

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14

WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS

HELD AT COUNTY HALL ON THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2001

Present:	Mrs S Denovan	-	Interim Head of SIS
	A Batterham	-	NAHT
	T Sadler	-	NAHT
	M Harrison	-	NUT
	B Knock	-	NUT
	A Madgett	-	NUT
	M Trobe	-	SHA
	M Short	-	ATL
	Mrs J Breen	-	ATL
	I Phillips	-	NASUWT
In Attendance:	Mrs J Tagg	-	Head of Education Personnel (Schools)
	Mrs T Pike	-	Education Personnel Officer
	Mr C Stevens	-	Acting Head of PSS
	Mrs L Cox	-	Education Officer – Performance Review and Improvement
	Mrs H Nicol	-	Senior Administrative Officer

S Denovan introduced herself to the Association Representatives and explained her role as Interim Head of School Improvement and Support Branch.

M Short welcomed S Denovan to the meeting on behalf of the Associations and congratulated her on the appointment. He said that the JCC for Teachers had always enjoyed a very constructive and professional relationship with the Chair and looked forward to her involvement.

29/01 Apologies

S Leggate, J Hawkins, M Addleton and H Baker

30/01 Minutes

M Short pointed out an error on P3, last paragraph. He had checked his records and was now able to confirm that Mrs R Hunter had seven years service as a JCC Representative. This correction was accepted and the minutes were then approved as being a correct record of the meeting held on 12 July 2001.

31/01 Matters Arising

P2 Teaching Assistants Review – M Harrison said that this item had been discussed at the last County Secretaries meeting and that he would like clarification concerning job descriptions and pay. His Association was concerned over deployment and quasi-teaching role. It had been understood that Teaching Assistants would act under the direction of a teacher and could work with small groups of children, but what was the definition of a ‘small group’. He also wanted to know if the LEA would provide guidance to schools on the use of Teaching Assistants.

J Tagg confirmed that this issue would be raised at the County JCC at their next meeting before the end of November, as it affected National Joint Council Staff. The situation so far was that three model job descriptions had been sent out for consultation and that comments were awaited. After the JCC these would be circulated to schools, with regrading being introduced from April 2002. Advice as to the use of Teaching Assistants had not been part of the review however, the Association’s concerns would be fed through.

The standard definition of a small group for SEN purposes was 8 pupils.

M Short stated that as he would be present at the County JCC as a representative he would feed back any discussions to the Association Representatives.

P2 Recruitment and Retention – J Tagg said that at the last JCC the LEA was awaiting the outcome of a bid for funding. This had been unsuccessful as in fact were most bids made outside of the South East. There was no feedback available concerning why the bid had not been successful.

P2 Statements of Particulars - J Tagg reported that the agreed wording had now been incorporated.

P3 – M Short drew attention to the request for J Tubbs to provide a complete document for LEA Strategy and Practice. A second copy had been issued but this was still incomplete ie pages 8 and 9 were missing.

Action Point: S Denovan to raise this with J Tubbs.

M Short also queried if there had been any feedback on the intervention issue. T Sadler raised the issue of change of level of intervention from verbal to written, he felt that the intermediary stage should be used to give notice of change of level, that ‘nothing should come as a surprise’ and action was needed to avoid this at any stage of the proceedings.

Action Point: S Denovan will ask J Tubbs for feedback on this issue.

P6 Action point on revised directory – M Harrison thought that this referred to the revised schools directory and queried when this would be available.

M Short clarified that the minutes did refer to the directory re consultative groups and not the schools directory. It was noted that the latest version of the schools directory was not yet available but was expected shortly.

P7 Inclusion Policy – draft not available yet. It was confirmed that the JCC for Teachers had been added to the list of parties involved in the consultation process.

P8 School Achievement Awards – S Denovan confirmed that these were going through this term. The LEA is involved in the Small School level. There was a short discussion re this and the types of award now available.

P8 Tax and Travel – I Phillips queried whether the question of payments had been clarified. J Tagg confirmed that J Slee had attended the last County Secretaries meeting and had given a full explanation of travel and tax. A Madgett stated that he had a particular query relating to travel rates agreed with Inland Revenue as being non taxable being taxed when paid.

Action Point: J Tagg to raise A Madgett’s query with J Slee.

32/01 Capability Statistics

J Tagg said that she had circulated statistics to the last County Secretaries meeting. She was pleased to report that there had been a 25% improvement for those who had started on capability procedures and that overall there was a reduction in the number of capability cases.

