an enhanced disclosure, the same as required for teachers, is requested from the Criminal Records Bureau. The school's public liability insurance policy should already cover staff to a level appropriate for the work they are undertaking.
- 17 In particular, staff undertaking cover supervision should:
 - a) be familiar with the full range of school policies, particularly those regarding health and safety, equal opportunity issues and special educational needs (SEN);
 - b) have the necessary skills to manage safely classroom activities, the physical learning space and resources for which they are responsible;
 - c) understand and be able to use a range of strategies to deal with classroom behaviour as a whole and also individual behavioural needs.

⁵ Also available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling

⁶ The job profiles are available at <http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/conditions/education/support/index.html>

- 18 In many cases staff will already have some of these skills/knowledge because of previous experience in the school or elsewhere. However, it is likely that specific training will be needed. It will be the responsibility of the headteacher to satisfy him/herself that an individual has the skills required, and to ensure that they receive such appropriate training. A cover supervision role could provide the basis for progression into other areas, for example more advanced roles in relation to the guidance and supervision of pupils.
- 19 In England, funding will be available to LEAs through the Standards Fund in order to develop training for staff for whom cover supervision is part of their job remit. Relevant training materials which LEAs might choose to build on are those used to assist teaching assistants in meeting the National Occupational Standards⁷ with particular reference to standards 3-1 'Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour'; 3-10 'Support the maintenance of pupil safety'; and 3-5 'Assist in preparing the learning environment'.
- 20 Other suitable training might include:
- a) TA induction training (in England only) – in particular the sessions on “Strategies and approaches for positive behaviour management” and “Effective Practice in Action”.⁸ However, it should be noted that this in itself will not be sufficient. In particular, further training in behaviour management will be required;
 - b) support staff introductory training (launched October 2003 in England only) – in particular the modules on “Behaviour Management”, “Inclusion, SEN and Disabilities” and “Risk and Reflection”. Again it should be noted that this introductory training in itself will not be sufficient;
 - c) training provided locally by LEAs or by private organisations (there are a number of organisations currently offering training for cover supervisors);
 - d) training in school, especially on relevant policies and procedures;
 - e) Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) training – to be rolled out nationally from April 2004 (in England only at the time of publication). The HLTA standards⁹ are considerably broader in scope than is needed for cover supervision and therefore the training will not necessarily be appropriate for someone whose main role is to be a cover supervisor. However, anyone who meets the HLTA standards will, as a matter of course, have the necessary training and skills for cover supervision if that is to be part of their role.

Case studies

- 21 Many useful case studies – including those of staff already successfully undertaking roles which involve cover supervision – can be accessed via the National Remodelling Team’s website <http://www.remodelling.org/index.php>.

⁷ Available to view via <http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/skills/teaching/download.html>.

⁸ Further information about TA induction training and the way in which they link to the National Occupational Standards can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/teachingassistants/training/>.

⁹ The HLTA standards can be accessed via <http://www.hta.gov.uk/about/hta/index.htm>.

Raising Standards and Tackling Workload

Implementing the National Agreement

December 2003

Department for
education and skills
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The notes issued by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG)¹ represent the agreed position of all the signatories to the National Agreement. One key intention of the Agreement was to create time for teachers and the leadership group by creating a wider range of support staff roles working closely with teachers to help pupils. This note concentrates on developing the opportunities for support staff to take on extended roles to support teaching and learning.

SUPPORT STAFF

Cover Supervision

The change to the teachers' contract with regards to cover is scheduled to take effect on 1 September 2004. Initial guidance regarding cover supervision was given in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2003. In line with the National Agreement, detailed national advice and guidance for schools to consider when deploying staff to carry out cover supervision has now been developed. This additional agreed guidance is included with this note.

