

The Educational Institute of Scotland

# Tackling Bureaucracy – Reps 2014 Survey

An analysis of surveyed reps - October 2014

10/27/2014

# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

The Tackling Bureaucracy Survey for Reps was opened on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and closed on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

The survey comprised of twelve questions, covering topics such as whether the report was distributed, and how it was implemented. The ‘Tackling Bureaucracy’ report was the key focus of the survey. The questions also covered detail such as the ‘School Improvement Plan’, and ways in which ‘Working Time Agreements’ were affected.

Background:

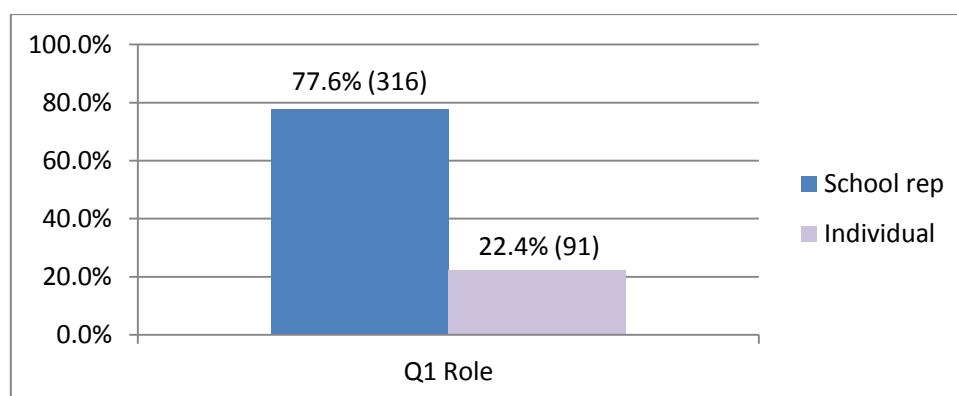
“The CfE Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy was established following a commitment by Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning at the EIS’s AGM to tackle concerns over unnecessary bureaucracy associated with the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

“The Group was chaired by Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland’s Languages, and tasked with identifying the main drivers around excessive bureaucracy relating to the implementation of CfE and making proposals for addressing the issues involved.”<sup>1</sup>

The survey was completed by 409 representatives; two respondents were removed in the cleansing process, leaving a final base size of 407. The actual numbers of respondents who replied to a particular question is highlighted alongside the percentage given, e.g. 20% (5 people). The base size (total number of respondents) of the question is written beneath the chart.

## Demographics of those taking part:

Q1. In what capacity are you completing the questionnaire?



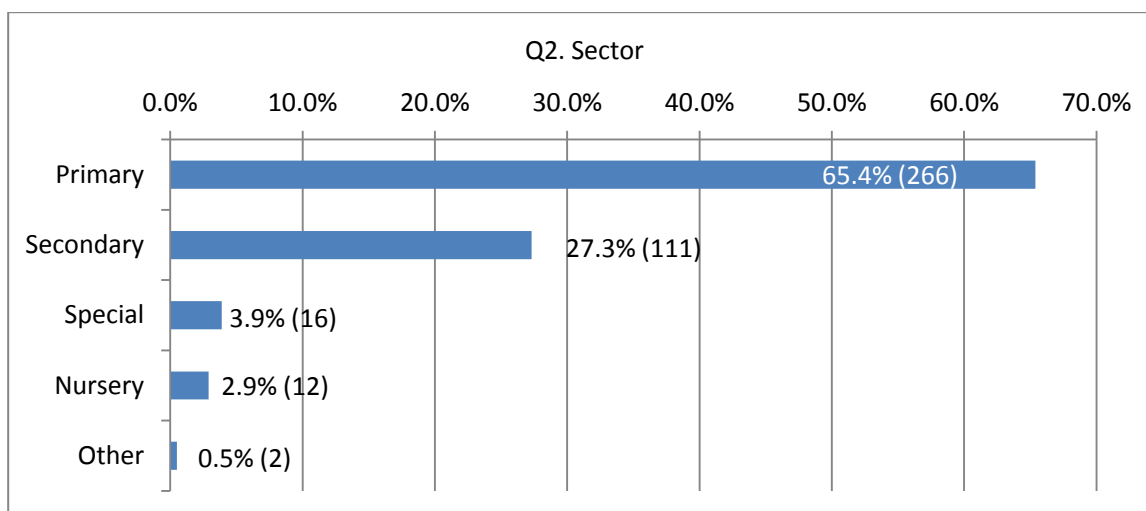
Base: 407

Over three quarters of those responding identified themselves as a school rep, while the remaining respondents identified as individuals.