M Short stated that this was a fair summary and that he was pleased to see a reduction and an increase in those that had improved. However, 13 cases out of 47 was not good enough and there was still a need to move towards 100% improvement.

B Knock queried the ‘no further action’ category. If this meant that an improvement had been achieved surely these cases could be deemed to be successful too. Perhaps a different category could be devised for these cases.

M Trobe asked if there were any statistics for informal cases, as this would be helpful to know. He also stated that at the County Secretaries meeting it had been reported that there had been a rise in cases following appointment in September. Was there any further news re this trend?

J Tagg confirmed that there were no statistics available for informal cases and that there was nothing further to report re the rise in cases following September starters. However, she felt that these cases could be the result of recruitment problems and that more information would no doubt become available in due course.

M Trobe asked if this item could be placed on the agenda for the next two or three meetings as it was important to keep an eye on trends.

Action Point: S Denovan agreed that Capability Statistics should be an agenda item for 2002 JCC meetings.

I Phillips asked how capability procedure cases came about and how the LEA becomes involved.

S Denovan explained that there were various routes, for example Heads could start by asking their Link Advisors for advice when talking problems through. Teachers may not get involved directly at that stage ie at Link Advisor level however, if the school concerned was in special measures then this may affect level of involvement.

M Trobe raised the point that schools had to purchase advisor support and should be made aware of the benefits of doing so.

33/01 Inclusion Policy/Special Schools Review

S Denovan welcomed C Stevens to the meeting for this item.

C Stevens confirmed that the JCC was on the list of bodies to be consulted for these reviews. He explained that the Inclusion Policy was not available for issue as it was being redrafted. It had been decided that it had been too aspirational and that there was not enough fact or foundation. It needed a clear statement of what the Department, Inclusion and Special Needs means.

I Phillips asked what the timescale for completed document to be issued would be.

C Stevens said that he would of course bring the document back to JCC for approval and discussion and hoped to do this for the next meeting. He said that the 'Review' title was to be discarded and that the revised document would take the form of proposals written after consultation with headteachers and governing bodies had taken place. He confirmed that the headteachers, staff and governors of Special Schools were very unhappy about the situation. He has now spoken to each headteacher and that the schools had now written development plans which he has permission to circulate to the JCC.

C Stevens stated that the Special Schools Group needed to know that there was no hidden agenda for Rowdeford School. The budget for Independent Special Schools was very overstretched and provision was desperately needed for a Secondary School Autism Unit, Rowdeford could be developed to provide this.

There was further discussion concerning other problems relating to the needs of Special School provision and the needs that have to be met. C Stevens stated that it was essential to look at alternatives to maximise resources and that nothing should be done in isolation all options needed to be explored.

M Short said that he would like to thank C Stevens for being so informative. There were big questions to answer in the times ahead.

S Denovan thanked C Stevens for attending the meeting.

Action Point: C Stevens to circulate draft development plans.

34/01 Collecting Children from School

C Stevens was also present for this item.

A Batterham thanked C Stevens for the work that he had done on this item which had been circulating for some time awaiting someone to tackle it.

C Stevens said that he had quite enjoyed devising a procedure, which was now in draft form and could be amended as necessary.

There was a short discussion concerning times stated – C Stevens confirmed that he had quoted times for collection to tie in with the availability of the Children and Families team in mind in case recourse was needed to this section. It was thought that one hour after the normal closing time of the school would be more appropriate. Definition of a child was also discussed and whether the term ‘children and young people’ should be used. This was accepted as suitable as the term children would cover all of school age who would be covered by these provisions. The possibility of including some rider re legal and parental responsibilities was also agreed.

It was agreed that C Stevens would take the draft document away and make the agreed changes and would then circulate for approval. It was agreed that once approved the document should be adopted as a standard procedure and be issued to schools in a format, which would be able to be displayed in a prominent place on a notice board.

S Denovan thanked C Stevens for his work in producing this document and for attending the meeting.

35/01 Three Tier School Review

The CEO was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments but he had e-mailed comments to S Denovan which were then read out. ‘The working party is meeting three times in November to consider the responses to consultation and will bring forward a report to the Education Advisory Panel on 14 December’.

S Denovan said that she would take all these issues on board.

36/01 Consultation

S Denovan welcomed L Cox to the meeting for this item.

L Cox stated that the paper brought before the last JCC went to Committee in September. The first draft of the Directory of Consultation Groups had been produced and had been to Primary Heads Forum (PHF) and to the Chair of Wiltshire Association of Secondary and Special School Heads (WASSH). The response had been very positive and was evidence that the LEA did consult widely.