NJC Guidance

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services in England and Wales, on which support staff unions and employers are represented, has produced national guidance for support staff. There are three broad categories of career profiles including classroom support, administration and organisation, technical and curriculum support – all ranging from levels 1-4. These will provide the basis for developing local career structures and local grades selected from the NJC's salary spine. The NJC has also produced good practice advice on training and development as well as on fixed-term contracts. Guidance on work/life balance issues for support staff, 'Finding the Balance', has also been developed. These documents are available from the Employers' Organisation at:

www.lg-employers.gov.uk/publications/fulllisting.html

Introductory Training for Support Staff

As outlined in the **Time for Standards – Developing the role of school support staff** consultation the DfES has now developed introductory training for school support staff other than teaching assistants (who have their own DfES induction course). The training was based on discussions with LEAs, headteachers and other education professionals and was piloted in eight areas in June. The course materials were delivered to English LEAs in September and launched at five regional LEA trainer conferences the following month. Consisting of five two-hour modules, the



NAHT

NASUWT

NEOST

PAT

SHA

T&G

UNISON
the public service union

¹ The Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group is composed of representatives from ATL, DfES, GMB, NAHT, NASUWT, NEOST, PAT, SHA, T&G, UNISON and the Welsh Assembly Government who are all signatories to the Agreement.

course covers introductions to topics such as behaviour, child protection, ICT, inclusion, SEN, disabilities, curriculum and EAL. Anyone wishing to see the materials or order copies should visit the TeacherNet website at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/supportstaff.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNING BODIES

The WAMG realises that governors have a key role to play in the implementation of the National Agreement and schools and LEAs are, therefore, urged to ensure that these notes reach governors. WAMG notes will also be made available through the Governors' Associations, NAGM and NGC, and through governors' information packs.

In conjunction with the Governors' Organisations and the National Remodelling Team (NRT), WAMG has produced a governors' information pack about workforce remodelling. This has been followed up by a joint Governors/WAMG/NRT Action Plan ensuring constant communication and joined-up thinking between WAMG and the Governors' Organisations. A further governors' information pack will be produced in the near future to provide practical advice and guidelines for governors on remodelling.

EARLY ADOPTER SCHOOLS

The nationwide school roll-out of the change programme in England has now begun, with 350 LEA remodelling champions having been trained by the NRT. All LEAs should now have a key contact for co-ordinating and managing remodelling activities within their LEA.

Every school in England and Wales must implement the phased statutory contractual changes set out in the National Agreement by the published dates. However, in addition to this, each English LEA has been encouraged to nominate at least one early adopter school to undertake an accelerated remodelling change programme. To date, 182 nominations have been received from LEAs, representing a good cross-section of schools across the country. These schools attended successful training events and are now setting up their school change teams and planning their next steps with support, challenge and encouragement from LEAs.

NEXT STEPS

The WAMG has an extensive programme of work under way to continue to take forward the provisions of the Agreement. Priority issues include:

- Working to ensure coherence between the change management programme for remodelling and the Primary Leadership programme.
- Reviewing Circulars 2/98 and 22/98 on reducing bureaucracy in schools, focusing on key issues such as meetings and pupil reports.



Time for Standards

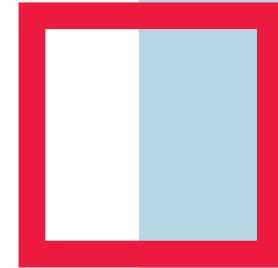
Transforming the School Workforce

Cover Strategies – Overview and Toolkit



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Time for Standards

Strategy overview

A stated aim of the National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload is to reduce significantly the amount of cover for absent colleagues which teachers are required to perform. Under the terms of the National Agreement, from September 2004 there will be an annual contractual limit on cover of 38 hours for teachers. This is a maximum which no teacher may be legally asked to exceed. The National Agreement further states the clear, longer-term objective that teachers should rarely be asked to cover for absent colleagues.

Explanations of the key terms used within this document can be found in the guidance papers included in this pack. In particular please refer to the following documents:

- 1 Section 133 Regulations and Guidance issued under the Education Act 2002
- 2 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document – Section 4
- 3 WAMG Guidance for Schools on Cover Supervision

It is widely accepted that cover is not an effective use of the time and skills of teachers at a school. For schools to meet the contractual requirements (including the longer-term objective) and become ever more effective, they must find new sustainable strategies to manage their cover requirements. Case studies show that the employment of an effective cover strategy invariably brings further benefits to schools. Not least of these benefits is the documented fall in staff sickness absence in schools where teacher cover hours are low.

