

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Education Culture and Sport
DATE	22 November 2012
ACTING DIRECTOR	Patricia Cassidy
TITLE OF REPORT	Review of Inclusion: Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) Impact Survey
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/12/055

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

As part of the Review of Inclusion, the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012 requested a further educational impact assessment on the reductions in pupil support assistant allocations. As instructed by committee, this updated report includes the views of class teachers, trades unions, pupil support assistants, parents and headteachers.

The Review of Inclusion will shape the future planning and provision of support for all learners and the findings of this report will be considered as part of this extensive review.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) notes the outcome of the impact survey
- ii) notes that continuing professional development issues identified in the previous impact survey are being progressed.
- iii) instructs officers to take account of the findings of this review within the overarching Review of Inclusion and report back to a future Education, Culture and Sport Committee

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications

### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

## 5.1 Budget Allocation

5.1.1 In February 2011 the Council agreed a number of options to reduce revenue expenditure as part of the on-going Priority Based Budget (PBB) programme. Within the context of the national agreement to maintain teaching numbers and the lack of progress with school rationalisation, one option was to reduce expenditure on pupil support assistants in primary and secondary schools to realise a full year saving of £2.5 million. This budget had previously been reduced in 2009 and in addition there have been reductions in support for learning and school administration.

5.1.2 The initial reduction in 2009 represented a 23% decrease in the 2008 level of resource and this revised budget was reduced by 33% from August 2011. This represents an overall reduction of 47%. However benchmarking data from comparator authorities continues to show a higher spend per pupil in Aberdeen City on pupil support provision.

Appendices 1 and 2 give details of the pupil support assistant allocations from 2008 – 2012. The allocation for the year 2012 – 2013 has been frozen at the same level as 2011 - 2012.

5.1.3 The full budget for pupil support allocations was allocated to schools using an agreed formula. In addition, the centrally held contingency budget for additional pupil support assistants was also devolved to schools. It was therefore the responsibility of headteachers to manage the allocations and to prioritise support to the most vulnerable pupils with additional support needs. **The pupil support assistant allocation to additional support needs (ASN) bases has not been reduced.**

5.1.4 Further resources have had to be committed to meet the increased unforeseen and exceptional demand for support for pupils with significant additional support needs as they arise throughout the year. Funding for this has been identified within existing service budgets in the current financial year but this level of expenditure will be difficult to maintain within existing budgets.

## 5.2 Impact Assessment

5.2.1 This report is based on the views of staff and parents. Questionnaires were designed to be accessed on Survey Monkey (an online survey tool) to seek the views of pupil support assistants (appendix 3), teachers (appendix 4) and headteachers (appendix 5). Headteachers were asked to ensure that the survey was made available to all appropriate staff.

5.2.2 Responses were received from 36 headteachers (33 primary, 3 secondary), 288 teachers (170 primary, 113 secondary, 4 additional support needs and 1 anonymous), and 177 pupil support assistants. In addition, focus groups were organised for representatives of the Parents' Forum and the Additional Support Needs (ASN) Parents' Forum, secondary headteachers, primary headteachers, and pupil support

assistants and trades union representatives. Themes identified from these discussions are summarised in appendices 9 – 13.

**5.2.3 This survey did not consider the impact of the pupil support assistant reallocations on pupils in ASN and Mainstream Integration of Children on Autistic Spectrum (MICAS) bases as the pupil support assistant allocation to bases was ring-fenced and not reduced.**

**5.3 The Post of Pupil Support Assistant**

5.3.1 In 2006 a generic pupil support assistant post was created. This post replaced the previously separate posts of classroom assistant, ASN auxiliary, lunchtime supervisor and playground assistant. It was intended that the generic post would offer flexibility within schools to maximise the role of the pupil support assistant. First Aid was added to the role at this time. This post was graded at a higher level than the previous posts.

5.3.2 The following issues were identified in focus group discussion:

- the hours allocated to some posts resulted in pupil support assistants being employed only for supervision of breaks and lunchtimes rather than the full range of pupil support assistant tasks;
- some pupil support assistants did not have the skills to take on the full role;
- the process of achieving the reductions including the redundancy assessment process, voluntary reductions in hours and redeployment had a significant effect on the morale of pupil support assistants;
- the goodwill which saw pupil support assistants working extra hours and making a voluntary contribution to the school community has now gone;
- headteachers identified some difficulties with the redeployment process.

**5.4 Tasks/functions of pupil support assistants**

**5.4.1 Prioritisation of time**

Headteachers and pupil support assistants were asked to quantify the percentages of time spent on main tasks and functions commonly performed by pupil support assistants. These are detailed in the table overleaf.

Tasks/functions	Responses from headteachers	Responses from pupil support assistants
Support to individual pupils	33%	30%
Support to groups of pupils	33%	38%
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	23%	24%
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	8%	11%
First Aid	6%	12%
Other	3%	9%

5.4.2 These figures indicate that schools are deploying most of their pupil support assistants' time to supporting children individually and in groups and this correlates with the findings of the previous report.

5.4.3 Within these allocations, pupils who have significant additional support needs and in particular behavioural issues are being prioritised for support. This was considered to have reduced the capacity for early intervention to:

- support pupils with less challenging behaviour
- minimise low level disruption within the classroom
- support the learning of the whole class group
- support pupils with less significant additional support needs

## 5.5 Changes to the role

5.5.1 There were broadly similar responses from all groups when asked about changes to the role of the pupil support assistant. (PSA survey appendix 6 Q5, teacher survey appendix 7 Q4 and headteacher survey appendix 8 Q4 & Q5)

- Supervision of pupils during lunchtime and breaks and provision of first aid both show a small reduction. This has been maintained as a priority due to health and safety considerations.
- Where reductions have been made to supervision, the Senior Management Team often has to volunteer to cover this during their breaks to maximise the safety of pupils.
- Support to pupils has reduced and support to teaching staff has been significantly reduced.
- Staff have indicated that timetabling of pupil support assistants is now much tighter with every minute accounted for.

5.5.2 Although administering first aid is identified as taking a small percentage of the time of the pupil support assistant, the unpredictable nature of demands can impact significantly on support to pupils.

## 5.6 Impact on learning

5.6.1 The survey asked “What impact have changes in the allocation of PSA hours had on pupils’ learning?” The majority of responses from headteachers, pupil support assistants and teachers indicated that the changes had had a negative impact.

### 5.6.2 Themes

The following themes were identified from the views expressed in the survey responses and the focus groups.

- Differentiated learning is more difficult with reduced levels of support in class.
- The reduction in pupil support assistant provision is seen as having a detrimental effect upon developing the new curriculum.
- Preparation of resources is an area which has been reduced greatly. Headteachers indicated that they had reduced this area of work for pupil support assistants and that this was now mainly being done by class teachers and, in primary schools, also by parent volunteers.
- There has been some impact on outdoor learning in which pupil support assistants are actively involved as it is reliant on adequate adult supervision to maximise participation.
- In the past, the adult who knew the child with additional support needs best and provided personal support for their learning was the pupil support assistant allocated to him or her. Now there is an issue with consistency and pupil support assistants are no longer allocated to an individual pupil.
- Management and teaching staff are dealing with more incidents and behavioural issues.
- Inclusive practice is more difficult to sustain with the reduced levels of pupil support assistant provision.
- Headteachers are committed to ensuring that all pupils are included, engaged and involved in their learning. However, feedback from both survey and focus groups indicated that the reduction in pupil support assistants has impacted on the number of short term exclusions for some pupils

## 5.7 Strategies

5.7.1 Schools are adopting a range of positive strategies to minimise the negative impact of the reduction in pupil support assistant allocations. These include:

- a greater focus on identifying pupil learning outcomes in order to target pupil support;
- adopting a team approach by deploying other staff where possible to take on tasks previously covered by pupil support assistants;
- capacity building through training and development. e.g. Increased participation by pupil support assistants in the solution oriented approaches training programme;
- maximising the existing staff resource through more structured timetabling of the tasks of pupil support assistants;
- encouraging pupil support assistants to support other pupils in class as well as those with identified needs;
- supporting larger groups of pupils in order to increase participation;
- working more closely with city wide services such as the Pupil Support Service to meet the needs of pupils;
- encouraging parental involvement to support children's learning and development.

## **5.8 Parental Involvement**

5.8.1 "Parents, carers and families are by far the most important influences on children's lives. Parents who take on a supportive role in their children's learning make a difference in improving achievement and behaviour. Their support can play a vital role at all stages of education."

Guidance on the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

Some schools are now more reliant on parent volunteers to undertake some tasks, for example, preparation of resources or accompanying school trips. Some parents thought that this level of parental involvement should be encouraged.

## **5.9 Continuing professional development and training**

5.9.1 Pupil support assistants raised the issue of continuing professional development (CPD) and training opportunities. This reflected the research in the previous impact survey and these issues are beginning to be addressed through an ongoing training programme for pupil support assistants and through the capacity building and staff development work stream of the Review of Inclusion.

Recent training opportunities for pupil support assistants have covered a broad range of development needs identified by pupil support assistants and schools including areas such as: managing challenging behaviour; supporting active learners with hearing loss; understanding a child with autism; playground games and counseling skills. Pupil support assistants are encouraged to evaluate all training courses and identify next steps in their development to inform future service planning and training.

## 5.10 Conclusion

5.10.1 The Education, Culture and Sport service is committed to Getting It Right For Every Child and has embarked on a Review of Inclusion to ensure that the needs of all our learners are met effectively in the twenty first century.

5.10.2 The findings of this report sit within the Review of Inclusion and will inform its development, in particular the “Building Capacity and Staff Development” workstream. This area of the Review will focus on developing a workforce which is skilled in supporting pupils’ learning and participation through inclusive practice.

5.10.3 The Service recognises the challenges identified in the impact survey and has already put in place a range of strategies to manage the change in pupil support assistant allocations and support schools which include:

- increasing opportunities for professional development for pupil support assistants;
- further evaluation of pupil support assistants’ training needs;
- a citywide focus on training for teachers in solution oriented approaches, restorative practice and nurturing approaches in order to promote positive learning environments and to reduce incidents of challenging behaviour in the classroom;
- devolved budget savings for schools have been reduced so creating additional flexibility for headteachers to support learners effectively;
- investing in an Additional Support Needs [ASN] team of officers with a remit to support schools in their work of identifying and meeting learners’ needs and to raise standards in supporting learners.

5.10.4 The Service has also identified a number of key priorities for action to improve support for learners which complement the longer term aims of the Review of Inclusion and which address a number of the challenges identified in the impact assessment.

These next steps include:

- ensuring that the detailed findings from this research are considered as part of the Review of Inclusion;
- monitoring the impact of changes to pupil support assistant hours through visits to schools by Quality Improvement Officers and Education Support Officers and reporting back through the Review of Inclusion;
- creating a focus group comprising representative pupil support assistants and officers to consider appropriate training and development opportunities for pupil support assistants;
- ensuring the new performance review and development scheme helps identify skills and individual training needs appropriately and that these needs and any challenges identified are reported to the focus group for action;
- holding a major in-service training event for all staff on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2013 focusing on support to pupils.

- ensuring continuing professional development will be provided for school staff to support them engaging and working with volunteers in school and;
- ensuring a citywide audit of pupils' needs in 2012/13 is completed by the ASN team in order to inform and target support for all learners effectively in 2013/14.

5.10.5 The findings from this report and the outcomes of our key short term priorities identified above will help inform and drive the overarching Education, Culture and Sport Review of Inclusion.

## **6. IMPACT**

This report supports the Council's commitment to the principles of inclusion and equality in relation to pupil access to schools, best value when considering the distribution of resources and the provision of the highest quality of service delivery. Aberdeen City Council is committed to providing the best possible education for all our children, which is essential if we are to ensure that Aberdeen and its citizens have a prosperous future. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Primary school PSA allocations (appendix 1)
2. Secondary school PSA allocations (appendix 2)
3. PSA responses to survey (appendix 6)
4. Teacher responses to survey (appendix 7)
5. Headteacher responses to survey (appendix 8)

## **8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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## Appendix 3

### Educational Impact of Change in PSA Allocation

(PSAs) September 2012

The Education Culture and Sport Committee has asked for a report giving an update on the impact on education of the reduction in the allocation of PSA hours in 2011/12. The allocation to Special schools and school support bases was not reduced as part of this budget setting. It is very important that you have an opportunity to contribute your views to this paper. Please can you complete the questionnaire below giving as much detail as possible. Some of the questions ask for details about your job; these will be used to help us categorise the results. The focus of the paper will be on the educational impact of the changes on the pupils with whom you work. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to submit your response. Data collected will be confidential and individual schools will not be identified.

