

Headteacher Well-Being Support News January 2005

Happy New Year everyone.

1. Support now available and growing

- **Heads for heads** – informal & confidential support is now available from colleague heads who, because of their first hand experience of the following situations, are willing to listen and/or offer guidance.
 - Your school being placed into special measures or serious weaknesses
 - Suspension
 - Acting headship
 - Finding support for aged parents

Contact me and I'll put you in touch.

- **Small school headship** – meeting the demands of school leadership and management within a tight budget whilst having a significant class teaching commitment isn't easy. At the Small Schools Conference in November a group of heads volunteered to explore ways of providing 10% PPA time. We produced a booklet to support small schools, which has been passed to Peter Simmonds, Remodelling Adviser.

One of the greatest benefits for heads of the days spent working together was being able to discuss school issues with colleagues, in the absence of either a deputy or SMT, and to compare how others used their budget and deployed staff. Some colleagues were overjoyed to discover exciting possibilities for reducing their workload **and** increasing their efficiency and effectiveness.

Following suggestions on ways to reduce isolation and increase collaboration, it will soon be possible to post a question, share an idea or make a suggestion on the Small School page on Esinet and for others to answer. Let's hope it's well used and beneficial.

2. INSET

a) Heads' Well Being training

I enjoyed a NAHT training course 'Surviving, Thriving & Enjoying the Job – professional well-being & personal effectiveness' run by John Yates. He urges schools and governors to take advantage of the current climate of 'increased autonomy' and discuss work-life balance as a part of teacher recruitment and retention, perhaps using the IIP

model as a starting point, and agree a School Standard to be worked towards.

How is your life/work balance? Some tips to consider-

- Put boundaries around work- set yourself a personal life/work standard
- Stop wasteful & non-productive activities & delegate where appropriate
- Stop being a perfectionist – develop a continuum from 25% to 100% right
- Work at home for 1 morning a week
- Limit evening and after school meetings
- Change format of governors meetings & reports
- Have a 'well-being' performance target (40-50% heads have one nationally)
- Plan a 'low key' week every half term
- Be totally confident to say 'NO' or 'Not yet'

b) Effective head/deputy relations

Malcolm Davis, a Norfolk deputy is willing to share with colleagues his EdD findings on the relationship between heads and deputies once his thesis is published in the summer. If you are interested in booking him for a cluster meeting etc. contact me and I'll pass your request on.

c) Reducing working hours

Teresa Greef, Personnel Consultant with EPS, is doing an MA in Strategic Human Resources and for her dissertation is looking at work/life balance of secondary heads in Norfolk. She is willing to share her findings with me, and any interested groups, from the autumn term. If secondary heads would like to talk to Teresa about any of their concerns or are happy to pass on 'best practice suggestions' do contact her on 01603 223481.

I am working with a few small school heads to examine why some can do their job in less than 50 hours whilst others work 70+ each week. I will pass on our findings. If you have any useful tips or suggestions please email them and I'll add them to my web page on the Well Being Site on Esinet.

d) Safer driving training

for cluster training options contact Iain Temperton, NCC Driver Development Unit: 01603 223362. For further details of the Institute of Advanced Motorists contact Norfolk Branch Sec. Martin Woodhouse on 01263 732997

N.B. To heads who asked for further details of a 'Winter driving' & observed drive' it wasn't possible to arrange due to small numbers requesting it.

e) Networking opportunities

Heads' Grand Prix Go Karting Challenge – Wed. 25 May 05 North Pickenham, nr Swaffham, 4.30 p.m. for a 5 p.m. start. Are you Norfolk's Michael Schumaker? Challenge your colleagues or another cluster. Come on your own and make new contacts or bring a group. Cost approx £25 p.p. which includes 4 races. Numbers limited to 28 so book your places early by contacting me. If we have sufficient interest shown by 12 March I will confirm the arrangements.

3. Other info

Cluster groups

I have a target to attend one meeting of each of the 53 groups this academic year to meet as many heads as possible and to learn about local issues and concerns.

In the meetings last term workforce remodelling and E-courier cropped up frequently. I have discussed the latter with Alan Smith who sits on the [e-Courier Action Forum](#). If you need advice on handling paperless communication he is very willing to add to the [ICT tips](#) already available on the site. He would also value advice from schools that have found ways of improving the ways they work as a consequence of e-communications. One tip for small schools already passed on by more than one headteacher is to change the non-teaching day to Friday. The headteachers have said this gives them better time to access the e-Courier and e-mail relevant content to colleagues. The e-Courier is also going to be improved to make e-mailing articles to colleagues easier. Contact Alan Smith on 01603 224455 or alan.smith@norfolk.gov.uk.

Some colleagues were not sure of the role of the **School Improvement Support Officer (SISO)** and how they can help you.

SISOs are the Director of Education's representative in one of four areas of the County and have a communication role between their area and County Hall. They chair the Area School Support Groups which co-ordinate support to schools from across the LEA, especially for schools categorised or at risk of being categorised by OFSTED as underachieving, having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures. They play a lead role in supporting governing bodies in the appointment of head teachers. They support partnership and inter-agency working, the implementation of national initiatives and the strategic development of LEA. **For all heads they are the local contact for general support and advice, and for those schools needing it, they provide intensive support to resolve unusually difficult or intractable issues.**

Contacts:

Western area - Mike Simm 01553 669200

Northern area - Chris Wilson-Town 01692 409507

Southeast area - Bill Russell 01493 336317

Central area –being covered by Mel Croft being covered by during Tim Newton's absence from the post 01603 433276 ext. 189

Staffing

As teaching assistants' job descriptions change you may wish to encourage them to join a union so they will receive appropriate support, should they ever need it.

Are you a Canaries supporter?

Free parking available at County Hall on match days if you are a member of the Sports & Social Club. Details available on Esinet.

Well Being Meetings

Do you remember attending one of a series of county-wide meetings with David Saunders way back in 2003 called 'Promoting headteacher Well-Being in Norfolk Schools'? Over 130 heads made suggestions and I'm happy to report that many things have happened since that time. The updated report will be available on the Well Being Site on Esinet shortly.

It would be very useful to have from you any new, important suggestions as well as those still outstanding and which you think are significant, so people working in the service can discuss possible ways forward.

What is headteacher well-being?

At Norfolk Middle School Heads' conference in November they offered the following list of suggestions:



- Belonging to support groups & having someone to talk to and have confidence in
- Wanting to feel more involved with LEA e.g. more shared dialogue & consultation
- Feeling supported by LEA if you have to make a quick/tough decision

- Wanting more 'positive stroking' i.e. more acknowledgement of success from LEA
- Wanting to feel that you are 'personally known' by LEA officers
- Feeling 'on top of the job'
- Making **achievable** lists
- Working at home if you choose without guilty feelings
- Not feeling forced to take work home to do/complete
- Extending the mentor programme so heads have a peer mentor
- Having opportunities to spend a longer and more relaxed time with colleagues e.g. cluster residential visits
- Not having **all** information on-line only or on CD Roms

Julia Hurlbut
Headteacher Well-Being Support Officer