For most schools their existing cover policy will already involve the deployment of a mix of cover strategies. In the development of a new school cover policy, reflecting a new mix of strategies, a headteacher should take into account the following considerations:

Demand profile

- The frequency and variety of situations in which the need for cover arises should be considered

- Categories of teacher absence may be broadly categorised – planned or unplanned and long-term or short-term. Strategies which are more applicable for short-term absence may be inappropriate if employed for long-term absence
- The availability of school-level resources over the year may not be consistent – exams, for example, may have an impact on space available

The National Agreement

- Which combination of choices will allow the school to meet the legal requirement of limiting teacher cover to 38 hours per year and to achieve the longer-term objective
- The headteacher must have regard for the other contractual changes as set out in the National Agreement, in deciding the sustainability of any mix of strategies – for example, a mix of strategies must not use a teacher's PPA time, must have regard to work/life balance and should not undermine the provision of management and leadership time

Continuity of learning

- Evaluation must take place as to whether the strategies ensure the best possible continuity of learning for pupils – cover lessons should not be time lost to learning
- Additional information is provided in the Guidance for Schools on Cover Supervision included in this pack

Implications for support staff

- The National Agreement envisages an enhanced role for support staff in the classroom
- For all strategies which involve partial reallocation of appropriate support staff to meet the cover need, managers should ensure that any change in responsibilities is consistent with the continuance of existing duties. In particular staff should not be disrupted from providing direct learning support to children in key periods of learning (for example, to children in year 6 preparing for examinations)
- There should be consultation with employees regarding changes to job descriptions. There must be agreement about change of contracts when there is a substantial change. Refer to the guidance provided in WAMG note 1
- Appropriate training should be provided for support staff to implement any given mix of strategies, for example, behaviour management
- Headteachers need to be clear when allocating support staff to cover responsibilities whether the work to be undertaken is specified work or cover supervision



Time for Standards

Strategy overview

Cost effectiveness

- The cost of each strategy should be assessed both in the short-term and medium-term. What percentage of the school budget is used to meet cover requirements, currently and under any proposed new mix of strategies?

Ease of implementation

- The school should also consider the ease with which its new cover policy can be implemented – including training implications for existing and future staff team members
- The school should consider maximising the deployment of existing school resources when considering its new cover policy
- When establishing the appropriate grade for a member of support staff, community schools must select one of the grades used by the LEA under the terms of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) Green Book agreement. The grades selected should come from local frameworks that reflect all demands
- The initial strategies may then form the first step of the School Development Plan which may define additional measures to be implemented over a longer term
- Any new school cover policy should be flexible enough to cope with any situation where teacher absence may arise, even under extreme circumstances



Time for Standards

Strategy overview

Cover strategies

This section identifies the common strategies available to headteachers to enable the implementation of the limit on teachers' cover and the longer-term objective of teachers rarely covering. The implementation of a new cover policy in a school should be assessed in light of the considerations described above.

Cover supervision

This strategy involves the deployment of support staff, with appropriate training and support from teaching colleagues, in a supervisory role to cover for staff absence. Support staff deployed to provide cover supervision may be wholly or mainly employed to provide cover supervision. Alternatively this strategy may involve the partial redeployment of support staff who also have a wider school role.

The deployment of cover supervision by support staff is in line with the aims and requirements of the National Agreement and provides continuity for pupils in the case of short-term absence. If cover supervision is deployed through support staff whose principal role is not cover supervision there may be issues around disruption to existing responsibilities. This strategy does not deliver active teaching to pupils and so would be inappropriate for longer-term absence.

Learning centre

A specially allocated physical space where pupils are moved when cover is required.

The use of a learning centre to provide cover for staff absence is in line with the aims and requirements of the National Agreement. The strategy is effective in providing continuity to pupils when deployed in the case of short-term absence. The permanent staffing of a learning centre would also mean minimal disruption for support staff. The start-up costs, including training costs, for a learning centre with ICT provision could be high and there would be ongoing maintenance costs. However, costs should fall following start-up.

Strategies delivering specified work

Higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) roles. Support staff may undertake specified work when the class teacher is absent for a short time. This must be done in accordance with the section 133 Regulations and Guidance issued under the Education Act 2002.

