Recommendations to the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers from the Support Staff Working Group

The action plan attached at Appendix 1 provides a summary of the issues and concerns raised by the SCRE researchers and comments and proposals for action from the Working Group. The Working Group's recommendations for the SNCT's consideration are:

(1) The Working Group should be continued to carry out the following further work:

- (i) An evaluation and review of Annex E.
- (ii) The development of a 'Good Practice Guide' which will support councils to ensure effective deployment and impact on teachers' workload and on teaching and learning.

(2) The SNCT Joint Chairs should visit councils where the expenditure provided for the implementation of Annex E does not seem to have been used for this purpose and where the desired outcomes have not been met.

(3) The Joint Chairs should write to all councils to highlight the issues raised in the research report which fall outwith the SNCT's responsibilities. These issues are:

- (i) The effect of school's policies on discipline on the role of support staff, in particular in the undertaking of dining room and playground supervision.
- (ii) The management of support staff and the role that CPD programmes could have in delivering training for managers, teachers and support staff.

Further detail around the points set out in the action plan can be found within the Insight attached at Appendix 2.

The Impact of Additional Support Staff: Action Plan

Issues and Concerns	General Comments	Actions
Number and deployment 2 554 FTE appointed under the Teachers' Agreement. Most primary school teachers appeared to have some time with classroom assistants whereas secondary schools operated a 'bidding system' for classroom assistants time.	The evidence confirms Working Group evidence that there has been a load lightening rather than a removal of all tasks identified in Annex E.	To be remitted to the SNCT: The SNCT should decide whether Annex E is being delivered.
Expenditure c.£29,502,500 spend on support staff salaries. c.£2,068,000 has been spent on capital expenditure	Expenditure has proved difficult to trace for a number of reasons outlined in the Insight but £50,000,000 was made available through Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE).	To be remitted to the SNCT: The SNCT should look further at Councils who have not delivered on provision of support staff. One action to help achieve this is the visit programme (see below) which is an action point for concerns regarding 'Implementation'.
Impact on Learning & Teaching 72% of LA respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the impact of additional support staff. 48% of HTs were either satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the impact. (Higher proportion of secondary and special HTs not at all satisfied). 52% of HTs believed the additional support staff had increased time for teaching.	Despite the discrepancy between authority and HT figures there is evidence that support staff are supporting learning and teaching.	Further work by the Working Group: Advice on good practice should be developed by the Support Staff Working Group. This should include examples of good practice.

Issues and Concerns	General Comments	Actions
<u>Implementation</u> The lack of funding and slowness led to variations in the level of support staff.	It was always open to authorities to find their own solutions. Therefore, there will be no uniform scheme throughout Scotland.	Further work by the Working Group and the SNCT: The SNCT should visit councils who are identified by the Working Group as being in need of further support. (While the SNCT will have to address the lack of implementation, or slow implementation, in a number of authorities, the SNCT cannot create uniformity.)
<u>Deployment</u> There are variations in the allocation of additional support staff. Schools do not necessarily perceive support staff located at authority level to be reducing their own workloads.	A number of Councils have not fully set out the rationale for putting in place support staff. The provision of support staff was to deliver Annex E not to enable authorities to finance a structural change.	The Working Group believes that all councils should develop clear statements on how support staff should be allocated and the rationale for this. The advice on good practice will address both these issues.
<u>Role of Support Staff</u> Many schools are still trying to define a role for additional support staff. This raises issues on the complexity of managing support staff. Using support staff to supervise dining halls and playgrounds was particularly problematic in some schools, especially in secondary schools.	The management of support staff is a matter for councils. The Working Group believes this issue does require to be addressed by local authorities. Support staff will only be able to have an important role in supervision if they are perceived to have authority in the eyes of pupils.	To be remitted to the SNCT: The SNCT should raise this issue with Councils. CPD programmes may be used to deliver necessary training in managing and work with support staff. The SNCT should bring this issue to the attention of Councils which should raise awareness of the role of support staff in developing the ethos of good discipline in schools.

