

FOI/ATISN/26974 – Extracts from SSPF documents on TA upgrades & role/pay

| Extracts from SSPF meeting papers – Agenda, papers, Note of meeting | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Meeting date: 04 November 2025</p> | <p>Agenda for 04 Nov 2025</p> | <p>Agenda item 4 - Strategic Education Workforce Plan Level 1 TA's and responsibilities' (proposed by UNISON)</p> |
| <p>Folder ref DC/LN/01029/25</p> | <p>Item 4: SEWP presentation 04 Nov 2025</p> | <p>Slide 6: 1. Deployment of teaching assistants in schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving support • Improving conditions |
| | <p>Note of meeting 04.11.2025</p> | <p>Item 4 - Strategic Education Workforce Plan</p> <p>Level 1 TA's and responsibilities WG presented the structure and priorities of the Strategic Education Workforce Plan, focusing on support for the workforce, recruitment and retention, workload, and specialist roles.</p> <p>Deployment and working conditions of teaching assistants (TAs), especially Level 1 TAs, discussed at length. Concerns included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional responsibilities (e.g., medical interventions) being added to Level 1 TA roles. ○ Low pay and lack of career progression leading to staff leaving the profession. ○ Pressure from health services and parents for schools to undertake medical tasks. <p>Consensus on the urgent need to address these issues, with calls for immediate action rather than further research or paper exercises.</p> <p>Local Authority representatives expressed commitment to finding practical solutions, and a subgroup was proposed to progress work on TA conditions and responsibilities.</p> <p>Importance of linking professional learning and performance development reviews (PDR) to workload and career development noted.</p> |
| <p>Meeting date: 06 May 2025</p> <p>File ref DC/LN/00426/25</p> | <p>Agenda for 06 May 2025</p> | <p>Agenda Item 3 - Strategic Education Workforce Plan (WG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Support Staff Task & Finish Group – next steps - National Professional Learning and Leadership Body - Support Staff Negotiating Body: Uk Government - Supply Teaching - National Model Teachers Pay policy |

FOI/ATISN/26974 – Extracts from SSPF documents on TA upgrades & role/pay

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | <p>Item 3: SSPF presentation 06 May 2025</p> | <p>Slide 4 - Strategic Education Workforce Plan: Role of SSPF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SSPF to provide the oversight and ensure coherence of the plan. - SSPF to be a decision-making body on some of the elements to be included in the plan. <p>Task and finish / sub-groups to focus discussions on key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workload – to take forward priorities as set out by the Strategic Workload Coordination Group. - TAs - One sub-group to be established to discuss all issues related to TAs and agree proposals - Pay – the existing Pay Partnership Forum will continue to discuss recommendations from the IWPRB relating to pay and the annual remit, including the report on supply teachers. |
| | <p>Note of meeting 06.05.2025</p> | <p>Following Jan-2025 written statement, WG gave members a presentation: C3 & 4 - the strategic position - addressing workload, issues; wellbeing of practitioners'; the quality of teaching and learning; teaching leadership; TA's and career pathway – also reported in Estyn's Annual Report.</p> <p>Action - To compile a draft from recommendation and reports from various working streams and concentrate on these areas of interest: – TAs</p> |
| <p>Meeting date: 28 January 2025</p> | <p>Agenda for 28 January 2025</p> | <p>Agenda Item 3 - Update: Schools Support Staff Task & Finish Group (WLGA)</p> |
| <p>File ref DC/LN/0076/25</p> | <p>Note of meeting 28.01.2025</p> | <p>Item 3 - Update: Schools Support Staff Task & Finish Group</p> <p>It was reported that the 2021 report concluded with recommendations. The report received support from Trade Unions, HRD Networks, ADEW, Workforce and Education Members; however, the report was agreed in principle with positive & negative concerns:</p> <p>Positives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the intention behind the report, to place a stronger emphasis on the profession. • Recognise that the teaching assistant workforce must be paid relative to the job they are employed to do. |

