



Workload Advisory Group: Terms of Reference

Workload is consistently cited as the main reason teachers leave the profession. Teachers reported in the Workload Challenge that they spend hours recording data on multiple programmes, analysing this data, and reporting in different ways for different audiences.

A culture remains in the school system where an unnecessary amount of time is spent on data collection and providing evidence of improvement, driven in part by the perception of what is required for school inspections and accountability. The origins of this 'audit culture' are complex, and need action by a range of actors (the Department, Ofsted, school leaders, governors, teacher and Headteacher unions, MATs, local authorities) to change it.

All of these actors have made progress since the 2014 Workload Challenge, with the reports from the three independent review groups into eliminating unnecessary workload published in 2016 and the reducing teacher workload action plan published in 2017. We will continue working in partnership to tackle unnecessary workload, with this group working specifically on reducing excessive data and evidence collection, which does not lead to improvements in outcomes for pupils.

Scope

The three independent workload review groups were set up to make recommendations on eliminating unnecessary workload associated with marking, planning and data management, and the Commission on Assessment Without Levels was set up to provide advice to schools about how to develop new approaches to pupil assessment.

This group will build on their findings and recommendations by looking at a range of issues related to school data collection and management. In particular, the recording and reporting of pupil attainment and progress, and its use beyond the classroom to manage school, teacher and pupil performance, and the practice of evidence gathering for external bodies (including the Department/RSCs, Ofsted, or at MAT or LA level, and school transition). The group will be action orientated, and produce recommendations by the end of the summer term.

In relation to addressing data and evidence collection in schools, the group will:

- Diagnose the specific issues related to unnecessary data collection and evidence gathering, identifying the kinds of data which are being unnecessarily gathered, defining the specific behaviours at different points in the system and dates in the school calendar, and understanding the drivers of these behaviours.
- Explore the evidence of what drives this culture in schools (including the role of the Department, Ofsted, school leaders, governors and parents) and consider solutions for driving culture change.
- Take stock of existing actions to remove unnecessary workload related to data collection and evidence gathering, reviewing progress made by all organisations in delivering the recommendations of three independent review groups and the data recommendations of the Commission for Assessment Without Levels.
- Consider how schools can be supported to assess pupils and report to parents with minimal workload burdens.

- Consider how educational technology (EdTech) can eliminate unnecessary workload associated with data collection, how to mitigate the risks of increased workload associated with technology, and agree actions for each organisation or representative group in facilitating these aims.
- Consider how the Ofsted framework could be aligned to the purpose of eliminating unnecessary workload associated with evidence prepared for inspections.
- Consider if further content is required for the workload reduction toolkit.

Outputs

The group will produce a set of recommendations to the Secretary of State by the end of the summer term 2018.

Meetings

It is expected that the group will be in place until the end of the summer term. Participation will take the form of face-to-face meetings. Meetings will be held every three weeks, commencing in May 2018.

These meetings will usually take place in London and be hosted by the Department. All correspondence for meetings will be sent via email. The Secretariat will circulate an agenda and papers before each meeting.

Membership

The Department will have the final decision on appointments to the group.

Confidentiality and use of official information

Members of the working group acknowledge that their name and any relevant details may be published on the Department's website or on any other relevant government website.

Confidential information and data associated with emerging policy may be shared with members appointed to the group. Confidentiality is vital and members of the panel must treat confidential information appropriately.

Before confirming their membership onto the group, members will also be required to declare any possible conflicts of interest with the Department.