School Leader
National Education Workforce Survey 2021
Analysis of open text comments

1. Workload

> **Overall themes from suggestions to make work more manageable open text question:**
> - extra time to be provided for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA);
> - less paperwork and bureaucracy;
> - increased budget for a larger senior leadership team to share responsibilities;
> - employ more staff.
>
> **Total number of responses: 758**
> **Total number of open text responses: 302**
> In response to:
> *4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you are able to effectively manage your existing workload within your contracted working hours? (select one) (when either disagree or strongly disagree was selected, the open text question was asked "Do you have practical suggestions on what changes would help to make your workload more manageable?"*

Analysis of comments relating to how workload could be more manageable:

1.1. Extra time to be provided for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) (121 comments)
- School leaders felt like more PPA time should be allocated. This should be done by increasing school budgets.

Examples
Increase school budget to allow colleagues more PPA time as they teach to the 45 hours a fortnight capacity. They need more time to collaborate on joint practice development, reflect on pedagogy and consider best practice.

Longer PPA time.

Extra PPA allocating time e.g. designated time for professional learning.

It is not possible to manage the existing workload within the working days. Preparation for each day (the evening before), takes several hours, planning is mostly done during the weekend as admin tasks are mostly undertaken during planning time. We have reduced our marking time daily, so usually don't need to take any home, but this isn't always the case.

1.2. Less paperwork and bureaucracy (116 comments)
- Leaders are asking for less paperwork. Especially as non-teaching leaders have been getting increasing amounts of paperwork.

Headteachers with a teaching commitment struggle to manage as they have the same paperwork/admin demands as non-teaching Headteachers.

Less repetition from LA and consortia. Less bureaucracy.

Remove the amount of paperwork needed to satisfy improvement partners and regional consortia along with that required by LEA.

Paperwork – school has decreased paperwork for teachers but as non-teaching Deputy, paperwork especially for the vulnerable children is becoming paperwork for the sake of paperwork!

Less paperwork – accountability.

1.3. Increased budget for a larger senior leadership team to share responsibilities (34 comments)
- Many comments stating for an appropriate school budget for leadership. Also a larger budget for the school in general which will free up time for the senior leaders.

Examples
Funding for staff to cover some of the roles that I have within the school and to employ a business manager to also cover some of my roles.

Increase budget for a larger senior leadership team to share responsibilities.

Fund schools to allow all teachers to have more contact time then teaching staff and middle leaders will be more effective allowing senior leaders to also be more effective.

1.4. Employ more staff (19 comments)
- Leaders are asking for more teaching staff and also staff to also help with administrative tasks.

Examples
More staff. Stop reducing school budgets.

More staffing to delegate tasks. Funding for staffing.

Admin staff to support ALN processes.

Having a site manager and finance manager.

Overall themes from why workload has increased due to blended learning open text question:
Additional work reasons
- support for others - staff, and parents/guardians contact;
- challenges of online/blended learning delivery and resource development.
- administration requirements and / or paperwork;
- assessment and marking;
- staffing levels and issues;
- self-training, learning on the job;

Analysis of comments relating to why workload has increased:

1.5. Support for others - staff, and parents/guardians contact (140 comments)
- Responding to parental queries and worries has increased and would not usually communicate through emails.

Examples
The time it takes to produce a parent friendly lesson plan with all relevant differentiation for one day would take longer than normal week plan when not in lockdown. Then monitoring, marking and responding to parent emails usually out of hours as the day is spent teaching the key worker children in our hub.

It has all been bespoke made to cater for the diversity of children and families.

Supporting families and the complexities of this. Supporting staff through the challenges they have faced. Developing policies for parents, pupils and teachers.

1.6. Challenges of online/blended learning delivery and resource development (113 comments)
- Many have stated that delivering blended learning takes so much longer. Planning preparation for classes takes longer which is the main problem.

Examples
Ensuring appropriate technology is in place and staff are able to use it. Staff training on tools and pedagogy for online learning.

Planning and preparation for blended learning takes so much longer than for within the classroom, especially if your subject is a traditionally paper based subject which means you've had to scan or re-create all you resources. It also makes simple contact with students and staff much harder as you can no longer 'pop down the corridor' to talk to them or catch them in passing.

1.7. Administration requirements and / or paperwork (48 comments)
- Comments regarding too many administrative tasks and some suggesting funding towards an administrative staff. Some comments stating less paperwork as it has increased significantly during the pandemic. Comments mention more administrative tasks such as risk assessments for COVID-19.

Examples
Additional funding so Head Teachers can have their own admin assistant - whatever size of school they are in.

I am a Head teacher and a PA would reduce the amount of admin I have to complete.

Less admin tasks, less accountability documents as some are repetitive, eg estyn and her and local authority.

Paperwork within the current pandemic has increased significantly particularly with health and safety, risk assessments etc.

