The Committee agreed to undertake a short inquiry into teacher workforce planning (and associated issues with school staffing). The Committee issued a call for views running for just over two weeks to inform the evidence sessions on Teacher Workforce Planning.

The information was requested in a questionnaire and we have received a large number of responses. These are the responses from school staff who are not teachers or senior management.

As these submissions are sensitive in nature they have been anonymised wherever requested and the names of teaching staff have been removed, as that may lead to individuals working in schools or local authorities being identified. All those submitting were sent a message to make clear that their submissions would be published unless they stated otherwise.

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PRIMARY SCHOOL – ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 1

Q1  What type of role do you have?    Clerical Assistant
Q2  Whereabouts do you work?    East Ayrshire
Q4  Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?    Yes. Every day is a different challenge.
Q9  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?    Very good.

SECONDARY SCHOOL – NAMED SUBMISSIONS

SIMON NEEDHAM

Q1  What type of role do you have?

I am a school Technician.
My role mainly concerns IT, electrical appliance checks, maintaining and making demonstration models for Science, school drama lighting, driving the minibus. I also am involved with running DofE and the Pottery club.

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?

Montrose Academy, Angus.

Q4  Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?    Yes, in the role of technician. Due to the wide variety of tasks I am requested to carry out, I am able to balance the workload as the technicians see fit to support the teachers. This gives variety and a choice of tasks that can be carried out on a daily basis.

The hardest part of the job is the poor organisational skills in a large proportion of the school and council. e.g. Getting this on the 20th of April. Always seems to be crisis management. In saying that, there are some staff in the school that are very organised which makes future planning easy.

Q5  Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Poor management and procedures in place, causes upset amongst the staff. This includes the large amount of instructions and reports that Teachers especially have to fill in taking their time away from preparation and planning lessons.

Q6  What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Remove the continual reports on the pupils. Reduce it to one short report 3 times a year for each pupil. No news is good news. Parents should be made away that on the whole if they do not hear anything their child is doing well. Supplementary reports should be generated for pupils that are falling behind or ones that are making special efforts.

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?

Planning the distribution and setting up of IT equipment around the school. This includes the planning of renewal of equipment best location for it, software required, and reshuffling of PCs to ensure that they are in the best locations for teaching. This is partly due to the office manager not being replaced and the Support Services Manager having to carry out 2 jobs to save money. Deployment and redeployment of Xerox and printers. Driving the minibus after hours, due to only older members of staff now able to drive minibuses, teachers without minibus on their licence are not being trained due to budget restrictions. 600 miles last week.

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:

There are now curriculum heads, who are responsible for more than one subject. They tend to look after their own the system seems to work better when each subject had their own head, including in the breakdown of science - physics, chemistry and biology. This has caused issues not only due to weak management but also reduces the promotion opportunity of teachers, which is not good for personal progression. This also impacts on the education of the pupils.

There is a lack of checks on the content and structure of the courses across subjects as the Senior management struggle with behaviour issues that are not dealt with by teachers and curriculum heads, it would seem, due to the convoluted behaviour policy.

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

I would say that the moral of the staff is low, partly this is due to the lack of leadership over the past few years with a rector that has been ill. It is also from unsupported directives and changes they are trying to keep up with from Education, no sooner have they sorted one course but it is changed and has to be redone with a lack of money for making these changes.

A main issue seems to stem from the need to get quotas. Teachers end up having to help pupils finish off work because they have not done it themselves, this either takes up their own time or time that should be used for preparation. If they do not do this, the pass rate drops, because they do this the pupils now expect it to be done for them so they do less. Teachers need to be able teach their own subject, and not just teaching to pass the subject.
Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:
Currently this region is moving to changing the school day so that the week finishes at 1300hrs on a Friday. I think that the school day should be 5 days a week 0900 to 1700. The teachers would be employed to come in for 4 days of that week maintaining the hours they are already contacted to do, this would give pupils staying for the full 6 years effectively another one year’s education. Teachers should be on 3 year rolling contracts, reviewed and renewed annually if they maintain the standards required. At this time staff that are not effective are very difficult to move on.

SHEILA WHITE
Q1 What type of role do you have?
   School Support Assistant (Classroom Assistant)
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
   South Lanarkshire, Lesmahagow High School
Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
   Yes. It is very rewarding working with young people and seeing them do as well as they can.
Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
   Don’t know
Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
   Better pay
Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?
   No
Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:
   • What are they?
   • How well are they working?
   • Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?)
   No
Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite good, although recent announcement to changes is staffing have been unsettling for some staff.