#### 1. Your name

Your name

#### 2. Name of School

Name of School

#### 3. Average number of hours worked per week?

- Average number of hours worked per week? 1-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- Over 30

#### 4. What pupils do you support?

- What pupils do you support? Pupils in Mainstream
- Pupils in ASN or MICAS base
- Both

#### 5. Please indicate which tasks/functions you carry out currently?

- Please indicate which tasks/functions you carry out currently? Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)
- Support to groups of pupils
- Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime
- Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc

First Aid

Other (please specify)

**6. Please indicate the average percentage of time spent on each task? (place number in boxes not % sign)**

Please indicate the average percentage of time spent on each task? (place number in boxes not % sign) Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)

Support to groups of pupils

Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime

Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc

First Aid duties

Other please specify

**7. If you were a PSA before August 2011, can you please complete the table below to show any changes to your job comparing what you did in June 2011 with what you do now.**

	Much less	Less of this	No change	More of this	Much more
<b>Support to individual pupils</b>	<input type="radio"/> *If you were a PSA before August 2011, can you please complete the table below to show any changes to your job comparing what you did in June 2011 with what you do now. Support to individual pupils Much less	<input type="radio"/> Support to individual pupils Less of this	<input type="radio"/> Support to individual pupils No change	<input type="radio"/> Support to individual pupils More of this	<input type="radio"/> Support to individual pupils Much more
<b>Support to groups of pupils</b>	<input type="radio"/> Support to groups of pupils Much less	<input type="radio"/> Support to groups of pupils Less of this	<input type="radio"/> Support to groups of pupils No change	<input type="radio"/> Support to groups of pupils More of this	<input type="radio"/> Support to groups of pupils Much more
<b>Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime</b>	<input type="radio"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime Much less	<input type="radio"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime Less of this	<input type="radio"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime No change	<input type="radio"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime More of this	<input type="radio"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime Much more
<b>Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc</b>	<input type="radio"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Much less	<input type="radio"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Less of this	<input type="radio"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc No change	<input type="radio"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc More of this	<input type="radio"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Much more

**Much less**      **Less of this**      **No change**      **More of this**      **Much more**

Other Much less       Other Less of this       Other No change       Other More of this       Other Much more

Other

**8. What impact have changes in the allocation of PSA hours had on pupils' learning?**

- What impact have changes in the allocation of PSA hours had on pupils' learning? Positive
- Negative
- No Impact

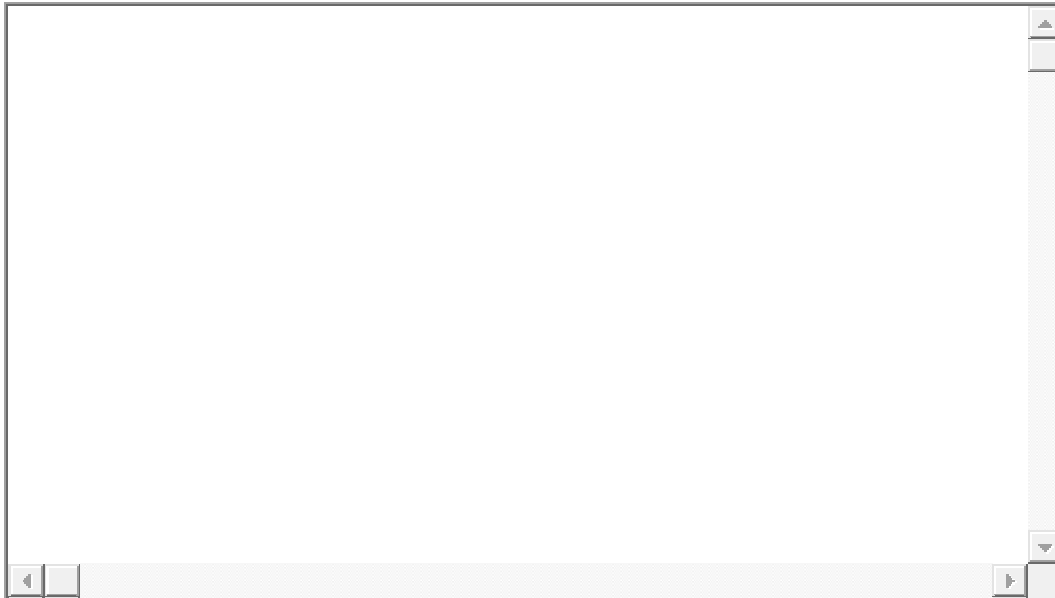
**9. If you felt that there has been a negative or positive impact please highlight why?**

If you felt that there has been a negative or positive impact please highlight why?

**10. Other than an increase in resources, what else could be done to help improve the support to pupils?**

Other than an increase in resources, what else could be done to help improve the support to pupils?

**11. Please add any other comment about the educational impact upon pupils of the re allocation of PSA hours?**



Please add any other comment about the educational impact upon pupils of the re allocation of PSA hours?

Done

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## Appendix 4

### Educational Impact of Change in PSA Allocation

#### Teachers September 2012

The Education Culture and Sport Committee has asked for an updated paper detailing the educational impact of the reduction in allocation of PSA hours last year. The allocation to Special schools and school support bases was not reduced as part of these reductions. Please complete the questionnaire below giving as much detail as possible. Your views are very important to this process and will make a valuable contribution to the collation and analysis of information. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to submit your response.

#### 1. Your name

Your name

#### 2. Name of School

Name of School

#### 3. Have you ever had PSA support in your class or classes?

- Have you ever had PSA support in your class or classes? Yes  
 No

#### 4. Do you currently have PSA support in your class or classes?

- Do you currently have PSA support in your class or classes? Yes  
 No

#### 5. If you currently have support what tasks/functions are carried by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session?

- If you currently have support what tasks/functions are carried by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session? Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)  
 Support to groups of pupils  
 Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime  
 Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc  
 First Aid

Other (please specify)

#### 6. Compared to the last academic session do PSAs now do more or less of these tasks or is their role about the same?

- |            | Much less                             | Less                                | No change                           | More                                | Much more                           |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Support to | <input type="checkbox"/> *Compared to | <input type="checkbox"/> Support to | <input type="checkbox"/> Support to | <input type="checkbox"/> Support to | <input type="checkbox"/> Support to |

	<b>Much less</b>	<b>Less</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>More</b>	<b>Much more</b>
<b>individual pupils</b>	the last academic session do PSAs now do more or less of these tasks or is their role about the same? Support to individual pupils Much less	individual pupils Less	individual pupils No change	individual pupils More	individual pupils Much more
<b>Support to groups of pupils</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to groups of pupils Much less	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to groups of pupils Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to groups of pupils No change	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to groups of pupils More	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to groups of pupils Much more
<b>Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime Much less	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime No change	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime More	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime Much more
<b>Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Much less	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc No change	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc More	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Much more
<b>First Aid</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Much less	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Less	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid No change	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid More	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Much more

**7. In your judgement, what has been the impact on learning and teaching in your school because of the changes in PSA allocation?**

- In your judgement, what has been the impact on learning and teaching in your school because of the changes in PSA allocation? Positive impact
- No impact
- Negative impact

**8. If you felt that there has been a negative or positive impact please highlight why?**

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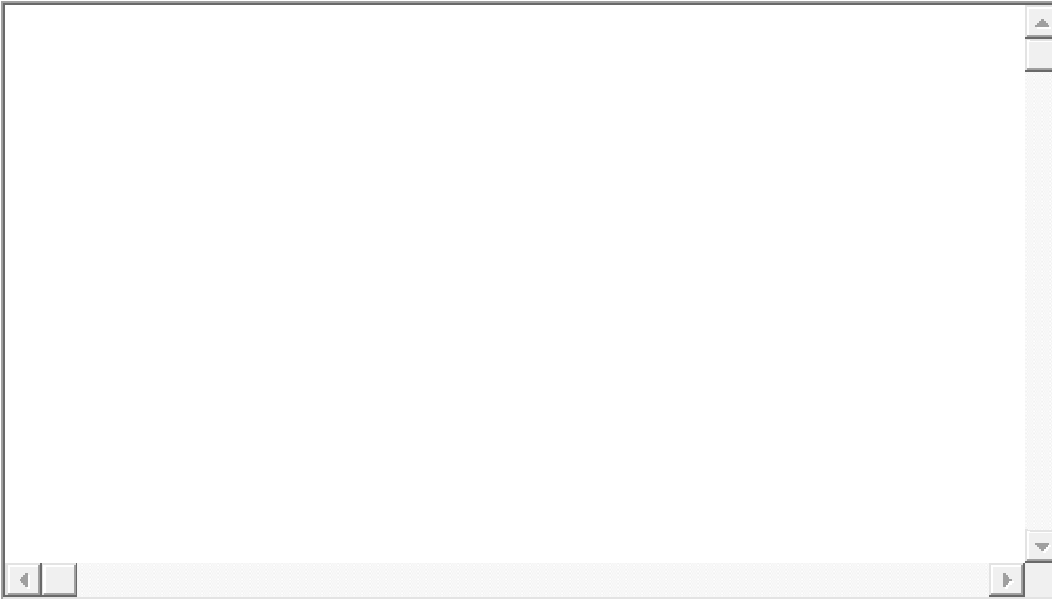
If you felt that there has been a negative or positive impact please highlight why?

**9. Can you please describe what strategy/strategies you have used to minimise any negative impact of a reduction in PSA hours?**

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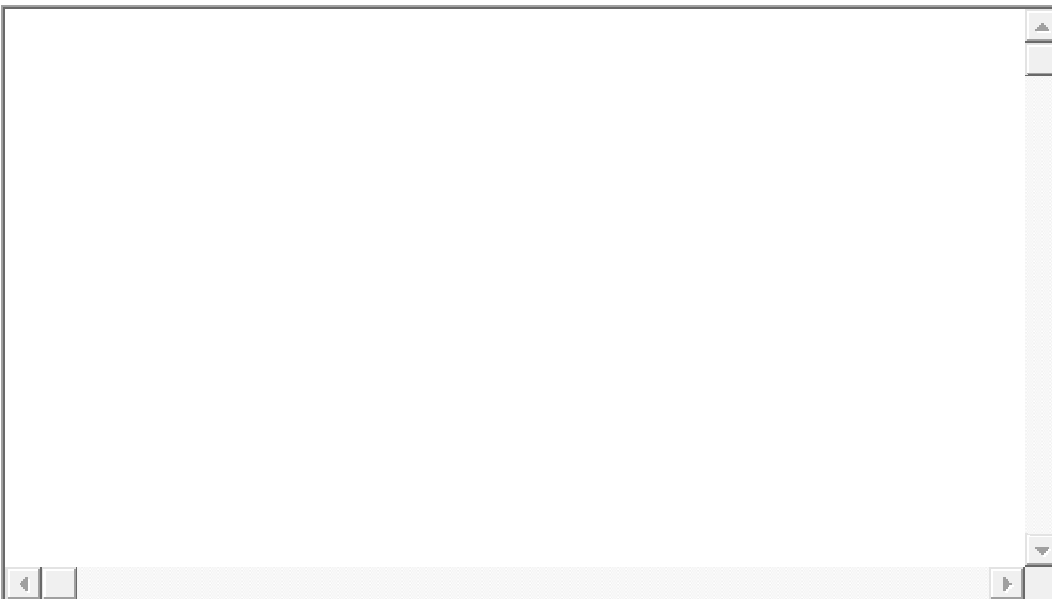
Can you please describe what strategy/strategies you have used to minimise any negative impact of a reduction in PSA hours?

**10. Other than an increase in resources, what else could be done to improve the support provided by PSAs to children?**

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Other than an increase in resources, what else could be done to improve the support provided by PSAs to children?

**11. Please add any other comment you wish to make about the educational impact of the changes in allocation of PSA support.**

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Please add any other comment you wish to make about the educational impact of the changes in allocation of PSA support.

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## Appendix 5

### Educational Impact of Change in PSA Allocation

(Head Teachers) September 2012

The Education Culture and Sport Committee has asked for an updated paper detailing the educational impact of the reduction in allocation of PSA hours last year. The allocation to Special schools and school support bases was not reduced as part of these reductions. Please complete the questionnaire below giving as much detail as possible. Your views are very important to this process and will make a valuable contribution to the collation and analysis of information. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to submit your response.

#### 1. Your Name

Your Name

#### 2. Name of School

Name of School

#### 3. Please indicate which tasks/functions are carried out currently in your school by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session?