Issues and Concerns	General Comments	Actions
<u>Annex E</u> Some HTs commented that the expectations of teachers have been raised, perhaps unrealistically.	The terms of the Annex E are clear but in the light of the evidence should be revisited.	To be remitted to the SNCT: The SNCT should consider whether Annex E tasks can all be removed from teachers.
<u>Cover for Support Staff</u> Lack of cover for support staff causes problems for schools and inhibits their effective use.	While the Working Group has sympathy for teachers if support is either not available or withdrawn to cover absence of staff who are in care positions it must be recognised that direct cover will lead to top slicing budgets.	No action required.
<u>Working space</u> There is some evidence that the increased number of support staff has increased the demand for workspace within schools.	This concern is not a matter which the SNCT can directly address.	The SNCT should note this for information.

The Impact of Additional Support Staff Provided by the Teachers' Agreement

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Introduction

In January 2001, a tripartite Implementation Group, with members drawn from teachers' organisations, employers (through the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) and from the Scottish Executive, agreed the professional conditions of service for teachers in Scotland (A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: An agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report, SEED, 2001). The agreement indicated that a significant investment would be made in additional support staff. Specifically, the resources should enable approximately the equivalent of an additional 3,500 staff to be appointed and the deployment of these additional resources was to be determined locally on the basis of local need. In addition, a list of tasks that should not routinely be carried out by teachers was agreed (Annex E of the Teachers' Agreement). These tasks would generally be undertaken by support staff, thereby allowing the particular skills and experience of the teacher to be deployed most effectively. The introduction of the additional support staff was to be phased in over a three-year period commencing on 1April 2001 using £50 million made available annually through Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) to Scottish Local Authorities. This Insight provides a 'snapshot' of the impact of additional support staff provided under the Teachers' Agreement during 2003/04.

Aims of the Study

In order to evaluate the impact that additional support staff appointed with funding from the Teachers' Agreement have had, the Scottish Executive, on behalf of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT), commissioned a team from the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) Centre within Glasgow University's Faculty of Education. The study aimed to:

- Estimate the number of support staff employed using funding provided by the Teachers' Agreement.
- Estimate the value of any capital expenditure associated with implementing this aspect of the Teachers' Agreement.
- Identify and evaluate the impact that additional support staff arrangements or alternative capital expenditure have had on the administrative workload of teachers.

Study Methods

Methods

The study began in September 2004 and reported in June 2005. Information was gathered from three main sources. First, all 32 local authorities were asked to complete a questionnaire about the number of support staff they employed and the amount spent on staff and equipment to support teachers: thirty-two authorities (32, 100%) responded. Second, a sample of 850 schools (450 primary schools, 300 secondary schools, and 100 special schools) was surveyed. Two hundred and sixty-seven schools (267, 31%) returned completed questionnaires, including: 116 primary schools (43%); 110 secondary schools (41%), and 26 special schools (10%). (Not all respondents identified the educational sector of the school.) Headteachers were asked to provide a detailed profile of the staff, such as business managers/bursars (finance officers or bookkeepers), other clerical/administrative support for teachers, ICT support, classroom assistants and learning support assistants, employed to carry out additional support tasks. Third, more detailed information was gathered from six case study schools (three primary and three secondary schools), selected from a variety of different local authorities. On each occasion, headteachers, other members of the senior management team and a sample of teachers and support staff were interviewed, either individually or as part of a focus group, to provide in-depth information about the different ways in which additional support staff have been deployed and their impact on learning and teaching.

Clarification

It should be noted that the study provides a 'snapshot' of the number of additional staff and expenditure at one point during the three-year implementation period of the Teachers' Agreement. Therefore, care must be taken in generalising about the resources spent on additional support staff. Although all local authorities responded to the questionnaire, not all provided the same degree of financial information and half reported either that they did not keep separate budget headings for capital expenditure on the Teachers' Agreement, or that the amounts were included in devolved school budgets. Fifteen local authorities included employers' 'on costs' in their salary costs; seven did not; and eight did not indicate. Spending on equipment to support the Teachers' Agreement appeared not to be transparent, and both local authorities and schools reported that they had difficulty disaggregating the amounts from within local authorities' and schools' budgets. A minority of respondents from both local authorities and schools could not identify where the funding for additional support staff under the Teachers' Agreement had been allocated. By way of explanation, a couple of local authorities suggested that it was impossible to keep an accurate account of additional support staff appointed using funding provided for the Teachers' Agreement because so many other initiatives and streams of funding were operating concurrently. Some headteachers indicated that they shared this confusion. We think that this is understandable given that the resources for the implementation of additional support staff were included within the Grant Aided Expenditure to local

authorities and represent only a small proportion of the total expenditure that local authorities manage. In addition, on-going devolution of budgets to schools made it difficult to provide an accurate national picture of spend on additional support staff.