SECONDARY SCHOOL – ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS 2

Q1 What type of role do you have?

Area Business Support Manager

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

West Lothian Council

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?

Yes and No. The roles available for staff other than head teachers and teachers can be very fulfilling and rewarding with the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives and learning of young people. However, some roles do not receive due recognition under the corporate system and salaries and lack of potential career paths reflect this.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Support roles such as technical support (CDT/Science/IT and AV) and Business Support Manager roles. We have huge difficulty recruiting and retaining experienced technical staff, mainly due to the salary issues around sessional and part time hours and pressures on school budget allocations for support staff.

Business Support Manager staff turnover is high due to the senior level management remit and responsibility, in relation to the salary which at the top end, equates to PT 04. The workload pressure is enormous, where a management model for a roll of 1200 is 1 HT, 2 DHTs and 1 Area Business Manager and the Business Manager also covers 6 primary schools.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?

School support staff budgets reviewed and increased, recognising the key role staff provide in supporting the learner directly and the teacher at a more practical level in assisting with preparation of resources etc. Remits for technical support staff require to be broadened to make the work more interesting, flexible and challenging in line with their counterparts working in
industry, with appropriate salary remuneration and opportunities for training and career progression. All support posts are advertised on a temporary basis and this does not encourage quality candidates, particularly if they already have permanent positions out-with education.

The Business Support Manager role should be reviewed to ensure that the remit is not ‘impossible’ as it currently is, and the salary reviewed, given that much of the remit being covered would otherwise require to be carried out by a DHT. The critical support of this role in school management should be recognised and endorsed.

In order for such a review to take place authority education management would require to take a realistic look at what is being asked of Business Support Managers and whether this is achievable with slimmer senior management teams in schools and ever decreasing admin and clerical staff to support the role.

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?

I carry out a number of tasks for our Head Teacher and for the wider school which previously would have been carried out by an Admin Officer. Our current office staff is down by 2.5 than previously and due to reduced flexibility in the way we are able to use our devolved staffing budget we are unable to recruit further staff. I generally work from 8am to 6pm with no breaks, working through lunch, but days can be longer at end of financial year and during exam periods.

All support staff (and teaching) operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis to some degree and for many it is excessive. Our current admin officer works very long hours covering additional daily duties and the ‘would be nice’ tasks which have always made the school better such as award ceremonies etc. We have PTs and teaching staff who are in before 8am and do not leave until late in the evening.

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:

- What are they?

We have reduced numbers of pupil support staff and technical staff as well as reductions in clerical and admin support. Some posts have reduced hours and all new recruitment is to temporary positions only as we are not in a position to commit to permanent posts.

- How well are they working?

Teaching and support staff are feeling the pressure of these reductions. We are in a constant state of change which is good neither for motivation or morale.
• Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?)

These measures will require to remain in place for the duration of the current teacher ratio demands but we cannot advertise support posts on a permanent basis.

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale among support staff is quite low. As a manager I find myself dealing with more complaints, worries, concerns and disagreements and continually trying to resolve day to day procedural issues due to lack of staff.

I do my best to maintain morale but admit that I am finding this more challenging as the manager of the support staff who must feel I am partly responsible for this situation. In short – an increasing amount of time for myself and other members of the SMT is taken up by ‘people’ problems.

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:

ANONYMOUS 3
Q1 What type of role do you have?
Senior Technician

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Glasgow City Council

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?

No. As support staff, greater pressure is piled on to continue to deliver services with less staff due to cuts. The job doesn’t feel safe as year after year we are offered the very minimum of pay increases and we are constantly told of deeper and deeper cuts. It feels like a personal attack on me and my choice of career driven by ideology adopted by the Tory Party.

The job used to be varied and enjoyable, providing unique and unusual solutions to educational problems and supporting the curriculum through developing new apparatus and experiments. Now, with greater reliance on IT solutions, more of our time is spent fixing computers and doing ever more basic experiments in the classroom as time pressure competes with the easy, internet option. We still have to maintain the stocks of chemicals and machinery and ensure health and safety in the practical areas, but it is less and less rewarding.

As a teacher it’s stressful, behaviour problems can be challenging, the curriculum doesn’t seem to have settled in as well as it should have.
Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a 'goodwill' basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?