FOI/ATISN/26974 – Extracts from SSPF documents on TA upgrades & role/pay

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support good opportunities for professional development. <p>Negatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unintended impacts on recruitment and retention,• Employment opportunities and career progression within LA communities.• Additional costs and subsidiary funding by the Welsh Government <p>The report reflected the hard work and dedication of the Task & Finish Group, for which they were thanked. It was said that the described perspectives prevented the work from continuing.</p> <p>UNISON asked to view the responses; and to ensure the work continues, with strategies.</p> <p>Members were reminded that the SSPF T&F was established from a report that Welsh Government had commissioned on the role, attainment, and deployment of teaching assistants - the group must maintain emphasis on the issues raised by the staff themselves.</p> <p>WG agreed with the points above and mandated that planning talks be conducted through the Strategic Education Workforce Plan.</p> <p>Chair ensured that the item would be a priority, under the Strategic Workforce Plan work, going forward.</p> <p>GMB noted that support staff pay and workload continue to remain a widespread issue and requested that the work in Wales is fed into the school support staff negotiating body - adopting the same principles.</p> <p>WLGA pointed out many positive aspects of the report, removing level one could be very challenging including the technical structure on 'net costs' – paying grade and the financial impact on authorities and Welsh Government funding during this current climate.</p> <p>ASCL indicated that teaching and learning support assistants working in schools are asking for canteens' leftover food and visiting food banks due to financial struggles - they are people who make schools effective and keep children safe.</p> <p>UNISON added that in most schools in Wales, job description of a level one is obsolete; TAs are being paid at</p> |
|--|--|---|

FOI/ATISN/26974 – Extracts from SSPF documents on TA upgrades & role/pay

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | <p>a level 1 but are expected to work at a level 2 and 3, every day in every school in Wales.</p> <p>WG requested a separate conversation around the recommendations; what are the key challenges in implementing the new pay scale in Wales, and how can they be addressed.</p> <p>WLGA/Cllr agreed that teaching assistants' contribution to education (incl Food & Fun and other activities) should be reflected. A framework and further discussion should be had.</p> <p>Chair affirmed the item as top priority.</p> |
| <p>Meeting date 14 October 2024</p> | <p>Agenda for 14 October 2024</p> | <p>Agenda item 4: School Support Staff Negotiating Body: Uk Government (WG)</p> |
| <p>File ref DC/LN/10054/24</p> | <p>Note of meeting 14.10.2024</p> | <p>Item 4 - School Support Staff Negotiating Body: Uk Government</p> <p>It was noted that the above was referenced in the King's speech, although local government are in early stages.</p> <p>WLGA, UNISON and WG were said to have had discussions on the press release - https://www.gov.uk/government/news/school-support-staff-body-reinstated</p> <p>Next steps are discussions with UK Government on issues around timings, scope and coverage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It will take a year for the Bill to come into effect, - Initial focus on non-pay related matters. - Welsh Government will adopt their own strategies. - The Bill gives WG an opportunity to get clarification on what is covered (learning support workers and associated roles) or all School Support Staff - Working in the context of a wide variation in pay - Have conversations with employers through local authorities <p>WLGA/Cllr requested WG to proceed with transparency with LA Leaders and noted argument against the IWPRB system approach – it does not work!</p> <p>It was said there was a genuine risk of equal pay claims in Wales.</p> <p>NAHT stated that without teaching assistants, schools would be unable to implement any of the new</p> |

FOI/ATISN/26974 – Extracts from SSPF documents on TA upgrades & role/pay

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| | | <p>curriculum, ALN legislation, or changes to the way that education is delivered and outlined the risks of recruiting and retaining teaching assistants.</p> <p>WLGA highlighted this being complex with many possible ramifications, essentially regarding Green Book terms and conditions issues.</p> |
| | | <p>Item 7 - AOB</p> <p>It was noted that WG had accepted in principle the findings/recommendations of the Task & Finish Group on Teaching Assistants [Report February 2022] but wanted to get views from the Schools Partnership Council before publishing:</p> <p>Implementation of education reforms: Interim report</p> <p>Welsh Government Response Interim report 10 September 2024.pdf</p> |
| <p>Meeting date 14 May 2024</p> | <p>Agenda for 14 May 2024</p> | <p>Agenda Item 9 - AOB - TAs and Level 1 (proposed by GMB)</p> |
| <p>File ref DC/LN/05101/24</p> | <p>Note of meeting 14.05.2024</p> | <p>Item 9 - AOB - TAs and Level 1</p> <p>GMB - aware one school looking to downgrade L3 to L1, whilst we understand some budgets being cut these are our lowest paid staff. In the paper looking to eradicate L1 roles by September: like to know which LAs have, who hasn't, why they haven't, and if schools looking to reduce salaries, why that would be?</p> <p>Chair - really value the role of teacher assistants and was aware of discussions lead by ADEW during the March meeting.</p> <p>UNISON - I went to the ADEW meeting along with Gerry McNamara, Chair of SSPF sub-group (Schools Support Staff Task & Finish Group) on 1 March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in principle those present agreed but aware this would need to be taken back to local discussions, - particularly alarming that L1 role seen as outdated and not fit for purpose, - feedback getting from branches is that education JCCs are being told they do not know anything about the report and the recommendations. <p>WLGA - a report went to ADEW and was very well received. Whilst agreement in principle, the difficulty is the financial climate:</p> |