Key findings

Number and deployment of additional support staff

Local authorities reported that they had appointed numerous additional support staff funded by the Teachers' Agreement. The posts included business managers, finance assistants, administrative and clerical assistants, classroom assistants, auxiliaries, ICT officers and other technical support. It is, however, difficult to estimate accurately the exact number of additional support staff appointed because support posts may be funded from a variety of initiatives, authorities may calculate full-time equivalent posts in different ways and job titles may vary across local authorities. Some authorities created new posts; others regraded existing staff and/or gave them additional hours. Despite these difficulties, we estimate that the overall number of support staff appointed by local authorities under the Teachers' Agreement was 2,554 full-time equivalent posts (FTEs), and this ranged from 9 to 399 across the 32 authorities (average 91). The total number of actual appointees was 3,358 and ranged from 9 to 463 across the 32 authorities (average 124).

The location of employment of these additional support staff varied across local authorities: 69% (22 authorities) supplied some support centrally; 47% (15 authorities) assigned support staff to work with school clusters; and 69% (22 authorities) allocated support staff to individual schools. With specific reference to classroom assistants, primary and secondary schools deployed them in different ways. Most teachers in primary school appeared to have some time with classroom assistants allocated to them, whereas secondary schools reported that they operated a 'bidding system' for classroom assistants' time, in which teachers were asked to submit plans for the use of classroom assistants in their class or department. Many schools reported an increase in the hours worked by secretarial staff, but some, particularly primary headteachers, indicated that their share of financial staff time was inadequate.

Expenditure on additional support

An important aim of this research was to identify how the 32 local authorities had allocated the £50 million made available to them during 2003/04 with which to implement the additional support element of the Teachers' Agreement. The thirty (30) local authorities providing financial information reported that they had allocated £27,832,553 during 2003/4 for additional support staff salaries. This approximates to £29.5 million when 'scaled up' for 32 authorities. Fifteen local authorities were able to identify the amount of their capital expenditure on equipment and software to support the implementation of Annex E of the Teachers' Agreement. The total amount reported was £2,068,256. This approximates to £4.4 million across all 32 authorities. Only eight authorities provided details of other capital expenditure associated with the implementation of Annex E. The total amount was

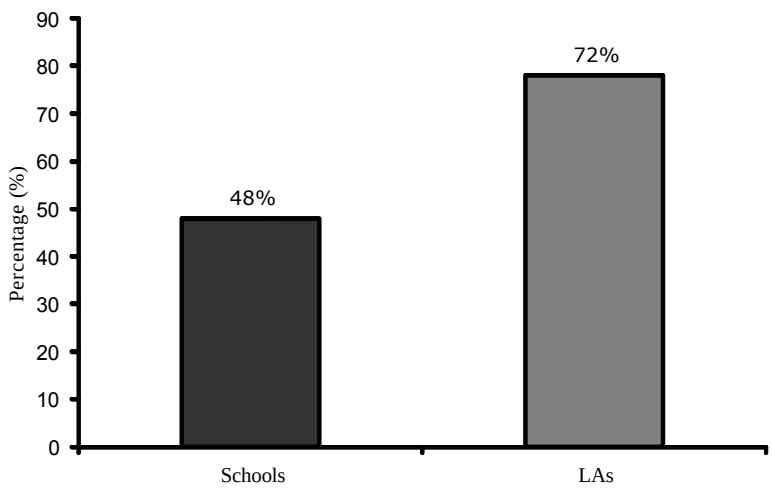
£366,844. This approximates to £1.5 million across all 32 authorities. The total amount reported to have been spent by 30 authorities on additional support staff salaries, equipment and other capital costs was £30,267,653. We estimate this amounts to approximately £35.4 million when 'scaled up' to 32 authorities: it leaves approximately £14.6 million unaccounted for.

It is also clear from local authority responses that in addition to appointing additional support staff, some local authorities anticipated that improved Information and Communication Technology (ICT) provision would help schools implement Annex E of the Teachers' Agreement: some offered schools a centralised purchasing and technical support service. However, the centralisation of ICT support services by some authorities was causing concern in some schools, especially those that had invested heavily in alternative computer systems and/or had previously employed school-based technicians.