This strategy provides a good level of continuity for the pupils, especially when the support staff have been involved in the preparation and planning of the lesson, and is in line with the aims and requirements of the National Agreement. A cover policy which frequently involves the deployment of HLTAs away from their timetabled responsibilities could be disruptive and inconsistent with the important role of HLTAs.

Floating teacher. A school employs a qualified teacher with no timetable, or less than 50 per cent timetable, to meet cover requirements by teaching the class.

This allows the delivery of specified work to pupils. Continuity for pupils would also be good as they would be taught by a familiar member of staff. However, contracting a floating teacher is not necessarily cost effective if in practice they are providing cover supervision only.

External resources. A school sources teacher cover either through an LEA supply service, from a private agency or private lists which might be shared with a small number of other schools.

This allows for the delivery of specified work. The Ofsted study of "Schools' use of temporary teachers" (December 2002) provides helpful advice. Employing external supply teachers for short-term cover where only cover supervision is required may be less effective in terms of both continuity for pupils and cost.

Other strategies

Double or split classes. The class joins another lesson or is divided amongst several lessons.

Neither of these strategies is in line with the aims of the National Agreement. As stated in the National Agreement, from September 2004 there will be an annual contractual limit on cover of 38 hours for teachers. This is a maximum which no teacher may be legally asked to exceed. The National Agreement further states the clear, longer-term objective that teachers should rarely be asked to cover for absent colleagues.



Time for Standards

Strategy overview

Cover analysis tool

The tool is intended to help schools audit their cover needs and estimate expenditure and cost per hour for different strategies. This information can be used to plan future approaches to cover.

The diagnostic has seven steps

Discover – the situation in your school

1. **Assess cover hours:** enter the cover hours provided by each teacher for each month of the previous year. This page will illustrate when, and by how much, a teacher has exceeded the 38 hours limit. If this data is not available realistic estimates should be made in consultation with unions
2. **Reason cover required:** use this page to indicate what the reasons for cover were in your school
3. **Strategy used:** use the tick-boxes to show which strategies were used for each of the reasons that cover was needed

Deepen – your understanding of the reasons why change may be necessary

4. **Strategy cost breakdown:** use this page to estimate the cost of the different strategies. By including cost per month and hours provided, you will also see the unit cost for each strategy
5. **Summary of current strategy:** use this page to summarise the benefits and concerns for each of the strategies you currently deploy in your school. This summary allows you to gain an overview of both the tangible and intangible benefits of the different strategies

Develop – possible solutions to issues and assess their effectiveness

6. **Projected strategy cost:** use this page to estimate the costs for new cover strategies under consideration
7. **Projected strategy summary:** the final page is used to summarise the benefits and concerns for each of the strategies under consideration. This summary gives an overview of both the tangible and intangible benefits for the projected strategies

The diagnostic tool and worked examples are also available on the NRT website www.remodelling.org

Step 3 of 7 - Strategy used

Please tick the boxes indicating each cover strategy used to cover each cause. These strategies are defined at the beginning of this document.

Strategy used	Cover Supervision	Learning Centre	ICT Learning Centre	Shared Resources	Floating Teachers	External Resource	HLTAs	Double Classes	Split Classes	Teacher Non-Contact Time
Short-term illness	✓/x									
Meetings										
Doctor/dentist/hospital										
CPD										
Personal										
Carer's leave										
Religious observance										
Educational visit/trip										
Long-term illness										
Bereavement										
Maternity/paternity/adoption										
Dependent's leave										
Unfilled teaching post										
Other:										

Step 5 of 7 - Summary of current strategy

Please list your strategies, the benefits and concerns for each, and the associated cost totals.

