All Head Teachers / Teaching Assistants

11 July 2018

Dear Head Teacher / Teaching Assistant

**Teaching Assistant Terms and Conditions - Implementation Update**

**Background**

In September 2017, following a joint review, the Council agreed to the following changes to Teaching Assistants terms and conditions of employment:

- Revised roles and responsibilities;
- Alignment to a new grading structure as agreed by Head Teachers;
- A standard 37 hour working week, with any reduced hours being paid on a pro-rata basis;
- A standard contract of 40 weeks;
- The establishment of a Teaching Assistant Career Progression Board;
- A training programme to be established for Teaching Assistants to provide support and development for future career opportunities.

In October 2017, agreement was reached with all recognised Trade Unions to implement these changes from January 2018 and new contracts of employment were subsequently issued.

**Career Progression Board**

In order to support the professional development and promote career opportunities for Teaching Assistants, a Career Progression Board has been established and is making positive progress.

The Board aims to develop opportunities for career development/progression for all teaching assistants as well as considering opportunities to reduce the financial impact on any teaching assistants adversely impacted through the changes to terms and conditions.

**Implementation**

The Council and Trade Unions will continue to work with Head Teachers to resolve operational issues as they emerge on a school by school basis. Following the last meeting of the progression board we thought it helpful to provide a reminder on the following key issues:

**Resources**

Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UQ
Main Telephone 03000 26 0000
Text messaging service: 07797 870 192 – your message must start with the word: INFO

www.durham.gov.uk
Consistency of monitoring additional hours / weeks

Guidance promoting flexibility in relation to additional time worked has already been provided to Head Teachers.

Head Teachers are not required to document additional hours or time worked. However, as is the case with all employees, a sensible approach needs to be taken to ensure that hours are worked in line with contracts of employment, including, for example, capturing any relevant time worked outside of the normal school day.

It is not the expectation that Teaching Assistants attend school during periods of school closure other than for CPD.

Classroom cover arrangements

Head Teachers must be satisfied that PPA is being appropriately covered in schools. Where a Teaching Assistant is required to cover whole classes to a greater extent than identified in their job description, they should be paid accordingly. In such circumstances, split contracts are encouraged, e.g. where for part of the week an Enhanced Teaching Assistant is operating at the level of a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA).

Split-Contracts of Employment

The Council support the use of split contracts where appropriate. A number of schools have already implemented split contracts or are considering doing so as an option. Where this has been implemented, the feedback has been positive with Head Teachers finding it an efficient and effective use of resources within school. Split contracts provide greater flexibility with staff and Head Teachers may consider this as a suitable alternative to supply cover in some circumstances.

As a result of ongoing discussion with Trade Unions, where schools have been approached about the potential to use split contracts, the majority have either implemented or have agreed to consider implementing them in the future.

The Council and Trade Unions will continue to work with schools to encourage the use of split contracts as appropriate.

Continued Monitoring

Since January 2018, the Council and recognised Trade Unions have continued to work together, with a view to reducing the number of Teaching Assistants who were forecast to suffer a financial loss, once the compensation period comes to an end in December 2019.

The work undertaken by recognised Trade Unions and the Council since implementation has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of Teaching Assistants predicted to lose salary from January 2020.
The Council and Trade Unions will carefully monitor this and, as a priority, will work with schools to continue to reduce the impact on pay. Head Teachers support with this is greatly appreciated.

The new terms and conditions of employment have now been in place for well over a term and both Teaching Assistants and Head Teachers are thanked for their patience and professionalism in ensuring that implementation has been as smooth as possible.

Should you have any queries in relation to this update, please contact schoolconsultation@durham.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

John Hewitt
Corporate Director of Resources

Margaret Whellans
Corporate Director of Children & Young People’s Services