- Please indicate which tasks/functions are carried out currently in your school by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session? Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)
- Support to groups of pupils
- Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime
- Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc
- First Aid

Other (please specify)

#### 4. Please indicate hours allocated to tasks/functions carried out currently in your school by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session?

Please indicate hours allocated to tasks/functions carried out currently in your school by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session? Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)

Support to groups of pupils

Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime

Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc

First Aid

Other



	No-one	Class Teachers	Promoted staff/managers	Parents/volunteers	School office staff	Other
breaks/lunchtime	No-one	Class Teachers	Promoted staff/managers	Parents/volunteers	School office staff	breaks/lunchtime Other
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc No-one	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Class Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Promoted staff/managers	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Parents/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc School office staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc Other
First Aid	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid No-one	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Class Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Promoted staff/managers	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Parents/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid School office staff	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Other

Other (please specify)

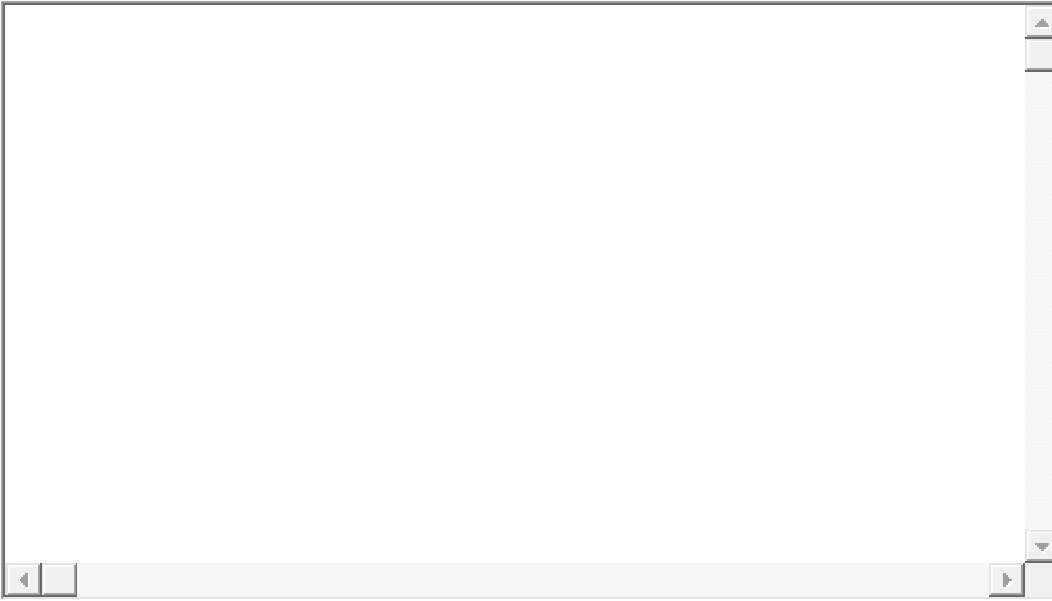
**9. In your judgement, what has been the impact on learning and teaching in your school because of the changes in PSA allocation?**

- In your judgement, what has been the impact on learning and teaching in your school because of the changes in PSA allocation? Positive impact
- No impact
- Negative impact

**10. If you felt that there has been a negative or positive impact please highlight why?**

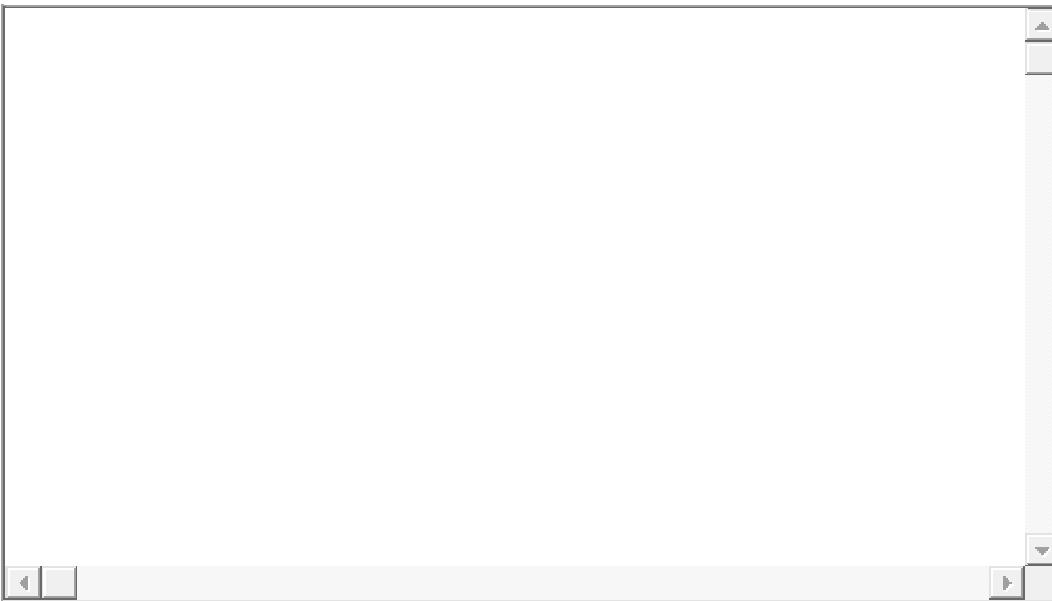
If you felt that there has been a negative or positive impact please highlight why?

**11. Can you please describe what strategy/strategies you have used to minimise any negative impact of a reduction in PSA hours?**

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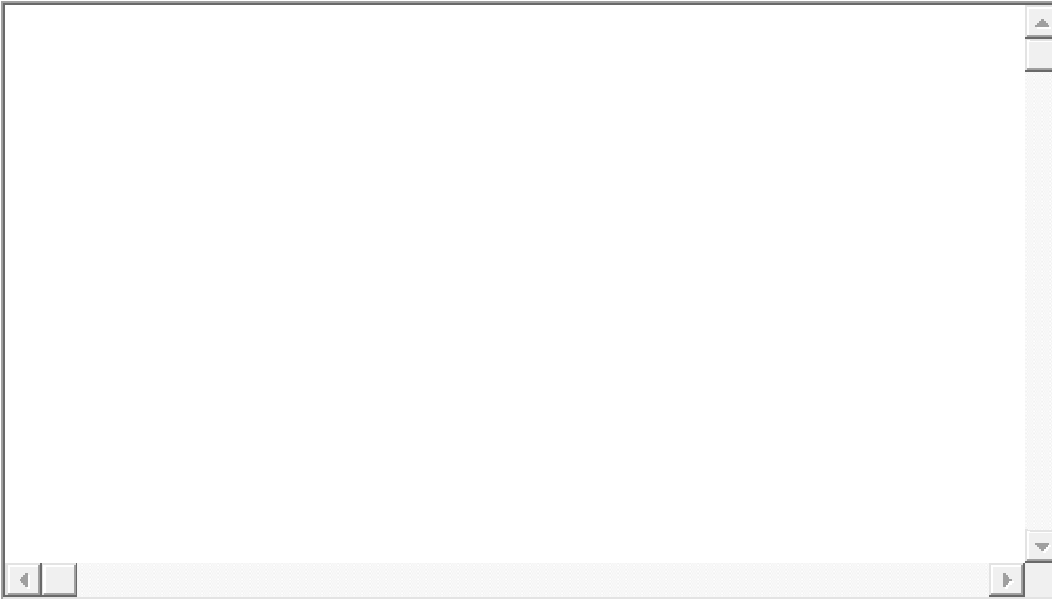
Can you please describe what strategy/strategies you have used to minimise any negative impact of a reduction in PSA hours?

**12. How have you ensured that the needs of the most vulnerable children are met?**

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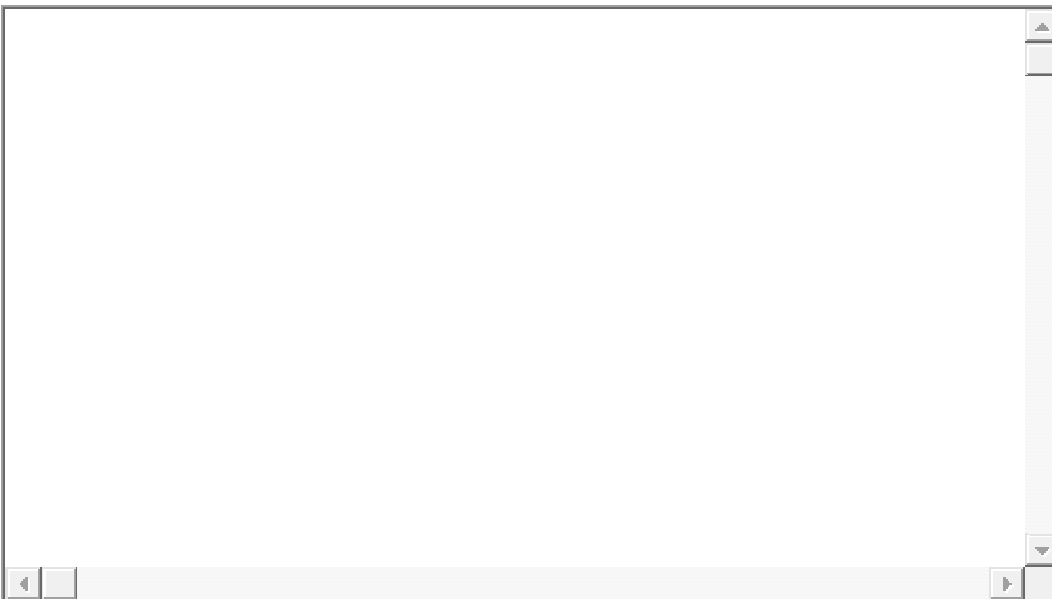
How have you ensured that the needs of the most vulnerable children are met?

**13. Other than an increase in resources, what else could be done to improve the support provided by PSAs to children?**

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Other than an increase in resources, what else could be done to improve the support provided by PSAs to children?

**14. Please add any other comment you wish to make about the educational impact of the changes in allocation of PSA support.**

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Please add any other comment you wish to make about the educational impact of the changes in allocation of PSA support.

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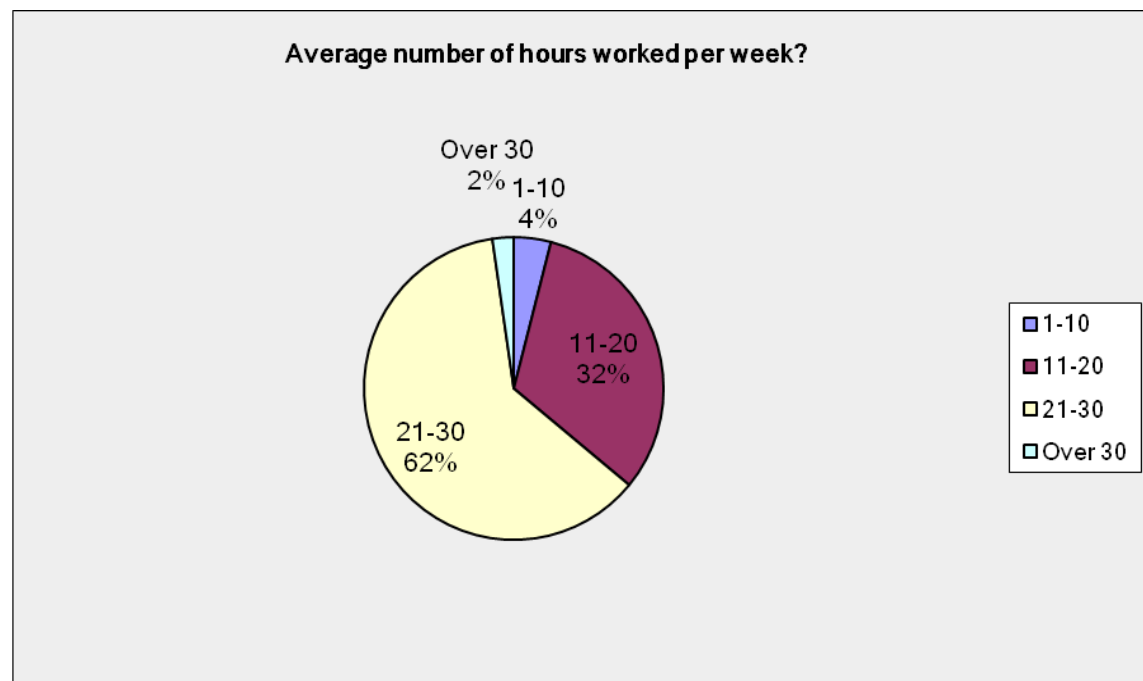
## Appendix 6