Strategy Summary		Annual Cost	Unit Cost (per hour)		Annual Cost	Unit Cost (per hour)
-------------------------	--	-------------	----------------------	--	-------------	----------------------

Strategy 1:		£	£
Benefits:	Concerns:		

Strategy 2:		£	£
Benefits:	Concerns:		

Strategy 3:		£	£
Benefits:	Concerns:		

Strategy 4:		£	£
Benefits:	Concerns:		

Strategy 5:		£	£
Benefits:	Concerns:		

Strategy 6:		£	£
Benefits:	Concerns:		

Q.1 Is the application of the above strategies consistent with the provisions and objectives of the National Agreement?	✓/x
Q.2 Do these strategies provide a consistent, positive learning experience for your pupils?	✓/x
Q.3 Are these strategies consistent with minimising disruption and workload for all staff?	✓/x
Q.4 Are these strategies cost effective?	✓/x

Total:	£	£
---------------	---	---

Comments:

Step 7 of 7 - Summary of future strategy

Please list your strategies, the benefits and concerns for each, and the associated cost totals.

Strategy Summary		Annual Cost	Unit Cost (per hour)		Annual Cost	Unit Cost (per hour)
-------------------------	--	-------------	----------------------	--	-------------	----------------------

Strategy 1:

Benefits:	Concerns:

£	£
---	---

Strategy 2:

Benefits:	Concerns:

£	£
---	---

Strategy 3:

Benefits:	Concerns:

£	£
---	---

Strategy 4:

Benefits:	Concerns:

£	£
---	---

Strategy 5:

Benefits:	Concerns:

£	£
---	---

Strategy 6:

Benefits:	Concerns:

£	£
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Q.1 Is the application of the above strategies consistent with the provisions and objectives of the National Agreement?	✓/x
Q.2 Do these strategies provide a consistent, positive learning experience for your pupils?	✓/x
Q.3 Are these strategies consistent with minimising disruption and workload for all staff?	✓/x
Q.4 Are these strategies cost effective?	✓/x
Q.5 Are these strategies implementable?	✓/x

Total:	£	£
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Comments:

Time for Standards

Transforming the School Workforce

Cover Strategies – Good Practice



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Good practice overview

There is a range of strategies that schools can adopt to manage the contractual requirements on cover in the National Agreement. Although some schools have yet to implement revised cover strategies, we already have numerous examples of emerging good practice. It seems that the majority of small schools are tending to employ a single strategy, while most large schools are using a combination of strategies.

Remodelling schools are developing cover strategies as part of their remodelling process. Schools that are not yet involved in active remodelling are developing strategies within their traditional processes and structures, for example, through their school leadership teams.

This document outlines good practice for all schools.

Visit www.remodelling.org for further details.

Good practice common to all cover strategies

While specific details may vary from school to school, a number of good practice factors are common to all schools which are developing and implementing cover strategies.

Before implementation:

- It is good practice to consult with unions and all staff prior to developing and implementing cover strategies
- Cover supervision should fit with the other processes and policies of the school (for example, behaviour and discipline)
- The grade for a member of staff undertaking cover is assessed to take into account their new responsibilities. When determining the appropriate grade, community schools must select a grade from one of those used by the LEA under the terms of the NJC for Local Government Services Green Book agreement. The grades selected should come from local frameworks that reflect all demands

- Costings are assessed and budget reorganisation/redirection is planned
- The interim and long-term strategies are part of the school development plan
- Communication with other schools that have implemented a similar cover strategy is beneficial
- A group of local schools may wish to consider sharing a cover resource – resources pooled in this way may be support staff, able to provide cover supervision, or teachers

Process of implementation:

- There should be consultation with employees regarding changes to job descriptions. There must be agreement about change of contracts when there is a substantial change. Refer to the guidance provided in WAMG note 1
- Cover supervision training is provided for support staff, involving dedicated training time, periods of observation and an ongoing mentoring and monitoring programme
- Support staff are included in school CPD and encouraged to develop their skills and careers
- A regular review process should be integral to the implementation of new cover strategies
- When covering lessons, supervision of support staff should be subject to the school's normal supervisory arrangements and emergency procedures – headteachers need to be mindful of section 133 Regulations and Guidance issued under the Education Act 2002 with regard to specified work included in this pack
- Schools should define the maximum period support staff can supervise an individual class before long-term supply cover is sought – long-term cover could be accommodated in the school's cover insurance scheme. Headteachers need to be mindful of the cover supervision guidance also included in this pack