FOI/ATISN/26974 – Extracts from SSPF documents on TA upgrades & role/pay

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| | | <p>- this cannot happen overnight - the deadline has been shifted to 2025 - we cannot mandate this - will take longer than first perceived - this message needs to be clear that this is a transition period.</p> <p>ADEW - on a practical level any guidance notes would be useful to ensure consistency.</p> <p>GMB - it would be helpful to attend this meeting - original concerns remain - staff being downgraded: There are also examples where a TA has been taken on to cover time off and when employed "properly" they are taken on as an Apprentice on £400 per month, less than half of their passed original salary.</p> <p>WLGA - verified that Pay T&Cs are covered by the NJC agreements and requested the above information to be passed onto WLGA for further inspection.</p> <p>UNISON - alarming to hear if there are apprentice TAs' - request further LA information.</p> <p>WLGA - had a detailed discussion at last JCC about apprenticeships.</p> <p>WLGA - will pick this up with ADEW and see how this can be taken forward.</p> |
| Meeting date 16 January 2024 | Agenda for 16 January 2024 | Agenda Item 6 - Teaching Assistant Job Description Review 2024 (Gerry McNamara, Chair of SSPF sub-group) |
| File ref DC/JM/00011/24 | Item 6: paper | See attached document |
| | Note of meeting 16.01.2024 | <p>Item 6 - Teaching Assistant Job Description Review 2024</p> <p>Gerry McNamara - The role of TAs has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. Sharper focus on improving the standards of pupils and skills of TAs. Post-Covid wider range of anxiety and wellbeing issues that TAs have key part of the vital role schools undertake to support pupils.</p> <p>Need to ensure TAs involved in INSET days and training. Feel this paper should be shared across all 22 LAs. Estyn could be commissioned to look at deployment of TAs.</p> <p>Undoubtedly retention is a huge issue – high turnover – seemed to be a bigger issue in primary schools. TAs feel undervalued and pay is a key issue.</p> |

FOI/ATISN/26974 – Extracts from SSPF documents on TA upgrades & role/pay

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | <p>Need the most skilled staff in these roles. Proposal remove L1 from 2024. Flintshire already removed and now appoint from L2.</p> <p>WLGA - T&Cs around TAs fit within Green Book, governed through NJC. Need to engage and consult with NJC, and we can undertake that engagement as the employer representatives.</p> <p>ADEW - constructive meeting held with Chair of ADEW, Gerry McNamara and UNISON - Committed to inviting them to ADEW group for detailed discussion.</p> <p>UNISON thanked Gerry McNamara for leading and engaging TAs positively on this. WG research 2007 and 2013 made similar recommendations. Huge disparity – some LAs only employ L1.</p> <p>WLGA/Cllr fully support the paper and model JDs – concerned about the conversation about LAs accepting the recommendations - not just the LA as Governing Bodies of VA schools also need to be brought into the conversation.</p> <p>Chair proposed asking officials to pull this together and identify the complexities and outline a clear plan to taking this forward.</p> <p>All – agreed</p> |
| <p>Meeting date 10 January 2023</p> | <p>Agenda for 10 January 2023</p> | <p>Agenda Item 4 - Update on Schools Support Staff Workforce Board (proposed by GMB)</p> |
| <p>File ref DC/JM/02578/22</p> | <p>Note of meeting 10.01.2023</p> | <p>Item 4 - Schools Support Staff Workforce Board</p> <p>GMB requested an update from the SSPF subgroup (Schools’ Support Staff Workforce Board) in relation to deployment, pay and terms and conditions.</p> <p>Chair added that it had been valuable to hear at first hand from Unison & GMB’s Teaching Assistant’s event in Dec’22; with the work is moving in the right direction.</p> <p>WLGA proposed inviting HT Gerry McNamara, chair of the Schools' Support Staff Workforce Board, to give an update at the next SSPF meeting.</p> <p>Chair noted that the work is ongoing and complex, with many work streams to deliver but many positive outcomes already achieved - Governors, professional learning, and entitlement work.</p> |

FOI/ATISN/26974 – Extracts from SSPF documents on TA upgrades & role/pay

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | <p>WLGA/Cllr pointed out that these are the areas that must be included in the budget, which may cost schools money.</p> <p>Chair agreed that the item would be ticketed on the agenda for the next meeting.</p> |
| <p>Meeting date 22 November 2022</p> <p>File ref DC/JM/01645/22</p> | <p>Agenda for 22 Nov 2023</p> | <p>Agenda Item 2 - Update on Workload (WG)</p> |
| | <p>Note of meeting 22.11.2023</p> | <p>Item 2 - Update on Workload</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A TA union reps group to be established. • Current managing workload groups will merge into a Strategic Coherence Group, which will report up to SSPF. • All reference groups will be in place before Christmas – hoping to have independent Chair secured by then. • Project Plan to be finalised in December – to include calendar to ensure schedule of meetings are aligned. |
| | | |