### Educational Impact of Change in PSA Allocation

#### Pupil support assistants September 2012

Number of respondents 177

Q1 Average number of hours worked per week?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-10	4.0%	7
11-20	32.0%	56
21-30	61.7%	108
Over 30	2.3%	4
<b>answered question</b>		<b>175</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>2</b>

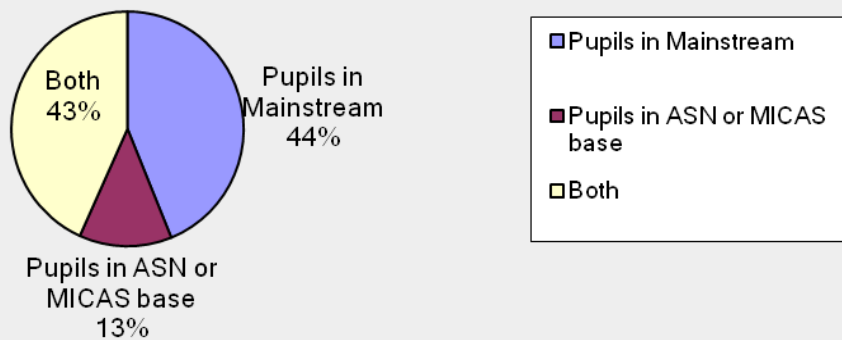


## Pupil support assistants September 2012

### Q2 What pupils do you support?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Pupils in Mainstream	43.9%	75
Pupils in ASN or MICAS base	12.9%	22
Both	43.3%	74
<b>answered question</b>		<b>171</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>6</b>

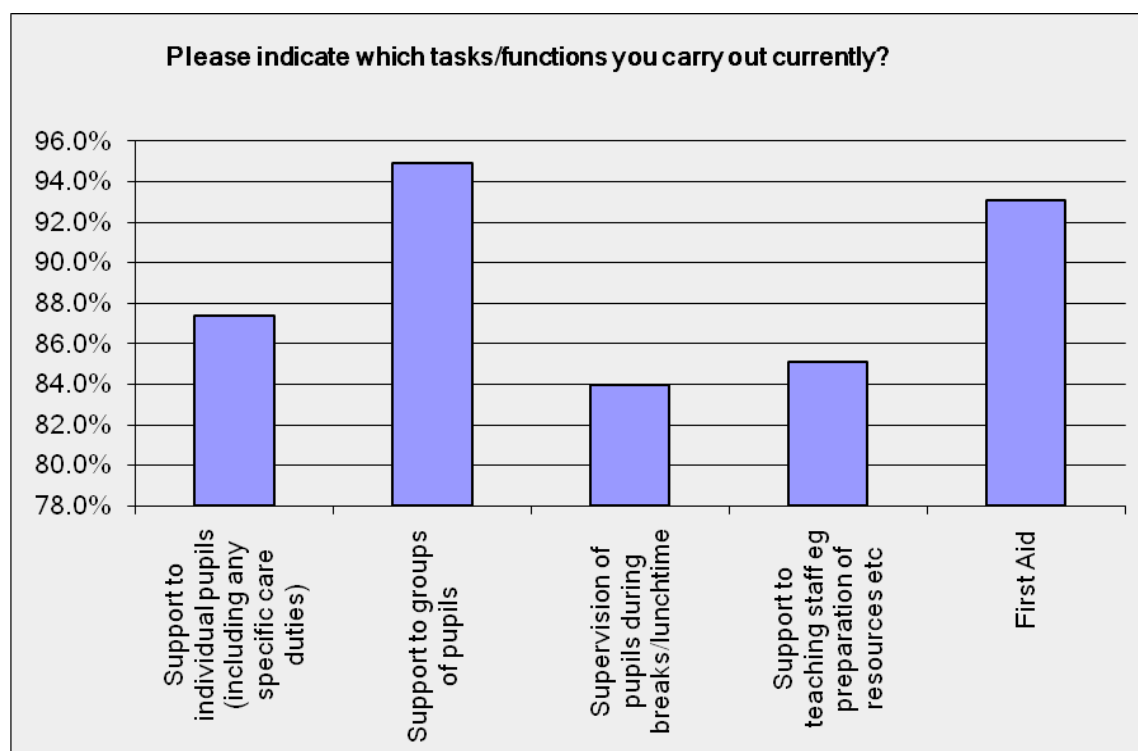
What pupils do you support?



## Pupil support assistants September 2012

### Q3 Please indicate which tasks/functions you carry out currently?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)	87.4%	153
Support to groups of pupils	94.9%	166
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	84.0%	147
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	85.1%	149
First Aid	93.1%	163
Other (please specify)		46
<b>answered question</b>		<b>175</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>2</b>

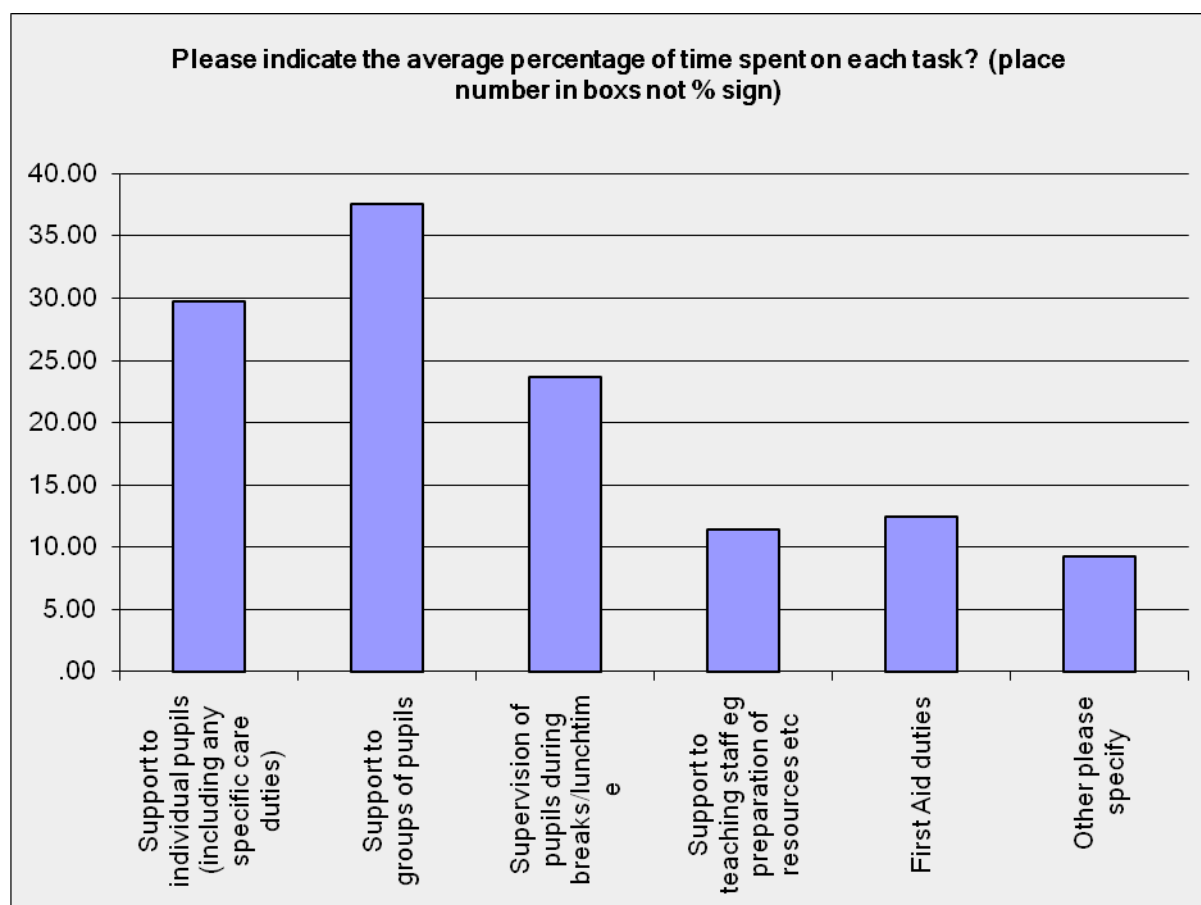




## Pupil support assistants September 2012

**Q4 Please indicate the average percentage of time spent on each task?  
(place number in boxes not % sign)**

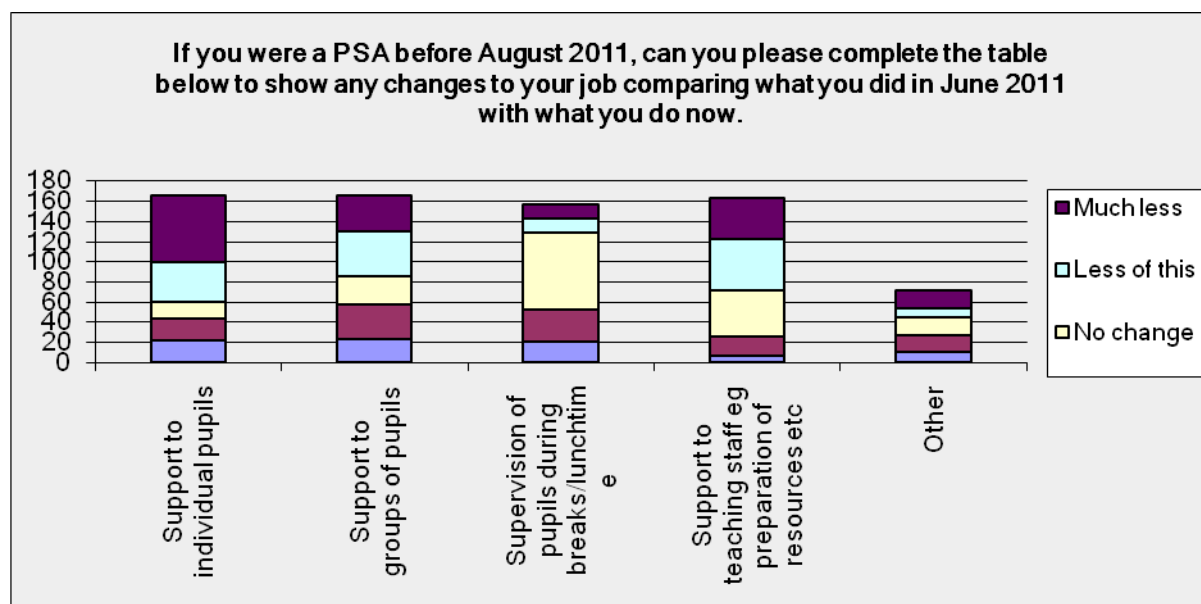
Answer Options	Response Average	Response Total	Response Count
Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)	29.76	4,494	151
Support to groups of pupils	37.58	5,825	155
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	23.64	3,404	144
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	11.35	1,634	144
First Aid duties	12.38	1,932	156
Other please specify	9.21	387	42
<b>answered question</b>			<b>166</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>11</b>



## Pupil support assistants September 2012

**Q5** If you were a PSA before August 2011, can you please complete the table below to show any changes to your job comparing what you did in June 2011 with what you do now.