Impact

Overall a majority of respondents appear to have been satisfied with the impact of additional support staff. Seventy-two per cent (72%) of the local authorities (23 of the 30 respondents) reported that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. Only two local authorities said they were not at all satisfied. However, the schools survey revealed a different picture to the local authority respondents, with a minority of headteachers indicating that they were satisfied with this element of the funding of the Teachers' Agreement: 48% of the headteachers (128 respondents) stated that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Local Authority and school satisfaction with the overall impact of additional support staff

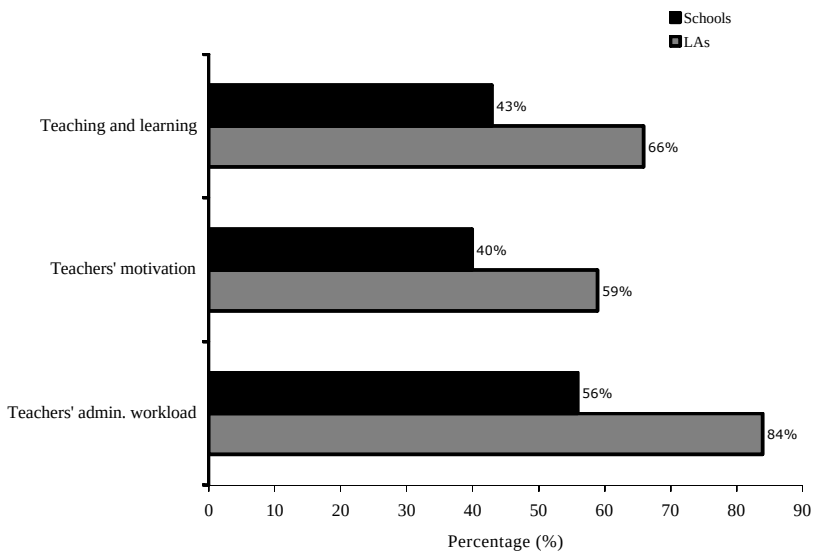


When the responses were broken down by sector, approximately a quarter of both secondary and special school headteachers were not at all satisfied (29%, 24 secondary headteachers; 22%, 4 special headteachers) compared to only 14% of primary schools (13

headteachers). Overall, a majority of headteachers (57%, 153 respondents) across all sectors indicated that the amount of support staff was not enough.

Local authority respondents reported that the impact of additional support staff on teachers' professional experiences, in terms of their workload, motivation and pupil/student learning, had been far more significant than headteacher respondents indicated. This pattern is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Local Authority and school views on the positive impact of additional support staff



Headteachers did, however, describe how additional support staff had provided support for a variety of tasks that helped teachers. They mentioned, for example, support with whole school duties, assistance with pupil supervision, both within school and on school trips, support for early intervention and behaviour support.

Impact on teachers' administrative and non-teaching workload

The vast majority of local authorities (84%, 27 respondents) reported that the provision of additional support staff was reducing teachers' administrative/non-teaching duties. They indicated that there had been a great reduction or at least some reduction in teachers' administrative and non-teaching workload. The majority of headteachers (56%, 150 headteachers) also stated that the initiative had reduced teachers' administrative burden, although this view was not as widespread as amongst the local authorities. Examples of the ways in which additional support staff were reducing teachers' administrative workload were provided by case study informants. Primary teachers in Case Study 3 described how classroom assistants undertook photocopying for them and organised resources for all their classes, as did secondary teachers in Case Study 4. A business manager in Case Study 5, a large secondary school, described how a clerical officer had been allocated to the home economics department one afternoon per week, which relieved the principal teacher of weekly budgeting duties; and Case Study 6, a large secondary school, was able to

reorganise its clerical support so that one assistant acted as a receptionist to deal with visitors, and parental and pupil queries throughout the school day.

Impact on teachers' attitudes, motivation and well-being

A majority of local authority respondents (59%, 19) reported that the deployment of additional support staff had resulted in a great improvement or some improvement in teachers' attitudes/motivation/well-being. However, over a fifth of authorities (22%, 6 respondents) indicated that there had been no change in this dimension of teachers' professional experience, and two answered don't know. Fewer headteacher respondents (40%, 106) noted a great improvement or some improvement in teachers' attitudes/motivation/well-being. Twenty-nine per cent (29%) of survey headteachers (77 respondents) stated that there had been no change in these dimensions of teachers' professional experience; 3% (7 headteachers) reported it is now worse, and 12% (32 headteachers) replied don't know. However, when the proportion of respondents across the sectors are broken down, special school headteachers were least likely to note an improvement (36%, 8 special schools). The survey sample of special schools is too small to identify the reasons for this. From the case studies, it emerged that teachers in primary schools were more positive about the impact of additional support staff than their secondary colleagues were. A primary teacher in Case Study1 explained that it had helped to reduce the pressure on her to have two adults in the classroom.

