



UNISON Teaching Assistant Bulletin: Clarification on Key issues

This note provides further clarity on specific issues of the Collective Agreement which UNISON has agreed to ballot members on.

The Progression Board's priority will be to explore opportunities for progression that could assist in mitigating the potential losses faced by some Teaching Assistants within the 2 year compensation period. A variety of options will be explored including, where appropriate, making relevant training available. Trade unions and the Council will be able to bring forward ideas to the Board and whilst this is not a negotiating body, the Council and trade unions are committed to focusing initially on those staff that may face a reduction after the two year compensation period ends.

It is expected that the grading, pay and conditions of Teaching Assistants undertaking 'specified work' should reflect the high level of work they are undertaking. Therefore for clarification and consistency purposes and in line with proposed new job descriptions for Teaching Assistants, the following should be applied in respect of 'specified work' with whole classes:

- The proposed Teaching Assistant role (Grade 3 mainstream) does allow for cover to supervise a class on an unexpected basis. It is anticipated that this will only be on rare occasions and where the Head Teacher can show evidence that the Teaching Assistant has sufficient skills, expertise and experience e.g. they are doing it as part of professional development work, as part of planned career progression and the Teaching Assistant has agreed to it;
- The proposed Enhanced Teaching Assistant role (Grade 5 mainstream) allows for the post holder to cover supervise i.e. not teach lessons to pupils. However, an Enhanced Teaching Assistant may undertake all/other elements of 'specified work' for smaller groups of pupils/individual pupils;
- The proposed HLTA role (Grade 7 mainstream) allows for all four elements of 'specified work' to be undertaken.

Additional hours will be implemented on a flexible basis, recognising extra hours already worked on an informal basis, including work done outside of school (e.g. planning, marking, residential trips) and outside current contractual hours (e.g. staff meetings, after school events) as agreed with the Head Teacher.

Work/life balance of Teaching Assistants should be taken into account along with the needs of the school. It is not necessarily the case that additional working time is undertaken on a weekly basis or during school holidays but that flexibility is applied across the school year by the Head Teacher – in line with guidance issued by the Council. 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.

Where a Teaching Assistant feels that they are being asked to undertake work outside of their job role, they are advised to discuss this with the Head Teacher in the first instance. Additionally, any concerns about implementation can be raised by TAs via their union. The Progression Board would also provide a further opportunity for any issues that may impact on future progression to be discussed with all stakeholders.

The Progression Board would also discuss issues beyond the implementation (e.g. a training audit to identify future training needs) and continue to meet after the agreement is fully implemented so that TAs have a voice in shaping their profession in the future.