

HEADQUARTERS CIRCULAR

Priority: 2

No: BR 17/14

*1 = Urgent, immediate attention required, 2 = As soon as possible, action to be taken, 3 = For information

From: Valentine Mulholland
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Date: 15 September 2014

Résumé: Update on NAHT's work for school business manager policy issues

Actions: Branches should share this information with members including SBMs

Dear colleague,

School business managers are playing an increasing role in schools as well as within NAHT, as this growing membership category now totals more than 1,300 members. NAHT is working on a number of areas of interest to this membership group, steered by our school business managers' (SBM) committee, which recently celebrated its first anniversary. Formed in July 2013 as a subcommittee reporting to NAHT's professional committee and National Executive, the SBM committee aims to bring together and represent the interests of NAHT's ever increasing number of SBM members from all over the country.

Top of the list of policy issues for SBM members and for the committee has been the issue of striving to secure pay and recognition for SBMs as equal members of school leadership teams. There is significant variation in how pay levels are set across the country, even for posts of equal responsibility, as SBM pay falls outside the school teachers' pay and conditions document (STPCD) and pay is set at a local level by employers.

NAHT's submission to the School Teachers' Review Body's 23rd remit on leadership pay in late 2013 confirmed our position on SBM pay as advocating that where SBMs are in leadership roles, they should be paid on a leadership scale commensurate with the STPCD leadership scales. All NAHT's SBMs are in leadership roles as a condition of membership.

We have therefore started a new project aiming to develop an SBM leadership pay structure which can work with the STPCD leadership pay structure and appropriately reflect the range of SBM leadership roles and responsibilities.

NAHT intends to use this pay framework to lobby government for the development of a national SBM pay framework to provide fairer and more consistent treatment of SBMs who are part of school leadership teams.

NAHT has joined forces with ASCL, whose members face the same challenges, and engaged Hay Group to develop this framework with them. To inform this work, we sent out a member survey in May 2014 for SBM members to gather up to date information on current SBM roles, responsibilities and pay levels. More than 40 per cent of NAHT SBM members responded to the survey with key findings including:

- Only 28 per cent of respondents thought their pay represented a fair reflection of their responsibilities, with the other 72 per cent dissatisfied
- Within schools, SBMs were typically leading on:
 - strategic budget setting;
 - financial management and control;
 - procurement and contract management;
 - premises and estate management;
 - staff recruitment and management;
 - HR management;
 - health and safety; and
 - project management.
- This reflected a gradual shift towards other school leaders becoming increasingly focused on managing teaching and learning and leaving other areas in the hands of increasingly capable SBMs
- The survey also showed that more than half of SBMs were also involved in areas closer to teaching and learning including:
 - school improvement planning;
 - pupil premium monitoring;
 - admissions;
 - data management; and
 - pupil tracking.
- 86 per cent of SBMs were on their school leadership team, a significant figure highlighting the changing role
- However the down side to this was how much their work has increased over the last year, with nearly 90 per cent reporting an increase in workload over the last year and most SBMs working an average of 45 hours a week
- Another development over the last few years has been in the type of contracts, with three quarters of SBMs in the survey now employed on year-round contracts rather than term-time only

NAHT's full report on the findings can be found at www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/school-management/naht-school-business-manager-survey-report-now-available/. This confirmed the increasingly important role played by SBMs on leadership teams, and will be extremely useful to inform our work on developing a pay framework.

School forums are also an important issue for our SBM members as it is clear that SBMs can make a valuable contribution when they are able to attend but are often struggling to get access to these meetings.

This was recognised by the June National Executive meeting where it was agreed to make a case to the DfE that all schools forums should have at least one SBM member in recognition of the specialist expertise they can bring. SBMs have in-depth knowledge of school funding and can support school forums to make informed and realistic decisions.

The SBM committee has also worked on a number of other areas:

- They met the lead official in the DfE's funding team who was working on the funding framework for the universal infant free school meals policy and were able to raise concerns with her as well as receiving up-to-date information which was conveyed to members
- They supported NAHT to submit evidence to the DfE's review of its policy on the management of asbestos in schools, raising concerns about the current approach which leaves schools exposed and ill-informed
- They have discussed facilities time, an issue of increasing concern for all NAHT members but also specifically for SBMs

NAHT is also working more closely with the National Association of School Business Management (NASBM), the professional association for SBMs, on the implications of the move by the National College for Teaching and Leadership to stop licensing the SBM qualifications (Certificate in School Business Management, Diploma and Advanced Diploma). From now on, the NCTL will be making the materials available to any provider who can get registered. While this is an approach the National College is taking to all leadership qualifications, NAHT is very concerned about what this might mean for our SBM members. The National College qualifications, underpinned by its competency framework, have been important in the increasing recognition of the professional status of SBMs, and NAHT is keen to ensure that the future quality and credibility of the qualifications is assured.

This work and all that we have outlined in this circular demonstrates that NAHT's SBM members represent a significant proportion of our members and we are actively involved in policy issues that impact on their profession. Updates on our work can be found on our dedicated school business management webpage that is accessible from the NAHT website homepage and focuses on topics of interest to these members. We are always willing to hear from members on other resources they would like to be available to support them.

Best regards

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