**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF**

**Introduction**

Support staff roles are becoming more diverse following workforce remodelling. Schools are encouraged to create new roles based on the staffing structure they have created and matched to the needs of CYP. The knowledge and skills that have to be developed to meet these needs has to become part of the management process that enables staff to feel secure and confident in their roles.

The crucial contribution of support staff should be recognised through the correct arrangements for employment, deployment and performance management.

**Recruitment and Professional Development**

**Recruitment and Job Descriptions**

Advice and guidance is available from Schools > Human Resources. Here you will find model job descriptions, how to get a job description evaluated and graded, recruitment procedures as well as guidance on Cover Supervision and HLTA roles.

**Induction into new roles**

School-based induction should be a staged process which is planned. It should allow time to read essential documents, to shadow colleagues, to observe modelled provision for vulnerable CYP. SEN knowledge may need to be taught, especially in relation to supporting learning for CYP with LDD. The process could include attendance on an Induction or Introductory Training Course to confirm the basic knowledge required to work in a school.

**Using Occupational and Professional Standards**

These national descriptors are useful for a number of reasons. They provide a prototype for School Support Staff roles and are most useful when used to determine roles and the required knowledge and skills SENCOs needs to ensure. They enable schools to have a very good idea of the various skills they can expect of the support workforce and how these can be measured.

National Occupational Standards (NOV) are available at [www.tda.gov.uk/standards](http://www.tda.gov.uk/standards).

The most relevant NOS are those for **Support Work in Schools** and **Supporting Teaching and Learning**. Remember, support staff do not have to meet all the NOS, just those that are relevant to the role they have in the school or as required for a qualification.

The Professional Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) are available from [www.tda.gov.uk/hlta](http://www.tda.gov.uk/hlta). The HLTA role is a para-professional role.
and the standards are based on those for QTS. HLTA roles and responsibilities require a high proportion of CYP contact and are based around teaching and learning.

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) are used to build National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). The Professional Standards are used to confer HLTA status.

**Performance Management**
Performance management for support staff is not compulsory but is considered to be good practice. Schools >Human Resources Service website has the Oxfordshire Guidance on Performance Management for School Support Staff as well as related supporting documents.

**Training and Professional Development**
Support staff roles are mainly vocational roles and as such, will depend on training and CPD when in the role. School-based induction and training should be complemented with courses attended away from the school. These experiences offer breadth and enable staff to reflect on the role in the school and more widely. It gives an idea of career routes and progression and supports retention of experienced staff.

Enabling staff to gain qualifications has a very positive effect. It raises confidence levels and gives managers security – to be able to say to parents that CYP with SEN are supported by a qualified workforce. Information on available training and qualifications, as well as funding to support these, is available from Flying Colours Service and from the Schools> Our Services>Support Staff website.

### Support Staff Roles

With workforce remodelling, schools are able to create the roles they need to meet the demand of the provision offered by the school. New roles are being created and here we have a selection of what are the most obvious roles that directly impact on CYP with SEN. (It does not include Behaviour Support Workers or support staff from SEN Services.)

**Teaching Assistants supporting individual CYP**
TAs are sometimes employed to support individual CYP with statements. Induction is essential to ensure TAs have sufficient training to support CYP effectively. An introduction to a range of support techniques and resources is also beneficial.

Appropriate CPD would be:
- Induction Training for Teaching Assistants,
- Supporting Teaching & Learning National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2,
- Support Work in Schools (SWiS) Vocational Qualification Level 2.
Teaching Assistants who support groups and whole classes
In these roles, TAs are mostly working on their own with the CYP. Lesson objectives should be clear and understood. Managers have to know, through observation, assessment or performance management, that staff have the requisite knowledge, skills and experience for this role. School policies and behaviour management strategies should be understood and secure. Typically this role is given to experienced support staff with NVQ at Level 3 or equivalent, or have HLTA status.

Lunchtime and playground supervision
The successful inclusion of CYP with LDD depends on communication with all staff regarding the needs of these CYP and any additional and different arrangements that have to be made. Supervisors should be given opportunities to share ideas and contribute to solutions. Feedback on the CYP from and to the lunchtime and playground supervisory staff will maintain good working relationships as well as secure that desired strategies are used to support learning and well-being for all.

Training for Lunchtime Supervisors is available through Flying Colours Service and can lead to the Support Work in Schools (SWiS) Award Level 2.

Cover Supervisor
Cover is defined as taking responsibility for a class where there is an unplanned staff absence. (This does not include PPA time which is planned.) Guidance for cover supervision must be drawn up by the school in line with the school policy for cover and staff carrying out this role should become familiar with the information.

Government guidance recognises this as a level 3 role and identifies the following qualifications as training for the role. Training for Cover Supervisors is available through Flying Colours Service, is based on government guidance and can lead to the Support Work in Schools (SWiS) Certificate Level 3. The NVQ Level 3 in Supporting Teaching and Learning is also appropriate. This role can be carried out by HLTAs.

Assistant SEN Co-ordinator
This role has been growing in popularity and offered to experienced support staff, mostly TAs but sometimes administration staff. This will depend on the requirements of the role and the conditions of service for the SENCO. Each Assistant SENCO role will be decided and the responsibilities determined by the SENCO who should be the line-manager. Induction and training must be planned and a sharing of information should be a regular timetabled activity. Clarity and guidance is essential as much of this work is statutory and carries a high level of responsibility.

- Specialist training is available from the Inclusion Team and qualifications at Level 3, 4 & 5 are most suitable.
- Training for Assistant SENCO Roles is available through the Advisory Team for Inclusion and can lead to the Support Work in Schools (SWiS) Certificate Level 3.
- The NVQ Level 3 in Supporting Teaching and Learning is also appropriate. This role can be carried out by HLTAs.
- The Foundation Degree for Classroom Support or in Communication at Work are very appropriate qualifications at Level 5.

**Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) – SEN Specialist**

This is a para-professional role and the professional standards that describe this role are based on the QTS standards. HLTA standards relate to roles that mainly support teaching and learning rather than assisting with maintenance, organisation and administration. However, schools deploy staff in a variety of ways to support learning. Experienced TAs often have a considerable amount of SEN knowledge and can have a specialist role that enables them to share and pass on this knowledge to all staff as required. SEN specialist HLTAs can support the SENCO or class teacher with expertise in drawing up an IEP and have a role in the induction of new staff who support SEN.

HLTA is a status rather than a qualification and is gained through an assessed portfolio of evidence and the supporting qualifications are NVQ Level 3 or the Foundation Degree in Classroom Support.