Impact on learning and teaching

Local authorities' and schools' views on the impact of additional support staff on learning and teaching varied. A clear majority of local authorities (66%, 21) noted that additional support staff had made a great or some improvement to teaching and learning overall. On the other hand, less than half of headteachers (43%, 115 respondents) indicated the same. Once the responses are broken down by sector, primary school headteachers (55%, 54 respondents) and secondary school headteachers (50%, 46 respondents) were more likely to report positive improvements in learning and teaching than their special school counterparts (41%, 9 respondents). However, again the number of special headteachers is too small to provide an explanation for this. Teachers in the case studies provided examples of the ways in which additional support staff have contributed to improvements in learning and teaching. For example, a teacher in Case Study 2, a small rural primary school, described how classroom assistants helped to organise multi-level differentiated curriculum materials for composite classes. Teachers in the art department in Case Study 6, a medium-sized secondary school, appreciated the support provided by a classroom assistant who was an art graduate but also resented the fact that she could be 'pulled away for whole school duties' with little or no notice.

Increasing teachers' time for teaching

Just over half of surveyed headteachers (52%, 137 respondents) reported that there had been either a great improvement or some improvement in teachers' time for teaching as a

consequence of the deployment of additional support staff. This included a majority of primary and secondary school headteachers (60%, 61 primary; 63%, 59 secondary), but only a minority of special schools headteachers (41%, 9 respondents). Again, the sample of special school headteachers is too small to provide an explanation. Case study teachers provided some examples of how additional support staff had impacted positively on their time for teaching. These include: a Primary 1 teacher in School 3 who mentioned that the assistant saved her a lot of time by organising and managing pupils' homework wallets each day; and guidance staff in Case Study 5, a large secondary school, who reported that they were able to devote more time to individual pupils because a classroom assistant maintained the school's guidance and absence records.

Some local authorities and headteachers reported that it was too early to see any impact from additional support staff and that time is needed to encourage staff to work in new ways. It should also be noted that a significant proportion of headteachers (39%, 103 respondents) mentioned that no additional support staff had been appointed to their schools. Therefore, while those who had received additional support staff might be positive, those without were far more negative. For example, five headteachers expressed frustration that they had received no additional support in their schools and a primary school headteacher questioned whether additional support had impacted on the classroom despite taking some of the administrative burden from headteachers.

Issues and concerns

Despite the overall positive response which the provision of additional support staff funded by the Teachers' Agreement received, both local authorities and schools expressed a variety of concerns regarding the implementation. These include concerns about:

Implementation

The Teachers' Agreement allows for variations in the implementation of additional support staff and envisages that this will 'be determined locally on the basis of local need and within the context of devolved school management arrangements' (SEED, 2001: 17). Therefore, variations across the country are to be expected. However, the lack of funding and the apparent slowness with which some local authorities are implementing the additional support staff part of the Teachers' Agreement is causing frustration for headteachers and teachers in many schools.

Deployment

Local authorities have deployed additional support staff in three main ways: additional support staff work exclusively in one school, are shared within a school cluster, or are managed at authority level to provide a service to schools. Contracts for the purchase and maintenance of ICT systems for schools were reported to have been negotiated by local authorities with either the local authority's technical services department or private contractors. These variations in the pattern of deployment of additional support staff are causing some concern amongst some headteachers, who preferred additional support staff

to be an integral part of the team managed by headteachers. A number of schools indicated that they shared additional support staff within area clusters or New Learning Communities. Some, particularly primary school headteachers, found the time allocated to them less than satisfactory. Teachers who had previously been supported by school-based technicians regretted the relocation of ICT support, and some headteachers and teachers stated that the current system was bureaucratic and did not necessarily include all the schools' ICT equipment.

Role of support staff

It also emerged that many schools are still trying to define a role for additional support staff. The problem seems to be far more acute in secondary schools where many teachers have little or no previous experience of working with classroom assistants, and where it can be more difficult for support staff to undertake supervisory duties, such as school dining hall and playground supervision, than it is in primary schools. Other headteachers stated that what support staff could reasonably be asked to do was a continuing 'grey area'. Teachers in the cases studies mentioned that they preferred to have additional support staff based within the classroom or department rather than engaged in whole school duties.