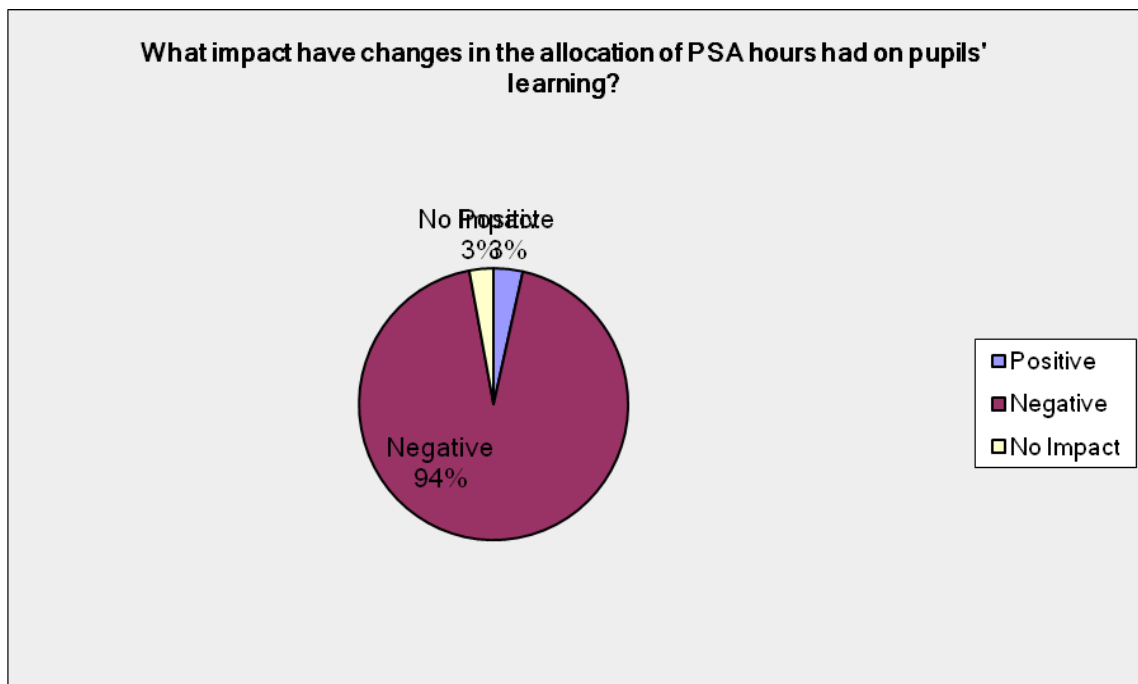
Answer Options	Much less	Less of this	No change	More of this	Much more	Response Count
Support to individual pupils	66	40	16	22	22	166
Support to groups of pupils	36	44	28	35	23	166
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	14	14	76	32	21	157
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	40	52	45	19	7	163
Other	17	9	18	16	11	71
<b>answered question</b>						<b>171</b>
<b>skipped question</b>						<b>6</b>



## Pupil support assistants September 2012

**Q6 What impact have changes in the allocation of PSA hours had on pupils' learning?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive	3.5%	6
Negative	93.6%	161
No Impact	2.9%	5
<b>answered question</b>		<b>172</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>5</b>



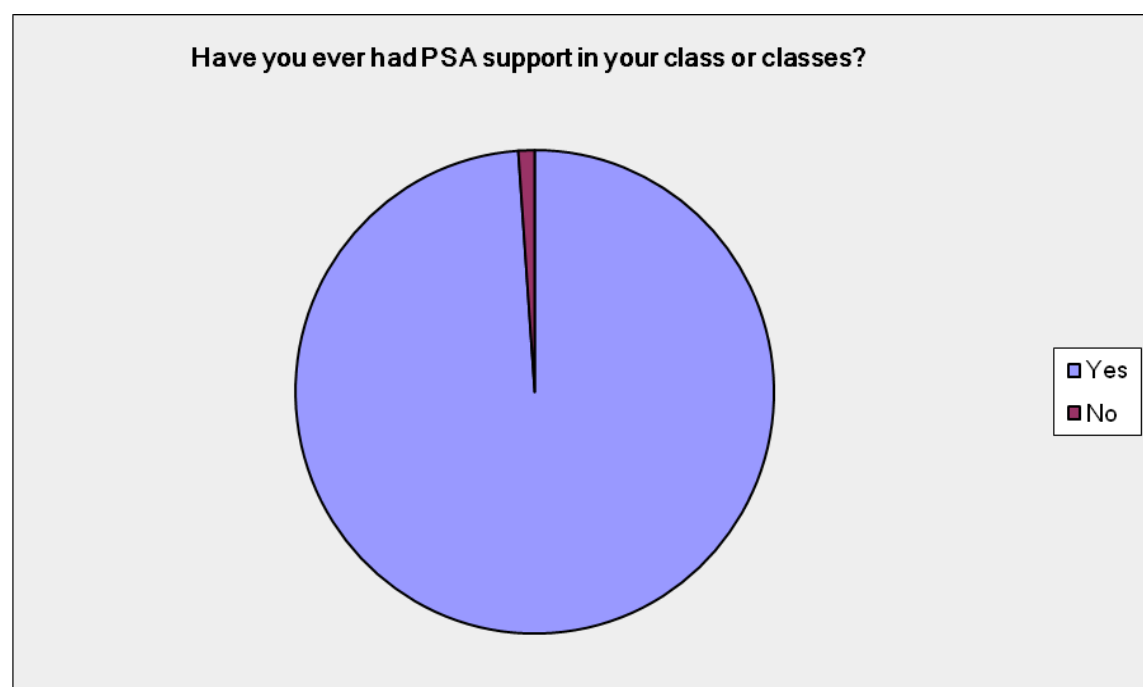
## Appendix 7

### Educational Impact of Change in PSA Allocation

#### Teachers September 2012

Number of responses 288

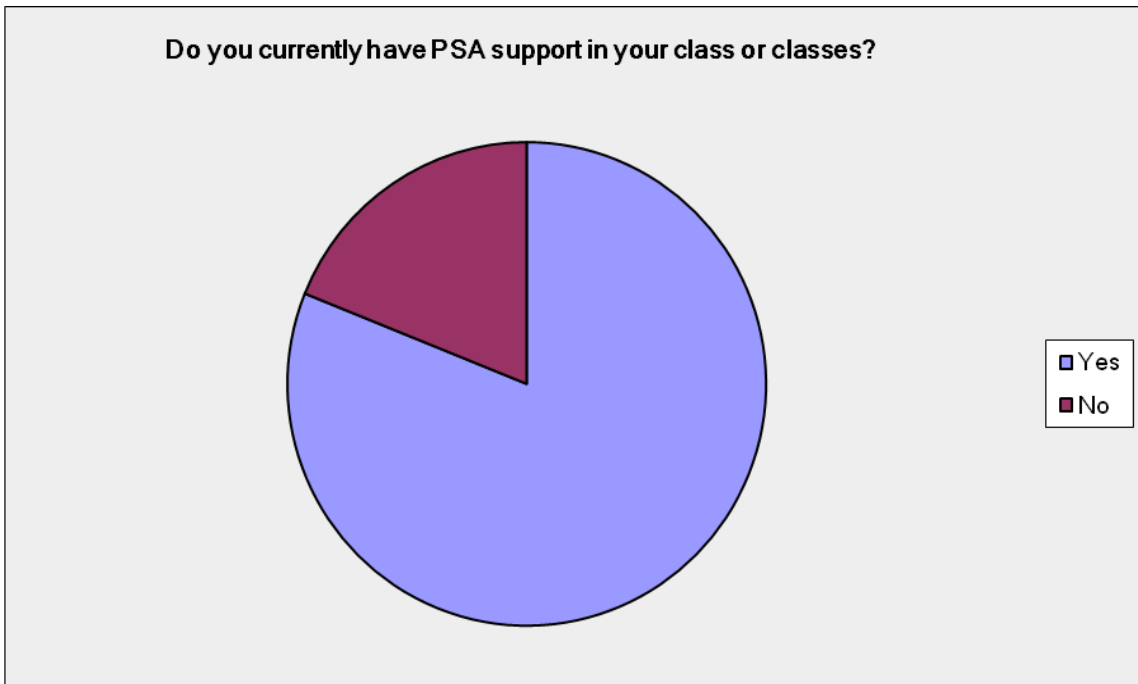
Q1 Have you ever had PSA support in your class or classes?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	98.9%	281
No	1.1%	3
<i>answered question</i>		<b>284</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>4</b>



Teachers September 2012

**Q2 Do you currently have PSA support in your class or classes?**

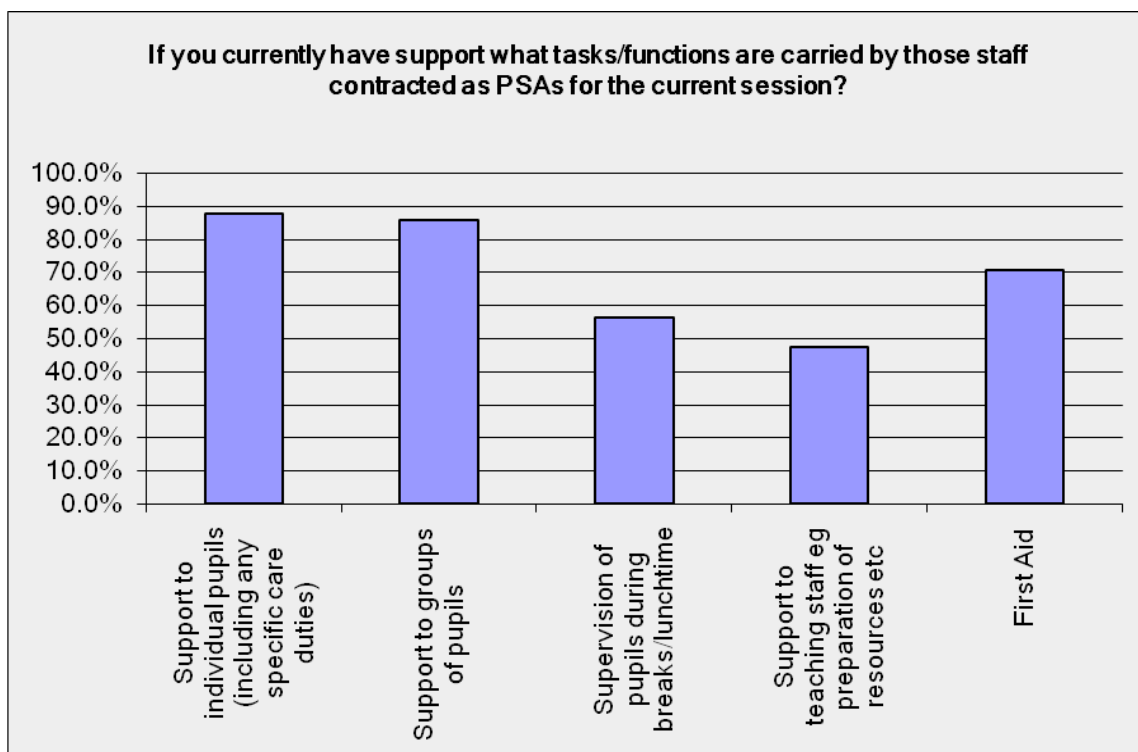
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	81.1%	231
No	18.9%	54
<i>answered question</i>		<b>285</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>3</b>



## Teachers September 2012

**Q3 If you currently have support what tasks/functions are carried by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session?**

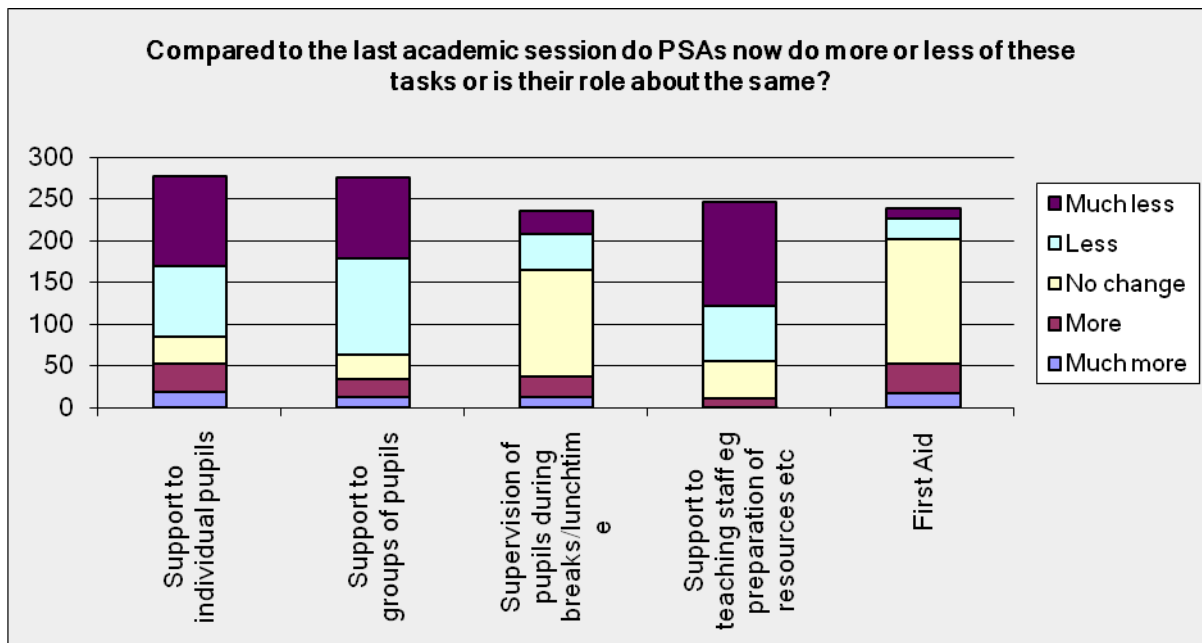
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)	88.0%	213
Support to groups of pupils	86.0%	208
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	56.2%	136
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	47.5%	115
First Aid	70.7%	171
Other (please specify)		17
<b>answered question</b>		<b>242</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>46</b>



