Teaching Assistant – Options in Relation to Flexible Working Arrangements

The Council in partnership with Trade Unions have now agreed a revised offer with regard to the employment of Teaching Assistants in our schools.

This offer includes the following;
• A new grading structure/job descriptions;
• A standard 37 hour week contracts (pro-rata when part time working applies);
• Teaching Assistant will be engaged on term-time contracts;
• The standard number of weeks which will constitute term-time is 40 weeks.

With regard to the application of the standard 37 hours/40 weeks contract Head Teachers should consider a range of options as to how Teaching Assistants can fulfil these contracts balancing the needs of the school whilst recognising that many may already be working additional hours on an informal basis in order to meet the needs of the job. In doing so, Head Teachers should also take into account the work/life balance of Teaching Assistants and provide as much flexibility as possible to support the working of additional contractual hours. This could include work undertaken outside of school such as marking, planning and residential trips, and work currently undertaken outside of contractual hours such as staff meetings, after school events and weekend events.

As the demands on schools vary on a weekly basis, it is not necessary that additional working time is undertaken on a weekly basis or during school holidays but that flexibility is applied across the school year. It is envisaged that this will be helpful to schools in managing peak demand periods and recognises that the job does not always lend itself to a daily fixed start/finish time. Head Teachers should agree with Teaching Assistants how this will work and must be satisfied that the contractual time is made up over the school year.

Where a Teaching Assistant is unable or does not wish to work a 37 hour week contract (pro-rata for part time employees), they should discuss this with the Head Teacher in order to agree a change to their contractual working time.

For further advice please contact: schoolconsultation@durham.gov.uk