Annex E

A number of headteachers commented on the expectations which they think that the acceptance of the Teachers' Agreement has created in schools. Some stated that expectations have been raised, perhaps unrealistically, about the duties that teachers should or should not regularly undertake. Others explained that some teachers may have to learn to delegate tasks to support staff, and a few noted that some teachers are unaware of the terms of Annex E of the Teachers' Agreement. This latter view was confirmed by teachers in the case study schools who indicated that they were not familiar with the terms of Annex E. Teachers in the primary and secondary school case studies did, however, report that they appreciated additional clerical support, for example with photocopying, maintaining learning resources or undertaking departmental purchases, but only primary school teachers reported that they expected additional support staff to support them regularly within the classroom. Secondary teachers in the case studies said that they had 'to bid' for a share of classroom assistants' time, which resulted in variations in the allocation of classroom assistants' time across the school.

Cover for support staff

A number of headteachers pointed out the difficulties which can result from the absence of support staff. Overall, few local authorities appear to have addressed this issue. In those authorities which do allocate cover for support staff, it was reported to be available only for long-term absence, such as a maternity cover, or it is left to the headteacher to supply staff locally. In others, headteachers explained that there is no ready supply of staff in their area willing to undertake such work, nor are they able to hire staff who lack a Disclosure

Scotland certificate. Teachers in the case study schools reported that support staff absences could disrupt their lesson planning.

Working space

Finally, there is some evidence that the increased number of additional support staff has increased the demand on space within schools for classroom workstations and group activities, office administration, management team desks, learning assistants' desks, and also within the staff room and car park.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the key finding from this research is that local authorities have begun to appoint varying numbers of additional support staff and also to provide equipment or other capital expenditure so that teachers may concentrate on those aspects of the job that require their professional expertise. The number of such staff increased over the period of the implementation of the Teachers' Agreement and many local authorities report progress. Despite any initial concerns and continuing lack of clarity about how support staff may best be used, the majority of both local authorities and schools which had received additional support were satisfied. Primary school teachers also tended to be more satisfied with classroom assistant support than their secondary school colleagues were, indicating that it may take time for working relationships to develop. However, we think that the issues regarding the equitable and transparent distribution of support staff and equipment need to be addressed if Annex E of the Teachers' Agreement is to become a reality for most teachers in Scotland's schools.

Further reading

Duthie, J.H. (1970) Primary school survey: a study of the teacher's day. Edinburgh: HMSO.

Kennedy, D. & Duthie, J.H. (1975) Auxiliaries in the classroom: A feasibility study in Scottish primary schools. Edinburgh: HMSO.

Moyles, J. & Suschitzky, W. (1997) 'The employment and deployment of classroom support staff: Head teachers' perspectives'. Research in Education, 58, 21–34.

Scottish Executive Education Department (2001) A teaching profession for the 21st Century: Agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Wilson, V., Schlapp, U. & Davidson, J. (2002) More than an 'extra pair of hands': An evaluation of the classroom assistants initiative. Edinburgh: SCRE.

Insight questions

1. The Teachers' Agreement indicates that additional support can be deployed according to local needs. How many additional support staff have been appointed in your school/local authority since the Teachers' Agreement?

2. Support staff perform a variety of roles. What roles do additional support staff undertake in schools in your authority?

3. Local authorities reported that they had purchased additional equipment and incurred other capital expenditure under the Teachers' Agreement in order to reduce teachers' administrative duties. Have schools in your authority been provided with additional equipment or other capital expenditure?

4. Local authorities indicated that they had located additional support staff in individual schools, in clusters of schools or at local authority level? What are the pros and cons of each?

5. The Teachers' Agreement envisaged that additional support staff would allow teachers to concentrate on teaching. Do you think that additional support staff have reduced teachers' administrative workload?

6. A number of local authorities and schools said that it was too early to tell whether additional support staff had impacted on learning and teaching. Do you think that additional support staff have had an impact on learning and teaching or is it too early to tell?

7. Overall, local authorities, headteachers and teachers reported that they were satisfied with additional support staff appointed under the Teachers' Agreement. Are teachers and headteachers generally satisfied with their allocation? How could the deployment of support staff be improved?