Time for Standards

Good practice overview – continued

Benefits of implementing good practice:

- Teaching and learning standards improve because there is less disruption to school, a more consistent approach to cover and better pupil behaviour
- Support staff regularly employed by the school know the pupils, they often contribute to lesson planning and know what is expected when covering lessons
- Staff work/life balance improves
- Support staff status enhanced
- Improved teamwork and communication throughout school
- Potential for use of pre-prepared subject materials
- The deployment of support staff in cover strategies is often an “organic” growth of existing staff roles and can have a positive impact on support staff morale
- Short-term/emergency cover is no longer a problem
- Reduction in staff sickness absence
- More cost effective

Three supervision strategies are now presented with case studies which show how these strategies have been used:

- Support staff with a dedicated cover supervision role
- Support staff providing cover supervision as part of a wider school role
- ICT/learning centre



Time for Standards

Support staff providing cover supervision as part of a wider school role

Members of support staff, with appropriate training and support from teaching colleagues, are deployed to supervise a class when a teacher is absent.

Overview:

- Members of support staff working in a school are available to supervise classes when teachers are absent
- When not supervising classes, support staff assist class teachers in lessons or carry out other agreed duties

Benefits:

- Support staff know the pupils, contribute to lesson plans and know what is expected in the lesson. There is less disruption and better behaviour
- Support staff status is increased in the eyes of pupils
- Improved teamwork and communication throughout school

Example school details:

School: Barnes Primary

Headteacher: Felicity Sugden

School details:

- Split-site primary, 300 pupils, 14 teachers, 21 support staff

Annual budget:

- 2002-3: £932,988 (including grants)
- Annual spend on teaching staff – £515,000; support staff – £211,000

Situation before implementation:

- Autumn term 2002: £10,700 on cover; staff absences 7.7 percent
- Mainly used agency staff for cover at £140 a day
- Often doubled-up classes on first day of absence

Implementation of the plan:

- Invested to train nine of the school's support staff
- Redirected money in the supply cover budget to pay support staff to supervise cover
- Support staff job descriptions changed – to include the provision of emergency cover for whole classes

Review:

- Percentage of staff absences has gone down. Autumn 2002 (pre-scheme): 7.7 percent; Autumn 2003 (post-scheme): 3.6 percent
- Money spent on supply cover/year has been reduced. Autumn 2002 (pre-scheme): £10,700; Autumn 2003 (post-scheme): £2,544 (including cover for first day absences)
- The headteacher says standards are maintained and the school only had to bring in agency cover on one instance and under exceptional circumstances
- 16 days cover provided by support staff in the Autumn term 2003



Time for Standards

Support staff with a dedicated cover supervision role

This strategy consists of appointing dedicated support staff to cover for staff absence for a short period of time.

Overview:

- One or more supervisors working in a school are available to supervise classes when teachers are absent
- Cover supervisors often, but not always, have a TA background
- When not supervising lessons cover supervisors may perform a range of other supervisory duties

Benefits:

- Supervisors know pupils, contribute to lesson plans and know what is expected in the lesson. The result is high quality cover, less disruption, better pupil behaviour and higher standards
- Supervisors are flexible. Can be given cover duties at the beginning of the day and then take responsibility for their own work. If not needed for cover they can undertake other duties, for example resource creation and invigilation
- As trust develops, teaching staff are more relaxed about allowing support staff to supervise their lessons

Example school details:

School: Bishop Luffa

Headteacher: Nick Taunt

School details:

- Secondary school, 1,341 pupils, 85 teachers, 55 support staff

Annual budget:

- 2003-4: £3,626,000
- Annual spend on teaching staff – £2,517,000; support staff – £438,600, including study supervisors – £49,000

Situation before implementation:

- Spend on supply cover/year was £45,000
- School rarely used supply agencies (£166 - £180 a day), instead used supply contacts at around £115 - £140 a day
- Annual cover requirement (illness, training, etc) approx 7,000 hours. Last year (years 7-11): 1,600 teacher days off (in total), 500 days due to illness

Implementation of the plan:

