

Results of consultations with schools concerning conditions of service for caretaking and cleaning staff.

DDS has been increasingly concerned about the retention and recruitment of its caretaking and cleaning staff. A working party was set up which included members of DDS, county HR service and DAPH. Gordon Aspland, DAPH link officer has been representing DAPH.

DDS wanted to ask Headteacher opinion so a short questionnaire was e-mailed to all schools :

1. Do you consider caretakers and cleaners are paid reasonable rates ?
2. If not, would you be prepared to pay more if rates were increased to help recruitment?
3. Would you allow cleaning at other times of the day or evening ?
4. Do you have any other comments or suggestions to make the job more attractive?

Results:

Out of 323 schools e-mailed, 78 sent in a reply.

- 33% feel pay is acceptable
- 67% feel pay is low
- 66% would be willing to pay more
- 18% not willing to pay more
- 83% would consider flexible working hours
- 17% no flexibility
- 20% would require extra funding to pay more
- 12% feel underpaid but would not pay more

The comments were very interesting :

- 1/ There seemed to be more concern about the number of hours, heads would pay more in order to increase hours , not increase pay , unless more money was given to schools. Though most heads agreed that pay was poor.
- 2/ The benefits from working with DDS should be made more obvious.
- 3/ Combining jobs in school is common and works well when you have a good person who wants more hours than one job could provide, ie. Cleaners, MTAs, crossing patrols , cooks, etc.
- 4/ There is a concern from heads about cleaning when children are on the premises. This is a H&S problem and has become worse since the development of breakfast and after school clubs. The general feeling is that very early morning cleaning is best. Heads do not want cleaning during the day , unless there is an emergency.
- 5/ Caretakers and cleaners should be treated as valued members of staff and though they work for DDS , they need to feel they are part of the overall school staff.

Ways forward:

- 1/ DDS are looking at ways of working closely together with other providers of non-teaching staff in terms of advertising, common salary scales and conditions of service. The aim is to make it easier for staff to combine roles.
- 2/ Greater consultations are needed with individual schools to plan more flexible working hours.
- 3/ DDS will be looking at how it can improve its conditions of service package without extra funding from schools.

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