There were different views between the primary and secondary heads concerning the way meetings were arranged and the impact on teaching commitments. There was a feeling that perhaps there were too many groups. It would be difficult to condense the

number of groups and a questionnaire raised discussion over what groups there should be and how they should be made up. There was a possible need to go out to all schools for more feedback. There were also concerns raised over the chairing of groups and whether Chairs are good at the job. Meetings were too long and it might be more effective if information was made available beforehand to cut down discussion time.

The introduction of electronic communication had been widely welcomed. Schools had been sampled for questionnaires – ie a third of schools had been sent questionnaires, it was proposed to rotate the schools who received questionnaires to avoid heavy workload in this area.

L Cox said that there had been a lot of positive ideas although not a lot of answers as to how to be more successful.

M Short said that he would like to make a few responses on this item. He said that it was not unusual to hear of discussions between Education Officers, WASSH and PHF, unfortunately just targeting Heads was restricting the representative number. WASSH and PHF had funding to perform well there were some occasions where it would be better to consult with SHA or NAHT.

He thanked L Cox for the draft directory, which was a great improvement to have all information in one document. Unfortunately it would never be totally accurate due to changes in membership etc. He did note that in some places the directory referred to TAC when the JCC is the appropriate consulting body.

M Short said that some groups affect teachers working lives and these do not have any JCC representation. The JCC would welcome involvement in these groups, it was important to involve practitioners in any decision making process.

M Short suggested that the Joint Trade Union Liaison Committee could be merged with the JCC for WCC employees. This would result in a stronger body with reduced number in representatives.

S Denovan suggested that any ideas for changes should be forwarded direct to L Cox, ie copy directory should be annotated with change etc.

A Batterham said that he wished to clarify that Associations were 'not at war' with each other or the LEA, Teachers Associations were bound by law to negotiate on matters relating to conditions of service. It is necessary to be aware that WASSH and PHF should not be solely involved in consultation, Headteachers organisations need to be involved as well.

S Denovan said that she agreed it was important to look at the composition of groups and that all teachers need to be represented and involved.

M Short and M Trobe also pointed out that SACRE needed to be added to list of consultative bodies as well as the County Secretaries.

T Sadler asked how the schools targeted for questionnaires were selected. He was concerned that if a third of schools were selected on a rota basis then the selection may not represent a range of schools – ie size, location, particular needs etc.

L Cox confirmed that this had been taken into consideration and the sample would be a balanced choice. When the Intranet was available to all schools it was proposed that the questionnaire would be posted to all schools so that those not in the sample can make their views known if topics apply particularly to them.

M Trobe said that he wished to support M Short's comments in stating that there were too many organisations and that they should be rationalised. There was a need to get people to attend meetings and a need to flag up whether the meetings were to target strategic or specific items. He felt that more involvement was needed at the planning level.

L Cox said that she had already received feedback on this issue from other headteachers. There was potential to use headteachers representatives at certain levels of meeting and headteachers for others. It would be difficult to find the right balance.

M Trobe stated that it was important to get the finances in place first – ie the facilities budget, to get attendance on these groups.

L Cox said that she would be putting together the responses for management team after Christmas re the way forward and would come back to committees with changes in April or early summer.

S Denovan thanked L Cox for attending the meeting for this item.

37/01 Advanced Skills Teachers

S Denovan asked if there was any feedback from County Secretaries.

M Short said that County Secretaries had nominated I Phillips to be the JCC representative on a working party to be reconvened to address issues that were being raised concerning Advanced Skills Teachers.

S Denovan said that she would of course start setting up such a group.

J Tagg confirmed that she understood that J Palmer had intended to set up a working party following concern over standards funds issues etc.

38/01 Guide to Well Being

S Denovan welcomed T Pike to the meeting for this item.

T Pike said that the Chief Executive commissioned a project in 1999 to provide a corporate aim to ensure that Managers and Staff were equipped to recognise work related stress and the duty of Managers to be responsible. The project was to use the Health & Safety definition of Stress and involved research into WCC sickness absence, case law, other LEAs experiences/ actions and other statistics and anecdotal

evidence. It was recognised that stress can never be totally eliminated as some stress is deemed to be good for you, however, there was no single level of stress that was acceptable. It was always difficult to recognise improvement in stress levels but everyone needed to be made aware of potential sources of stress and take appropriate action.