## Teachers September 2012

### Q4 Compared to the last academic session do PSAs now do more or less of these tasks or is their role about the same?

Answer Options	Much less	Less	No change	More	Much more	Response Count
Support to individual pupils	107	85	32	34	19	277
Support to groups of pupils	96	116	28	22	13	273
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	28	43	127	25	13	233
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	125	66	45	8	3	244
First Aid	13	24	149	35	18	238
	<b>answered question</b>					<b>279</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>					<b>9</b>

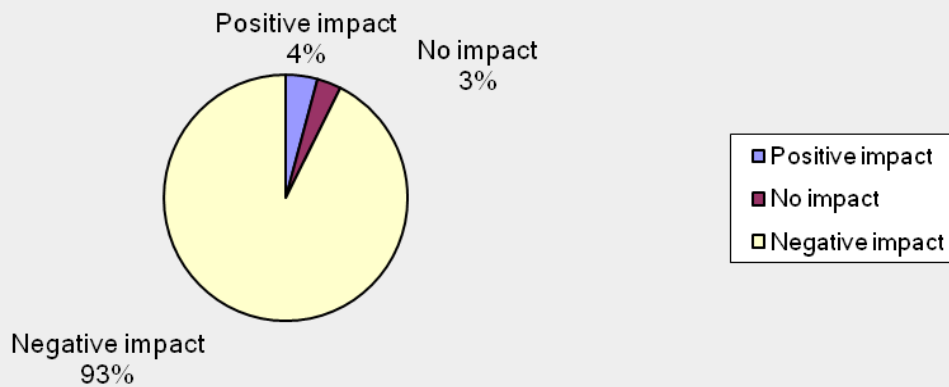


Teachers September 2012

**Q5 In your judgment, what has been the impact on learning and teaching in your school because of the changes in PSA allocation?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive impact	4.2%	12
No impact	3.2%	9
Negative impact	92.6%	263
<b>answered question</b>		<b>284</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>4</b>

In your judgement, what has been the impact on learning and teaching in your school because of the changes in PSA allocation?





## Appendix 8

### Educational Impact of Change in PSA Allocation

#### Headteachers September 2012

36 responses

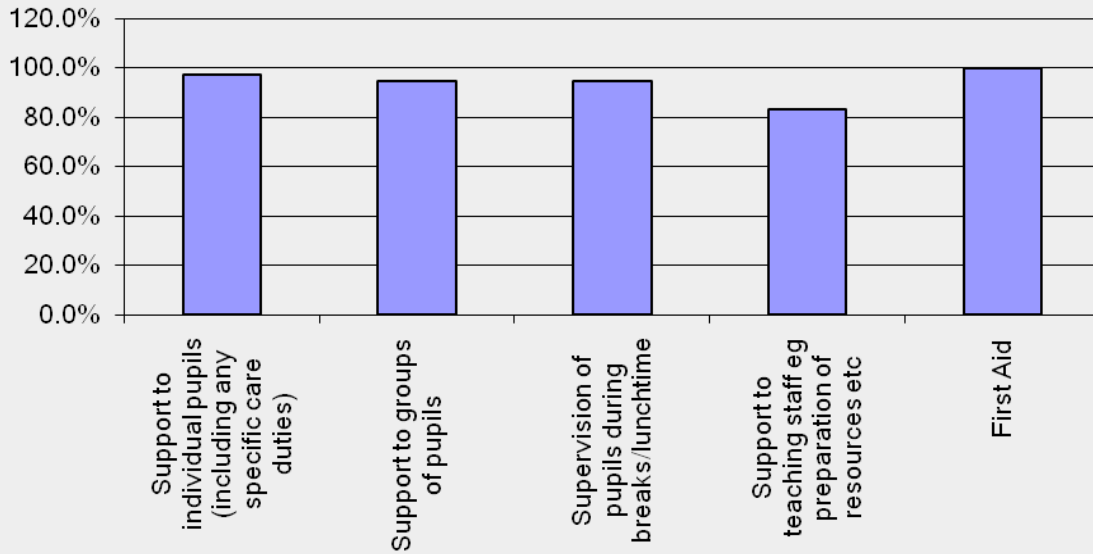
33 Primary Headteachers

3 Secondary Headteachers

**Q1 Please indicate which tasks/functions are carried out currently in your school by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session?**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)	97.2%	35
Support to groups of pupils	94.4%	34
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	94.4%	34
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	83.3%	30
First Aid	100.0%	36
Other (please specify)		10
	<b><i>answered question</i></b>	<b>36</b>
	<b><i>skipped question</i></b>	<b>0</b>

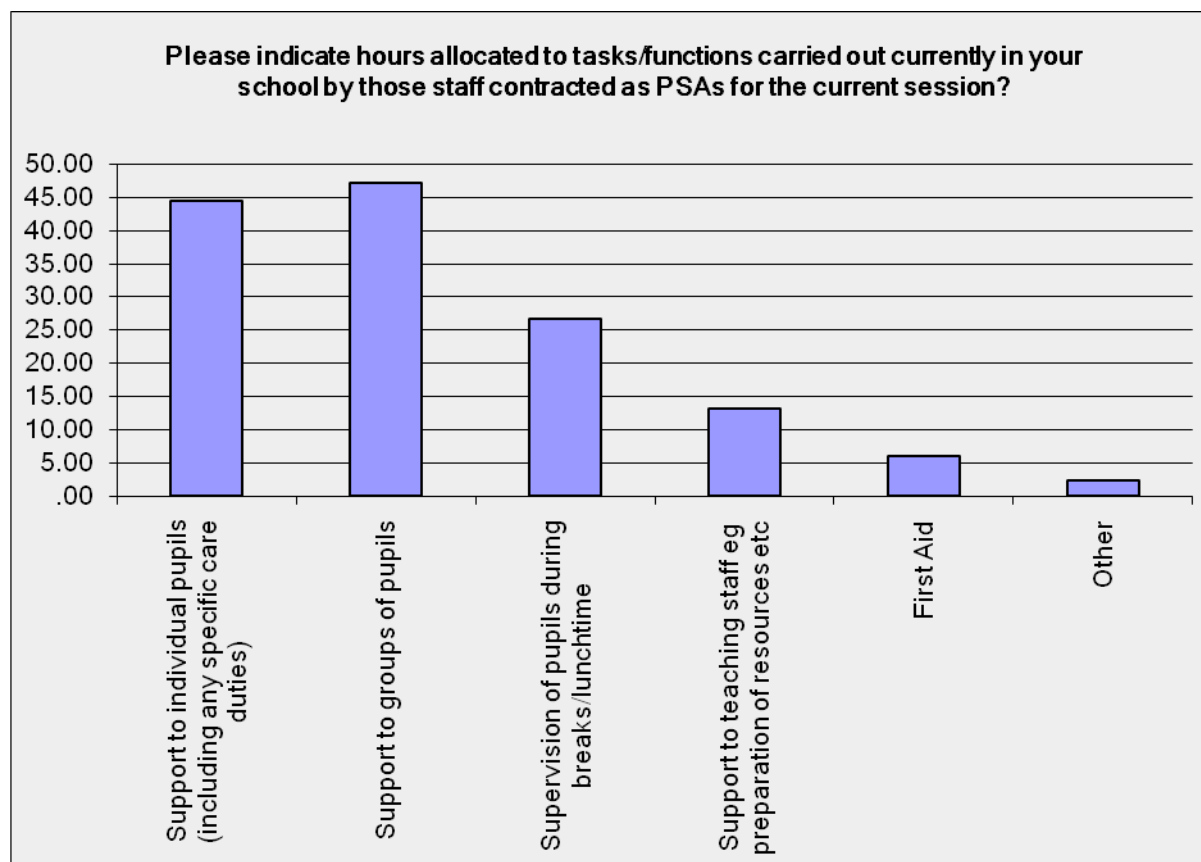
Please indicate which tasks/functions are carried out currently in your school by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session?



## Headteachers September 2012

**Q2 Please indicate hours allocated to tasks/functions carried out currently in your school by those staff contracted as PSAs for the current session?**

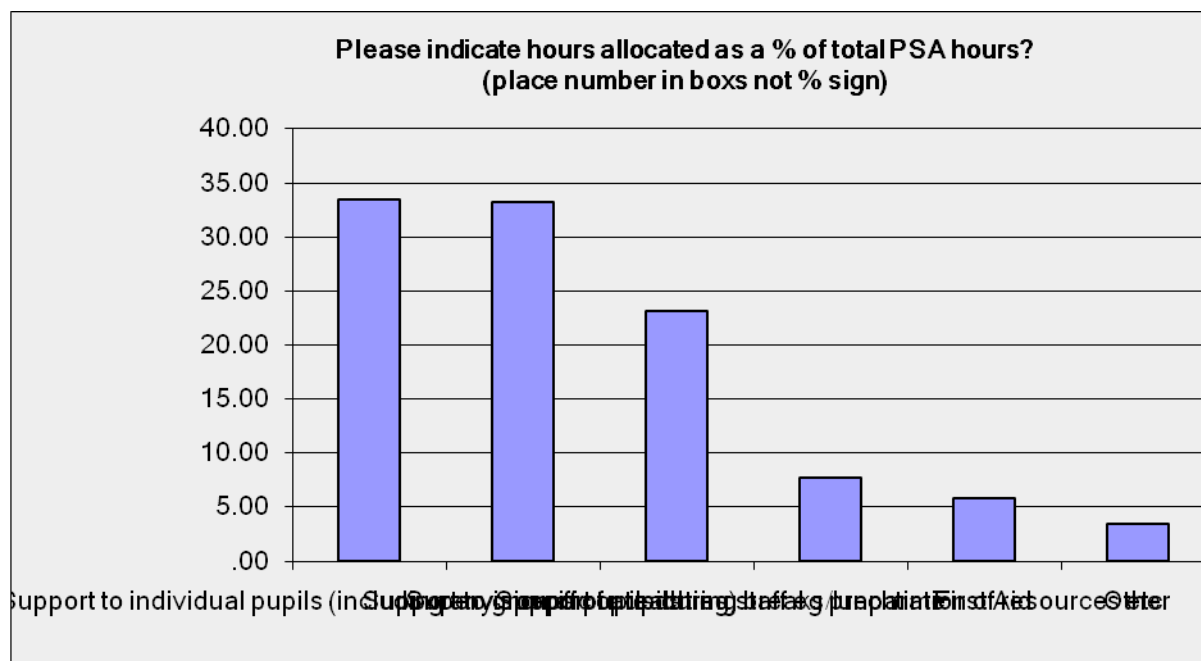
Answer Options	Response Average	Response Total	Response Count
Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)	44.55	1,292	29
Support to groups of pupils	47.21	1,322	28
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	26.74	722	27
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	13.19	356	27
First Aid	5.96	149	25
Other	2.36	26	11
<b>answered question</b>			<b>29</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>7</b>



## Headteachers September 2012

**Q3 Please indicate hours allocated as a % of total PSA hours?  
(place number in boxes not % sign)**

Answer Options	Response Average	Response Total	Response Count
Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)	33.45	1,037	31
Support to groups of pupils	33.27	998	30
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	23.10	670	29
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	7.71	216	28
First Aid	5.86	170	29
Other	3.40	34	10
<b>answered question</b>			<b>31</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>5</b>

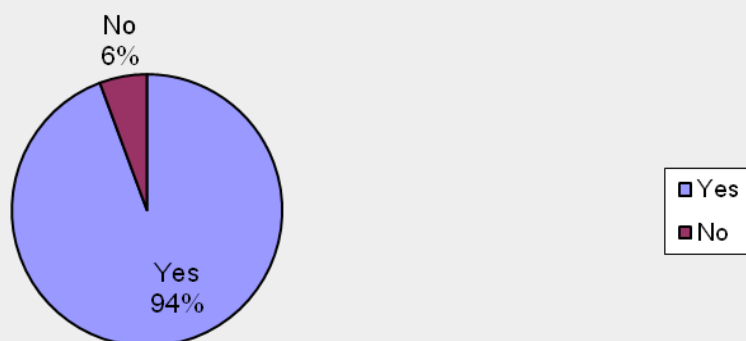


## Headteachers September 2012

**Q4 Have you changed the tasks/functions carried out by the PSAs as a result of the change in allocation last year?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	94.3%	33
No	5.7%	2
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>35</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>1</b>