I have performed some administrative functions (ordering equipment and chemicals) that are not part of my job as it involves specialist apparatus that the office staff don't have the time to research properly. I can't deliver that additional service anymore as stresses of my own job are too great.

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:

- What are they? We are being used as cover in other schools where vacancies exist.
- How well are they working? It is spreading the butter thinner on the toast adding additional stress to an embattled workforce. In many cases there is a lag of weeks before the posts are filled damaging educational achievement.
- Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?) This is the only mechanism of filling vacancies as staffing budgets are too stretched to have dedicated floating technicians.

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very Low
The attack on public services combined with difficulties in securing posts has made us all feel like there is a personal attack on our livelihoods.

ANONYMOUS 4

Q1 What type of role do you have? Technician at High School

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?

Would recommend only if they were thinking of being a teacher at school. There pay and conditions are excellent. As other staff is not.

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a 'goodwill' basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?

No there is not, but that is where the school lose out. With other staff more than capable to help out they don't feel part of the school team and are well under paid to be asked to do more.

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but
measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:

- What are they? Moving staff to work in two schools.
- How well are they working? There is more work load and pressure on you trying to achieve same standard.
- Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?)

**Q9** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low for non-teaching staff. With stretching our jobs and having different holidays, working with a different management team. Which makes them never feel part of the school team? Also pay not the best to ask us to be more involved.

**Additional comments**
The attitude in education surprises me that if you are not a teacher then you don’t have a connection with kids to help them develop. If the structure of teaching was pushed more for EVERY staff to be involved with development of the pupils it would mean the PUPILS are the ones that gain out of it.

As I’ve said, it would mean looking at the whole structure of employing non-teaching staff and getting the best out of everyone for the benefit of the PUPILS.

I have voluntary worked in youth work for about 18 years and worked with Project managers and youth development officers which I think would benefit the schools. If where employed in schools. They organise and help young people achieve outstanding believe in themselves and help structure their live to be a better person and reach targets they did not think possible.

**ANONYMOUS 5**

**Q1** What type of role do you have?
Classroom assistant working in different classrooms throughout the curriculum.

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?
East Ayrshire Council

**Q4** Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Yes, it’s rewarding helping pupils.

**Q5** Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Teaching jobs because paperwork load leaves less time to establish rapport with pupils.
Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Leaving Teachers to teach possibly.

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a 'goodwill' basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?
No

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:
- What are they?
- How well are they working?
- Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?)

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it
Quite low due to school amalgamation, workload and staff leaving.

ANONYMOUS 6

Q1 What type of role do you have?
Education Support Officer for the Senior Phase. (Previously PT Biology)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
(Please specify the education authority area that you work in, and if you wish you can state the name of your school but this is entirely optional)
Aberdeen City Council

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Yes, because we're desperate for teachers.
No, because the workload demands are horrendous.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Physics, Design & Technology, Home Economics, Chemistry and primary teachers.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Additional salary weighting in some areas it's not currently in e.g NE Scotland. Reduced workload may help with recruitment.
Retention – if we solve the recruitment problem, less class contact time/more preparation time to deal with the workload demands. This would also improve the quality of teaching & learning.

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?

Our LA curricular team are regularly used for cover in schools, due to illness/staff shortages.

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:

- How well are they working? Children are in school, but are they really getting the best educational experience?
- Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?) They should be temporary but many have been “temporary” for a long time.

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very, very low. I organised a meeting for teachers re SQA changes to unit assessments. About 60 SMT & Faculty Heads came along and it was horrendous to witness – angry teachers shouting at the SQA rep who was having to deliver the Scottish govt’s message. Too many changes(CfE) over the last few years without proper support; quick, ill-thought out changes to unit assessments which will have a negative effect on pupil attainment; negative messages from the Scottish govt like threatening fines if we don’t fill staff shortages; most teachers having to do CLPL in their own time –time they also need for prep & marking; inadequate sanctions for bad behaviour, so teachers get signed off with stress; society expecting schools to deliver all the skills that should come from home, whether crossing a road, saying no to strangers or learning how to wash dishes by hand…; everyman and their dog thinking they know about teaching because they went to school; a general habit in society that people like to recount stories of how they misbehaved & wound up their teacher at school, thinking it funny and showing the lack of respect – what other profession is subjected to that?

OTHER SUPPORT STAFF

ANONYMOUS 7

Q1 What type of role do you have?