A report was taken to committee and the title was changed to 'Guide to Employee Well Being'. A working party produced a leaflet, which was to be issued to all staff, and a more detailed guidance booklet was available for managers. The leaflet for staff had been circulated to all Association Representatives prior to this meeting.

T Pike explained that this was the corporate leaflet that had been taken to the Senior Management conference. She had also spoken to the Schools Review Group and had learnt that S Palmer had already been doing some work with schools on stress related issues. J Mosey had also produced a leaflet with some training being done – there were lots of initiatives for schools on this issue.

T Pike said that it would be helpful to combine the corporate document with the work that S Palmer had already done.

M Short asked who had been on the working party to produce this leaflet.

T Pike confirmed that this had been made up of P Colyer (Health & Safety Officer), M Collyer (Corporate Personnel), a Social Services representative and herself.

M Short thought that this was a very good idea but there was a lack of money to promote this issue. It would be useful to monitor absences relating to stress and collect data on sample stress levels. It was important to raise awareness on the problem of work related stress.

S Denovan said that there was a balance to be struck between those who are absent due to stress and the raised stress levels of those staff covering that absence.

J Tagg confirmed that a Well Being policy did not exist specifically for schools.

A Madgett said that there was a lot of advice for managers but did anything flag up that managers were often the cause of stress.

T Pike confirmed that guidance for managers did highlight this issue.

There was a short discussion concerning the effects of stress on others who have to cover absences and the lack of funds to get extra help in such cases. The attitude of some parents towards teaching staff was also raised as a cause of stress.

T Pike thanked the Association Representatives for their comments and said that she would look carefully at the points raised.

S Denovan thanked T Pike for attending the meeting.

39/01 Cover to Contract – Local Agreement

J Tagg stated that the CEO was to send out a letter concerning this item and that at the last County Secretaries meeting it was suggested that this could be used as a local agreement. A draft letter was circulated and comments were requested. As it was being circulated J Tagg noted that she had missed SHA and NAHT from the signatory list.

A Batterham said that the LEA did not want to send children home but if cover did become a problem then this scenario could become fact and that the Associations had realised this. He also suggested that the logos of the Association be added to the top of the letter alongside the WCC logo to reinforce the joint message.

M Harrison queried if the letter stated that LEA and schools would adopt the outline of guidance.

J Tagg said that she would strengthen the wording to reflect this.

S Denovan asked if there were any further points to be raised.

J Tagg said that the letter needed to be sent out by Friday 30 November and that once amendments had been made it would be necessary for County Secretaries to sign on behalf of their organisations. Arrangements were made for this to be done.

40/01 Dates of School Terms and Holidays 2003/2004

S Denovan welcomed H Nicol to the meeting for this item.

H Nicol said that the criteria adopted by the JCC made setting terms and holidays much easier. She had spoken to surrounding LEAs and although it was not always possible to adopt exactly the same dates, there was an agreement to have slight differences and to try to be as compatible as possible.

M Short stated that the Association Representatives were happy with the dates produced and congratulated H Nicol on her work in producing data from other LEAs.

There was a short discussion on the differences between LEAs and the problems in getting terms to end and start on convenient days.

S Denovan thanked H Nicol for attending the meeting for this item.

41/01 Dates of JCC and County Secretaries Meetings 2002

It was agreed that the dates for the 2002 meetings would be as follows:

JCC – Thursday 21 March	County Secretaries - Thursday 21 February
Thursday 11 July	Thursday 13 June
Thursday 28 November	Thursday 24 October

42/01 Any other urgent business

References:

M Harrision asked if individuals had the right of access to personal references, was there a Wiltshire Policy on this.

J Tagg replied that Wiltshire policy was for references to be given in confidence. Advice to Heads was that they could ask to share the content of references if they wished. There was no automatic right for an individual to see references as they were given in confidence.

Target Setting:

B Knock stated that there was a lot of stress being caused by target setting. This was causing a lot of problems where levels were too high etc.

S Denovan said that targets were generated from data produced – ie where children should be at KS1. It was appreciated that targets could be very difficult if produced by these figures. Turnover of children was also a problem where a completely different set of children could be subject to targets set on basis of different children.

B Knock said that he felt schools need link advisers to help and discuss when changes are made.

S Denovan agreed that there were difficult situations where targets were predictions or aspirational targets.

There was a general discussion concerning target setting and problems involved.

S Denovan agreed that there were issues to look at and that advisers could be involved in professional dialogue re this. The issue of summer born children was also a concern on targets.

As there were no further items the meeting then closed.

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