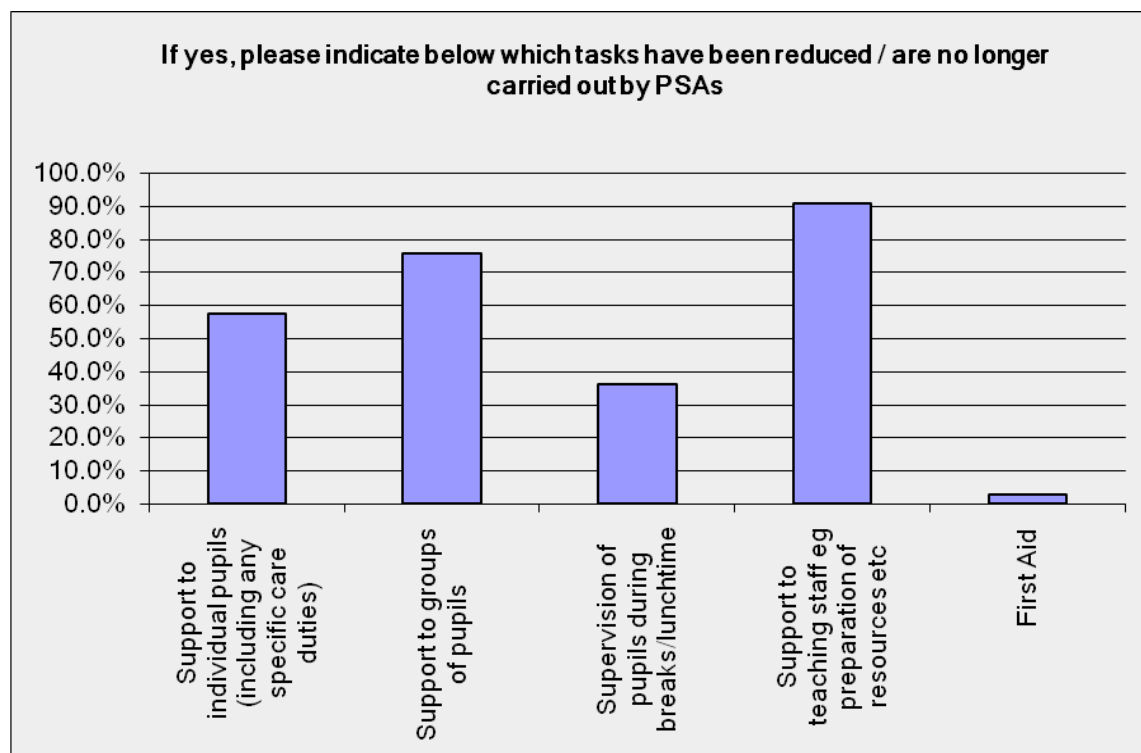
Have you changed the tasks/functions carried out by the PSAs as a result of the change in allocation last year?



## Headteachers September 2012

**Q5 If yes, please indicate below which tasks have been reduced / are no longer carried out by PSAs**

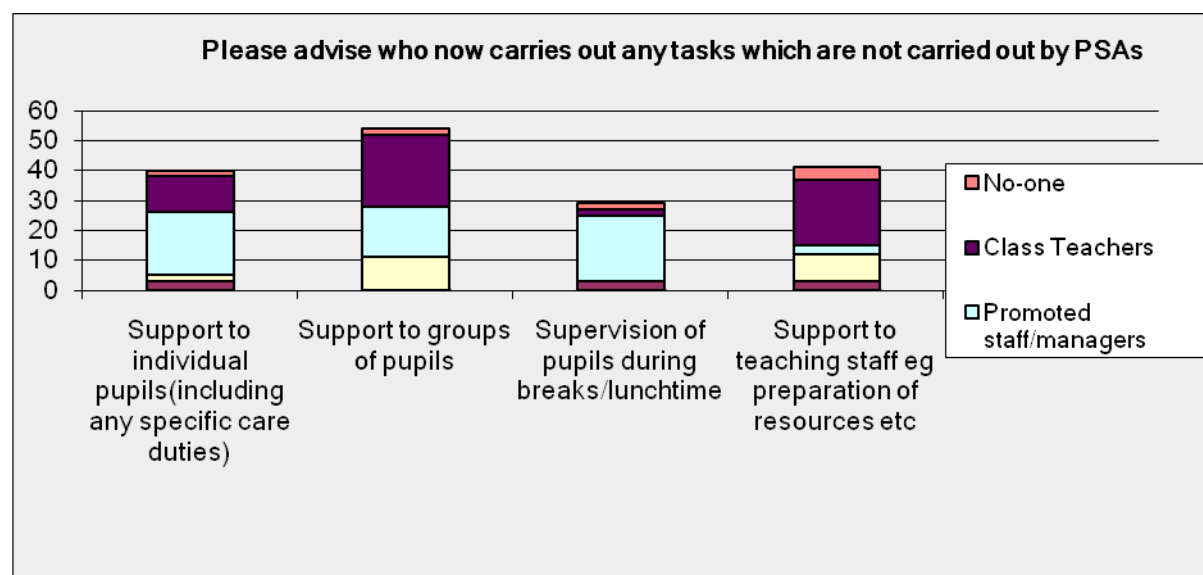
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Support to individual pupils (including any specific care duties)	57.6%	19
Support to groups of pupils	75.8%	25
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	36.4%	12
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	90.9%	30
First Aid	3.0%	1
Other (please specify)		7
<b>answered question</b>		<b>33</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>3</b>



## Headteachers September 2012

### Q6 Please advise who now carries out any tasks which are not carried out by PSAs

Answer Options	No-one	Class Teachers	Promoted staff/managers	Parents/volunteers	School office staff	Other	Response Count
Support to individual pupils(including any specific care duties)	2	12	21	2	3	0	27
Support to groups of pupils	2	24	17	10	0	1	30
Supervision of pupils during breaks/lunchtime	2	2	22	0	2	1	25
Support to teaching staff eg preparation of resources etc	4	22	3	9	2	1	34
First Aid	0	2	6	0	3	0	7
Other (please specify)							5
<b>answered question</b>							<b>36</b>
<b>skipped question</b>							<b>0</b>

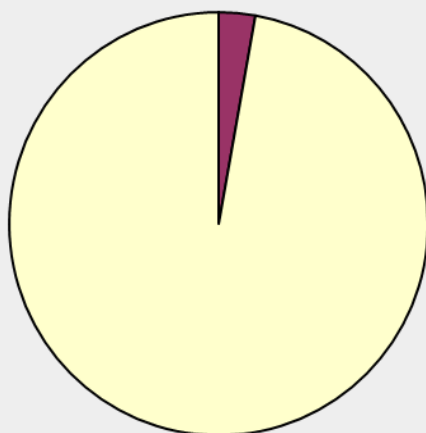


## Headteachers September 2012

**Q7 In your judgement, what has been the impact on learning and teaching in your school because of the changes in PSA allocation?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive impact	0.0%	0
No impact	2.8%	1
Negative impact	97.2%	35
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>36</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>0</b>

In your judgement, what has been the impact on learning and teaching in your school because of the changes in PSA allocation?



■ Positive impact  
■ No impact  
■ Negative impact



## Appendix 9

Focus Group Parents' Forum 21/09/2012

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### **Background**

Disappointed that the Parents' Forum had not been consulted about the format of the survey. They felt that some issues had been omitted.

They think trends should be examined to consider: the number of teachers off with stress; the number of teachers applying for early retirement; attainment levels; and number of exclusions.

There is concern that PSAs don't feel they can be honest because they have to give their name. It is possible to skip that question in the survey and some PSAs have done this.

PSAs don't know about the survey. 3 PSAs told me they haven't been told about it Information is being passed to PSAs by head teachers.

The Parents' Forum is aware of the budget situation so have realistic expectations

The impact has been negative but there have been positive aspects

There is a need to look at trends to assess impact

The Parents' Forum could support an assessment of support needs

Admin reduced too. This also has had an impact. People who did not cost much money have been taken out.

Some schools were not using PSAs appropriately so some reductions were justified.

Unpredictability of shifts in population. EAL pupils requiring support.

The pattern of employment of part time teachers creates inconsistency for pupils.

There has been an increase in the number of ASN pupils meaning that less resource has to go further.

### **Curriculum Issues**

There is extra pressure on PSAs and teachers because of the reduction in administration staff and lack of relief teachers due to reduction in payment.

Transition creates difficulties because PSAs don't move through the stages with the child.

## **Tasks/functions of PSAs**

Schools and PSAs change so a flexible approach is needed.

PSAs work in their own time to support schools.

There is a management culture that expects people to work beyond their hours. People are burning themselves out.

There is a lack of continuity now as PSAs are being spread between classes so it is more difficult to maintain relationships

Reduction in lunchtime and playtime supervision has resulted in pressure on senior staff at one school to be on duty at these times

There should be a move from admin support to working with children.

There are 2 groups of PSAs – those who supervise playgrounds and lunchtime and those who give support to pupils; this is a more complex role. There should be another look at the roles to consider whether the pay scales could be different. New lunchtime supervisors could be appointed on a varied salary. We need to differentiate between lunchtime supervision and pupil support

The generic model is good if everyone is at the same skill level but some people need to be skilled up. Some tasks are a waste of time eg spending time labeling boxes

With the reduction in PSAs it means that where there are essential tasks eg toileting pupils, PSAs are taken away from support tasks, there is much less individual support.

If PSAs don't do admin then it has to be done by teachers

## **Training CPD & Support**

PSAs are expected to attend departmental meetings in their own time.

PSAs in secondary school are task-focused. The role in primaries is more generic. Secondary PSAs tend to be better qualified and undertaking more complex tasks.

There should be a job remit for PSAs?

## **Parental Involvement**

In my school the Parent Council was informed about the budget and the reasons for the decisions about the use of PSAs. This did not happen in other schools. Explaining the decision can make the difference to parents' support. Some schools were happy while others were more

affected. An explanation would have helped reduce emotion. It would have been helpful to have a SIMPLE explanation of the formula.

Research shows that the best attainment and use of skills is achieved when parents are involved. Schools where parents are involved have higher attainment.

Some parents are reluctant to get involved because of their own negative school experiences. There are complex factors involved in parental involvement – it's not just deprivation. There are differences between areas in how parents are involved

In some schools the impact of the cuts will be less apparent because of parental involvement. If measuring attainment it may not be affected because of PSAs and teachers picking up the slack through voluntary commitment.

Parents can fill the void and minimise the effect of the cuts. This is direct parental involvement. We should see what is happening in schools. If schools are not using parents then they are not using an inclusive approach.

The authority should look at whether we can offer support/training for parents and for Head Teachers in how to approach parents.

Where PSAs are still doing preparation of resources, Head Teachers should revisit that decision. Head Teachers need to be aware how to approach parents

Volunteers can be involved for a morning or afternoon per week to support administration and preparation of resources. This would allow PSAs to concentrate on support tasks. Parents do get involved when they can

Parents can support reading in small groups.

Parents are now replacing people who were in paid posts. There is a possibility that PSA hours will be further reduced if the impact of the cuts isn't seen.

## **The future**

More quantitative overview of support needs should be developed

Transition – PSA contract is to the city so they could be asked to move through stages to support pupils in transition

There is a need for support for Head Teachers in involving parents – guidance/sharing good practice/CPD

There should be a move away from the generic role

There are innovative ways to solve problems so we need to identify good practice.

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## Appendix 10

Focus Group Secondary Head Teachers 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012

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### **Background**

Allocation reduced.

PSAs' morale is low. They are stressed. Excellent team but on the go all the time.

Reductions in other budgets eg support for learning and admin so there is a cumulative effect.

### **Curriculum issues**

Teachers have to spend more time dealing with issues/behaviours when there is no other support. They are also expected to implement authority guidance eg dyslexia.

One pupil has requested more support

Class sizes have increased.

### **Tasks/Functions**

Continually have to re-prioritise needs, particularly when children with needs join the school during the year eg second starts.

Only those at the top of the list in ASN and MICAS ie those at stage 3 or 4 get support. There is no behaviour support.

The addition of first aid to the duties of PSAs causes a problem as 2 PSAs are required to give first aid because of the situation in school. Much of the 'first aid' is care – runny noses, sore heads, itchy eyes etc.

Admin support for teachers is now bottom of the priority list.

During exam time PSAs are used for reading/scribing because they are the constant throughout the year.

Good team of PSAs and use their strengths.

The reduction in PSAs must impact on attainment.

### **Training/CPD & Support**

The training offered in first aid is not appropriate for the task PSAs are asked to do.

There are regular meetings in school with PSAs in their work time. This gives an opportunity to raise issues. Timetabled so that everyone can attend most meetings.