- A team of six supervisors was recruited, three full-time, rest on 0.8 FTE
- Supervisor induction course was developed: two weeks intensive and ongoing mentoring and monitoring. Supervisors were encouraged to go on other courses
- Individual supervisors were linked to school faculties, eg, maths, science, art
- Supervisors cover classes for up to a week, then supply teachers brought in
- New job description was written for supervisors. Contracted from 8am (school start) to 2.30pm. Supervisors were also contracted for professional development days. Pro rata pay over 12 months

Review:

- Since the scheme started the number of teachers absent for at least a day through sickness has gone down each year: from 64 (of 85 teachers) before its introduction, to 61, to 56, to 52 last year
- Last year the school spent just £10,000 on supply teachers. The released £35,000 is now spent on supervisors
- Teachers still do some cover. The maximum individual cover burden was 14 hours last year – the average figure was 10 hours
- The headteacher says there are three key elements to the success of cover supervisors:
 - 1) All departments have a clear understanding of how to set work for them
 - 2) They are organised in a team and some have prior experience of the school
 - 3) There is a clear disciplinary structure in the school that cover supervisors are aware of



Time for Standards

ICT/learning centre

A specially allocated physical space to which pupils are moved when cover is required.

A traditional learning centre, or study hall, might be established as a staging post to the introduction of a dedicated ICT cover suite.

Overview:

- A dedicated space is allocated to accommodate cover for staff absence
- The learning centre is permanently staffed to provide cover resource
- The learning centre may be staffed by a combination of teachers, ICT technicians and other support staff
- Support staff who are timetabled to work with a class may accompany their classes into the learning centre, to provide further support
- ICT and study hall-type learning centres need to fit with school processes and policies

Implementation:

- Systems are researched and implemented to ensure curriculum continuity and flow of information between the learning centre and timetabled lessons
- Options for external or additional funding investigated – this might include researching DfES funding programmes, sponsorship from industry or applications to charitable trusts or foundations
- In the absence of extra finance, funds are vired from the existing cover budget for initial investment
- Hardware and networking options are costed. This may include looking at reconditioned or donated equipment
- Identify and establish learning resources, eg, self-directed work sheets or software to be hosted in an ICT suite

Benefits:

- Well-organised and structured capacity for multiple class cover
- The learning centre provides a flexible cover resource
- An ICT learning centre offers the potential for pre-prepared subject materials and online assessment
- Active learning can take place in the ICT learning centre during covered lessons
- The learning centre is staffed by a team of familiar professionals – teaching and support staff
- Creates a studious space where learning can take place
- After initial start-up costs (equipment and training) costs will fall

Example school details:

Phased introduction of learning centre (study hall)

School: Parrs Wood Technology College

Headteacher: Rachel Jones

School details:

- 11 - 18 yr comprehensive school, 1,967 pupils, 122 teachers, 119 support staff

Annual budget:

- 2003-4: £6-7,000,000
- Annual supply budget (including externally funded cover) – £100,000
- £80,000 study hall costs (staffing)

Situation before implementation:

- Teachers asked to cover for absent colleagues
- Agency cover staff used
- Relatively high need for cover



Time for Standards

ICT/learning centre – continued

Forming the cover plan:

- Reform priority was to address staff workload and conditions, not to make budget savings
- Previous headteacher visited learning centre in an Australian school
- Study hall strategy to be introduced in three phases with budget savings made as the system becomes more efficient

Implementation of Phase One:

- Study hall manager appointed and a dedicated study hall teaching assistant was recruited
- Second FTE study hall teaching position was covered by four teachers with existing supply relationship with the school
- Study hall initially located in school assembly hall

Review:

- Staff absence figures fell by approximately 16 per cent
- Phase One of the study hall strategy has broken the mould of the cover system and built up staff confidence in the system's effectiveness
- Electronic registration code allows SMT to monitor students' use of the study hall

Future aims:

- Phase Two of the study hall strategy will involve recruiting further dedicated teaching assistants
- Teaching assistants will be trained in study hall practice
- Proposed Phase Three will involve relocation to a purpose-built facility
- The new facility will contain ICT provision through reconditioned laptops and a wireless link to the school's developing online curriculum
- ICT provision will allow even greater effectiveness in the curriculum integration of study hall lessons