Support Services Coordinator – supporting all schools in a learning community with all non-teaching activities and direct line manager for all non-teaching staff.
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Yes and no.
Yes to those interested in working term time with children and looking for an interesting and challenging job.
No to anyone thinking about pursuing a career in Education if not a teacher. There are very few job prospects for anyone without GTC registration and the pay for school support assistants is so low it doesn't justify the level of responsibility required of staff in this role.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
ASN support staff.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Improved rate of pay that reflects the level of responsibility associated with the job. More career progression opportunities.

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?
Yes, providing cover in schools for office tasks e.g. banking of money, updating pupil records, etc. This is particularly important in rural schools where there is generally only one support assistant in the office. Head Teachers also inevitably end up spending time on office tasks to keep things ticking over.

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:
- What are they?
- How well are they working?
- Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?)

None in relation to support staff.

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Quite good at present. I think this would apply to the majority of staff who enjoy working with children and get job satisfaction from their role. However, we are experiencing more and more pupils with challenging behaviour and I can see this having an impact on morale.

Additional comments
With the current shortage of teaching staff the role of support assistants has become even more vital and in some cases, experienced classroom assistants have assisted with classes when a teacher is not available. Their role is crucial to the effective functioning of schools and should be recognised as such.

SCHOOL UNKNOWN – ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS 8

Q1 What type of role do you have?
PSA

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City council

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
I would be in two minds, a lot of it is crowd control/behaviour issues and teaching seems to be secondary

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
More money (for PSAs)

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?
Teaching some activities in the lunch break

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:
• What are they?
• How well are they working?
• Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?)

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Quite good at beginning of term, deteriorating to very low towards end of term – exhaustion, lack of acknowledgement from wider school and SMT of the vital role we play

ANONYMOUS 9

Q1 What type of role do you have?
Classroom Assistant
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Ayrshire

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
No. Wage very poor and for the wages we get we are sometimes given a lot of important responsibilities. This is nowhere near reflected in the pay we receive.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Wages and Conditions.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Better rate of pay and better working conditions. Respect and payment from the authority for all the extra work we do would be a start.

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a 'goodwill' basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?
Yes, we are constantly understaffed. Through illness and the budget cuts etc. I realise that they give the school a budget for C.A hours based on need, however this needs to be looked at immediately as our schools, the staff and the children are suffering as a result.

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:
- What are they? Additional responsibilities on to our already overloaded timetables.
- How well are they working? from a distance they look fine, but the C.A are struggling and this in turn is causing stress leading to being off work sick.
- Are these permanent or a temporary measures (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher / other staff posts have reduced?) Permanent.

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Very low. Due to cuts in staffing, poor wage, extreme work load and constantly being expected to do extra for the same wage.

ANONYMOUS 10

After spending 12 years as a classroom assistant, and having successfully completed my honours degree with the open university, I was determined that I wanted to become a teacher, So I immediately went on to study for the required maths qualification, before applying for PGDE courses.
In my area, due to a shortage of teachers, a scheme had been devised to earn whilst you train, and I was fortunate enough to meet the requirements to qualify for this scheme.

The post graduate course was gruelling, however, I was determined and at the end of it, I was lucky enough to qualify. After starting my probationary year, I became unwell, with anxiety and depression. Although, I was unwell I was asked to attend a meeting over 70 miles away from my home, to discuss my future. Throughout the time I was unwell, although I was paid, due to my previous service, I was in a constant state of anxiety, under pressure to make decisions whilst feeling unwell, and on strong medication.

Eventually I applied for, and was granted a deferral for my probationary year, from the GTCS.

I am now in the position that I am on the supply list, with irregular work, severe money difficulties, and all my previous years’ service gone. This has added to my levels of anxiety, and stress, and impeded my recovery. Additionally, I have no guarantee that my probationary year will even be in the area where I live.

If someone who has suffered from illness can be treated in this manner, it doesn't say much for the fundamental principles of the teaching industry. After all the Scottish Government is supposed to be trying to eliminate discrimination against mental illness in the workplace.

I was made to feel ashamed of myself for my illness, as though I was somehow weak and lesser. I now realise, my illness was not my fault and I know that, given the chance, I would make a good teacher, but whether I want to be part of such an uncaring industry is another matter.

Please understand that I am not bitter about my experience, but I feel a great sense of sadness and disappointment, that a profession that is supposed to be all about nurturing, can treat its employees in such an uncaring manner.

For anyone considering a career in teaching, I would suggest that they seriously consider their decision.