There are more training opportunities but these are not enough to allow all PSAs to attend. Training budget tends to be prioritised for teachers although it should cover all staff.

There is a lot of self-directed training.

The new staff review protocol will identify training needs but will the authority be able to deliver training.

### **The future**

Opportunity for managers to share experience of how they manage their PSA allocation.

In-service days could be used to allow PSAs from different schools to meet up.

Work with teachers to raise awareness of their duty of care and first aid.

## Appendix 11

Focus Group Pupil Support Assistants 1<sup>st</sup> October

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### **Background**

Councillors have to understand that PSAs are crucial to pupils

Some PSAs were put off filling in questionnaire because of being asked for their name.

PSAs are so despondent that they feel there is no point in filling in the information.

Allocation is based on level of deprivation but children from professional families can be just as disruptive if not more so.

There has been an increase in pupils with additional support needs.

Not only PSAs have been cut. PSAs are asked to undertake duties to cover for cuts in janitorial, administration and support for learning staff. The remit is so wide that they can be asked to do anything.

In the exercise to allocate posts and hours, sickness record was a significant factor. This is also being assessed as part of the appraisal process and may affect future salary increases. This has resulted in people attending work even when they are ill. This creates a risk for some of the children who are very vulnerable to infection. Every minute at work has to be recorded and accounted for now.

PSAs are just waiting for the next cut. Morale is at rock bottom – PSAs have been cut twice and are still dealing with even more work.

There is a lack of support for PSAs and they feel that when they are abused by pupils they are blamed for not handling the situation properly.

Head teachers are doing their best to cope with the cuts but this has been to the detriment of the PSAs.

The good will has gone. The restrictions have resulted in PSAs only working their hours and not doing the voluntary extras that they used to do.

Some very good experienced PSAs have left. Qualifications are being valued now over experience and common sense.

Some PSAs are working to contract because they feel they have been so badly treated. This causes some tension within teams where some are working to rule and others do tasks that aren't traditionally PSA tasks.

## **Curriculum Issues**

Curriculum for Excellence has created difficulty for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder who cannot cope with an active learning environment without support. It will be impossible to assess the effectiveness of curriculum for excellence with all the cuts that impact on it.

PSA created a quiet room for ASN pupils but it can't be used now because there are no PSAs to take pupils there.

Attainment levels are not rising.

Teachers stress levels must be going up. Newly qualified teachers have not been prepared by training for the classroom situation. Teachers now have to stream pupils.

English as an additional language adds another strain on use of PSAs where children arrive with no English and cannot understand what is being said in class.

There are not enough support for learning teachers.

## **Tasks/functions**

There is less supporting learning than there was a year ago. Previously PSAs were based in one class now they are shared between classes. Where there was a pupil who needed one to one support there would be a PSA in class and one dedicated to the pupil.

High end kids are getting some support no-one else is supported.

In playground PSAs are having to concentrate on children with needs at the expense of other children.

First Aid creates difficulties especially in schools where 2 staff are required to deal with first aid. Where a PSA is on duty supervising a playground, if there is a first aid incident they have to ask a responsible primary seven pupil to keep an eye and call them if there are any incidents.

There is a need for PSAs who know pupils well enough to recognise triggers and avoid situations arising. Over the years I have seen the difference support can make, it's dispiriting to see that lost.

Reduction in time in classroom means that time is spent photocopying/laminating etc as there is no time for supporting pupils. There is a need to cover the office at lunchtime.

There are no PSAs in our school in the afternoons as the hours are required in the morning and over lunchtime but teachers need support from 9.00 – 3.00.

Children are being placed in a supported class with a mix of ASN children and low achievers with one PSA. Previously children would have been in mainstream classes with PSA support.

Children with additional support needs are being tested and given labels but then they are not given support.

There are large number s of pupils who need a bit of support but do not have a diagnosis or label, these children are missing out.

Inclusion requires one to one support for some pupils. Children with IEPs are not receiving their full entitlement of support and IEPs are being restricted by resources.

Where differentiated work is required in class it is often the PSA who has to prepare this.

There is no time for the positive support, praise and encouragement to pupils who are doing well.

Second start pupils arrive in school without any additional support; this often means that support has to be diverted from other pupils.

Those who make the most noise (pupils and parents) get resources. Lack of support means pupils are more likely to be excluded. Those who are quiet are forgotten. There is a whole generation of children being failed.

PSAs have significant office and administration responsibilities. Some do administration in the morning and cover the office over lunchtime. The new reading scheme will require PSAs to do photocopying and banding.

There is a need for more PSAs. They need to be able to communicate effectively with children. The remit is too wide including doing anything the head teacher asks.

This cut will prove more costly in the long run as pupils are being failed. These children will be society's problem in the future.

## **Training/CPD & Support**

When Aberdeen City Council decided to make one PSA job, they didn't put enough thought into it or talk to existing staff. There are a wide spectrum of jobs and the one generic remit is out of date. There are different remits in primary, secondary and ASN. PSAs are now expected to administer drugs at lunch time. For the post to be generic there is a need for support and training to ensure that PSAs know what is expected of them.

PSAs try to meet children's needs. The skills of the PSA should be matched to the work required. There are a range of different PSAs who have been taken on to do different tasks (eg admin) now everyone is expected to do the same job but some PSAs cannot do the whole job and are not coping in class. PSAs come from a range of backgrounds and can be used appropriately but head teachers have been told to prioritise support to pupils.



The first aid training bears no relation to what is expected of PSAs. Training does not cover needs of children nor the care role that is expected of PSAs. School Nurse trains PSAs in use of epi-pen etc. NHS are not helpful with training. There is a range of practice in schools but some PSAs, with responsibility for first aid, have no idea of the health background of the children they work with. PSAs have to order first aid supplies.

CPD never has enough places for those who want to access it. If training is in school time then PSAs can't get away. There is no funding for training. There is no time for training as in-service days have to be spent cleaning and catching up on work. PSAs need training for the work they are asked to do it is not enough to provide the same training for everyone. There is a need for a focus group for PSAs to look at CPD.

Training is required in:

- Diabetes
- Autism/Aspergers
- How to manage stress
- E1

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents are being encouraged to help in schools but sometimes this is inappropriate eg reading/scribing in exams without proper training. Children are used to the PSA who scribes in tests and then have to get used to someone else in the exam. Good support can enhance the child's chance of passing an exam.

There has been an increase in parents being used to do jobs that would have been done by PSAs. PSAs are not now used for trips and this means that there may not be a first aider with the children.

Some schools do not use parents to take on work that would have been done by PSAs.

### **Parental views**

There has been a rise in low level disruption in school.

## **Background**

Cumulative effect of cuts - administration and janitorial staff cut. Difficulty finding relief staff – teaching and non-teaching.

Lack of staff overall leading to increased stress and more absence.

Many experienced staff were lost. Some performance issues with redeployed staff – further drain on other staff. Existing PSAs have to support redeployed staff.

Limitations on where PSAs can be placed because of the way in which the hours are allocated to individual PSAs. Lack of flexibility. PSAs with largest number of hours are needed for ASN base pupils.

Indicators of deprivation don't necessarily reflect need eg school with no stairs has a higher placement of children with mobility difficulties. Misperception that 'leafy suburbs' do not have the same level of need.

No cognisance of pupils moving into school with high level of needs eg EAL or Second Starts.

Generic post is not best value but changing back would not be fair and would be horrendous in terms of morale.

## **Curricular issues**

Senior Management Team are having to cover all aspects of the work, including PSA duties. This is not cost-effective.

SMT are doing support for learning because of the need for improvement in attainment. Staff absences are making the situation worse. Increase in stress caused by PSA situation. There is no available staff cover for staff; teachers, nursery nurses or PSAs

Increase in number of incidents because of lack of consistency of PSAs

I am not meeting the children's needs. The reduction is such that PSAs are only allocated to children from the ASN base.

Staff are stressed about active learning.

## **Tasks/functions**

Children with most extreme ASN, both medical and behavioural, are priority. There is a limit to where PSAs can be placed because of the way in which hours have been allocated.

Increase in number of children with ASN. Managing inclusion is difficult with reduced resources

Other children in class affected by lack of PSA support both for their own learning and for reducing disruption in class.

Requirement for lunch and breaktime supervision

A small number of children require a large proportion of PSA time

Assault/incidents increased because of lack of PSAs. There is no feedback from incident forms or acknowledgement of issues. Something dreadful is going to have to happen before issues are addressed.

3Rs schools are secure at break times children cannot leave playground. Layout of school can impact on safety.

Teachers are being expected to work with extreme behavior.

PSAs feel under pressure – they are concerned about children and know they are thinly spread.

There is a lack of consistency

Pupils who do not cause problems are not a priority.

Curriculum for Excellence – outdoors is difficult without support.

Emotional needs are neglected – base and nurture group are now primarily behavioural – there are no positive role models.

No-one wants to exclude but without support sometimes exclusion gives breathing space. Exclusions are increasing for a few pupils.

ASN audit in school showed that 1/3 of the pupils have some need. ASN has a growing impact on schools and services.

Disproportionate amount for playground cover.

There should be a service pot for additionality for exceptional circumstances.

## **Training/CPD**

There is no time to develop teamwork. No opportunities for PSAs to share practice except on In-service days.

There should be better timetabling of CPD for all staff

Mainstream class teachers are expected to cope with more eg dyslexia. There is a need for training.

Teachers should receive training in de-escalation and conflict resolution. There should be a clear message from the authority on the duty of care and wellbeing and behaviour management. This should be mandatory for all teachers

Newly qualified teachers should be expected to attend induction which would include classroom management.

## **Parental Views**

The reduction in support creates a perception that the school is not managing disruption. This is highly damaging to the school's reputation. There are parental complaints and a lack of understanding of inclusion.

Parental complaints about lack of support for pupils.

## **Impact on Learning**

There has been a massive negative impact on learning

## **Future**

Alternative intensive support for some children

Smarter way of working within GIRFEC processes

Resource allocation should be evidence based not just who shouts loudest.

Shared vision and clear guidance

Information for parents

## **Appendix 13**

FOCUS GROUP ASN PARENTS' FORUM 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012

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### **Background**

The PSA allocation is reduced to a level that is not manageable with the number of pupils with ASN, particularly in practical subjects.

There is a cumulative effect of the cuts.

Class sizes are at maximum which impacts on teacher's time for each child.

Support exists on paper but in practice doesn't happen.

The focus should be on the needs of children rather than a block allocation.

Educational needs should be the focus of an education budget not social needs as is the case at present with the focus on deprivation. If you happen to live in an area with little deprivation then the budget has been slashed. The links between deprivation and resources should be loosened and resources targeted to children who have an educational need.

These reductions have resulted in reduction of support to some of the most vulnerable pupils. These pupils have not been re-assessed as requiring less support there has just been a blanket reduction.

The number of pupils with ASN is increasing due to advances in medicine meaning that more babies are surviving.

The policy of inclusion is right but there have to be enough resources to make sure needs are met. There is no consideration of children's needs this is all about money.

Plans and IEPs are being created but there are no resources to meet needs. As a parent I have to fight for everything and I get frustrated at having to deal all the time with lack of resources and knowing that if my child gets support someone else is losing out. Better planning is needed with annual reviews determining whether there is a need for ongoing support

### **Curriculum Issues**

Transitions are difficult for children with ASN.

There should be links between nursery and school and between each stage in school so that the child knows his or her teacher and classroom before the term starts.

Curriculum for Excellence is being limited by lack of resources.

## **Tasks/functions**

First aid is an issue because one PSA can be removed from support at any time to deal with an incident.

Quiet children are being ignored because they don't pose a safety risk.

Impact of lack of support causes ripples throughout the school.

Children are not getting opportunities for education and will not survive in the real world. This will have a cost for society if these children cannot be employed.

## **Training & Support**

Mainstream staff have a lack of knowledge and skill in dealing with pupils with ASN. The PSA used to be constant and know how to support the child and his teacher but now there are different PSAs in the class and they don't know the pupils or the classroom routines.

Teachers do not understand that for these children every day can be different; some days the child can do things that on other days are a challenge.

Management teams deal with inclusion differently some see ASN pupils as an inconvenience. Head teachers have different levels of commitment to inclusion. There is a need for in-service training for managers. There should be consistency across schools.

## **Parental views**

Other parents resent support given to children with ASN and the disruption that can be caused if enough support is not given.

They do not support inclusion when it is impacting on their child's learning.

Children with ASN are being set further apart because there is no support to interpret instructions. Where a PSA is allocated to a child they can be a support to others in the class as well.

## **The Future**

PSAs are not the only answer. Overlays or use of computer can also help. Need to look at things differently