Extra risk assessment and administration eg admin around in school testing, individual risk assessments, covid risk assessments

1.8. Assessment and marking (48 comments)
- Many comments mention increased amount and time involved in assessments.

Examples
Preparation and giving feedback take much longer than face to face teaching. Meetings need to be scheduled rather than quick 'corridor chats' to solve issues.

More planning and feedback.

Marking pupil work and providing feedback.

1.9. Staffing levels and issues (19 comments)
- School leaders have had to do more training and cover for staff absences which increases their workload.

Examples
As a school leader, I've had to rearrange staff and how they work.

Covering staff absences.

Shortage of staff since September had led to increase classes needing be covered. We have been managing the cover between the leadership team to avoid using supply where possible.

Staff were under-skilled to be able to achieve it; I had to invest huge amounts of time and resources on training them up.

All staff are engaged in remote learning and therefore less capacity for collaborative strategic roles and shared responsibilities.

1.10. Self-training, learning on the job (15 comments)
- A few comments on how staff had to learn on the job because of the lack of training. Staff undergoing training after working hours due to increased workload.

Examples
Learning on the job – lack of training. Engaging and motivating pupils and staff.

Finding online learning for staff to complete.

Implementing staff training, ensuring staff and pupils have access to the right technology.

Self-training on ICT and planning and overseeing of home learning.

Training opportunities and meetings are taking pace in the evenings.

Analysis of comments relating to practical suggestions on how workload can be improved

Please note, as there were only a small number of practical suggestions for improvement provided within this question, no prominent themes were established. Of the suggestions that were provided, comments included:

1.11. Further training for staff and students on online platforms (4 comments)

Examples
Staff training on tools and pedagogy for online learning.

Providing support and training to staff who were not confident using teams.

Better training provision from the government.

1.1. Reduce pressure and expectations during the COVID-19 pandemic (2 comments)

Examples
Less pressure to provide so much home learning.

Managing standards from distance learning in a different way and managing family engagement and concerns around Covid.

1.2. Additional staff for administrative tasks (1 comment)

Examples
Additional staff to undertake administrative tasks.

1.3. More accountability for families to engage in home learning (1 comment)

Examples

More accountability for families to engage in home learning would take the pressure of the constant need to check, encourage, coerce, support, guide and manage families. If there was a recourse what we follow that would make sure all pupils had to engage as this takes up a lot of time.

2. Professional Learning

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Overall themes from open text comments professional learning
- new curriculum;
- leadership, management and mentoring;
- mental health and wellbeing;
- improving Welsh language skills;
- action research;
- additional learning needs.

Total responses: 758
Total open text responses: 369
In response to:
15. In which areas would you welcome further development to help you be a more effective education professional? (please list up to three areas)

</div>

Analysis of comments relating to the main professional learning themes

2.1 New curriculum (141 comments)
- The most popular comment is regarding the new curriculum. Many stating they are not prepared and would like further training to get ready for the new curriculum. Comments also suggesting further guidance and advice on the new curriculum criteria.

Examples
Clear, consistent advice on the assessment of Curriculum for Wales.

New Curriculum Support.

The new curriculum is now so vast and wide, no one is willing to say, this is how it's done, and this is good practice.

Clarification on how to roll out the new curriculum.

2.2 Leadership, management and mentoring (89 comments)
- Comments made regarding more management and leadership training. Suggestions of training and leadership programmes for teachers to further develop their management/leadership skills.

Examples
I would welcome more professional training in leadership and management……………The majority of support and guidance seems to be directed at newly qualified or aspiring head teachers and as things develop and change rapidly in education, I think all leaders need up-to-date, high quality professional development.

Further leadership and a Welsh language course.

Developing leadership in staff.

2.3 Mental health and wellbeing (28 comments)
- Comments mentioning the need to support staff and students with mental health and wellbeing issues. More training would be welcomed for further development in this area to tackle the growing problem.

Examples
Supporting mental health of staff and HR aspects.

Health & Wellbeing of pupils - Emotional Literacy, Mental Health.

Support for learners in mental health crisis.

2.4 Improving Welsh language skills (23 comments)
- Many comments stating they would like to learn Welsh or further their Welsh language skills.

Examples
Training to develop Welsh skills, developing research skills.

Further Leadership and a Welsh language course.

Welsh language for secondary school teachers in English medium schools.

2.5 Action research (21 comments)
- Leaders stating they would like to further their action research ability.

Examples
Managing action research strategically.

Action research.

How to create time for research and professional enquiry when nothing has been removed from the school curriculum, in fact more has been added.

2.6 Additional learning needs (ALN) (13 comments)
- Leaders stating a bigger budget is required for ALN. Also further support would be beneficial.

Examples
More money in the budget to support our ALN and all pupils in their learning journey.

Further support with ALN – particularly liaising with all different organisations effectively.

Continuing with ALN courses.