Q2. Which sector do you work in?

<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (Nov 2013) *Curriculum for Excellence Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy*, APS Scotland, p1. Available from: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00438617.pdf>

## Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey



Base: 407

The majority of respondents were teaching in the Primary sector, followed by Secondary school respondents. The make-up of EIS membership is predominantly primary school teachers (over 2000 schools represented), followed by secondary teachers (almost 400 schools represented).

### Q3. Which local authority area do you work in?

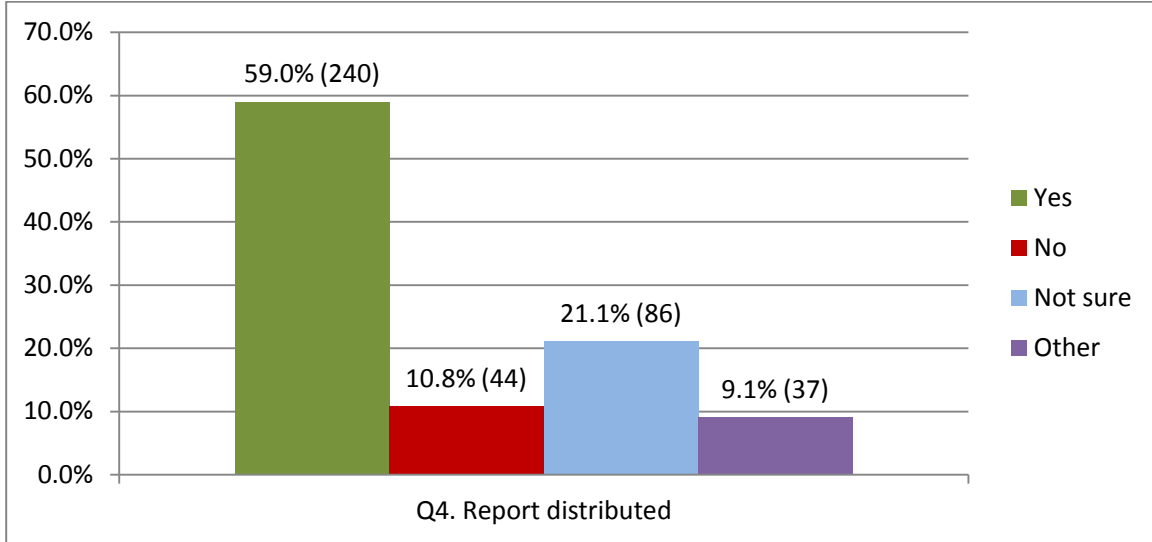
Fife	9.1%	Argyll and Bute	2.2%
Edinburgh	8.6%	Midlothian	2.2%
Glasgow	7.9%	Highland	2.0%
South Lanarkshire	6.9%	Stirling	2.0%
Aberdeen	6.1%	Renfrewshire	1.7%
North Lanarkshire	5.7%	Perth and Kinross	1.7%
Angus	4.9%	East Dunbartonshire	1.7%
West Lothian	3.9%	East Renfrewshire	1.7%
Moray	3.7%	Aberdeenshire	1.5%
Dumfries and Galloway	3.4%	Dundee	1.5%
Falkirk	2.9%	North Ayrshire	1.5%
Scottish Borders	2.7%	East Lothian	1.5%
Inverclyde	2.7%	Clackmannanshire	1.0%
West Dunbartonshire	2.5%	Shetland	0.7%
East Ayrshire	2.5%	Western Isles	0.7%
South Ayrshire	2.5%	Orkney	0.5%
B: 407			

The most populous Council regions in Scotland are Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife, North Lanarkshire, and South Lanarkshire, which closely reflects the spread of returns we received from the Scottish regions.

# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

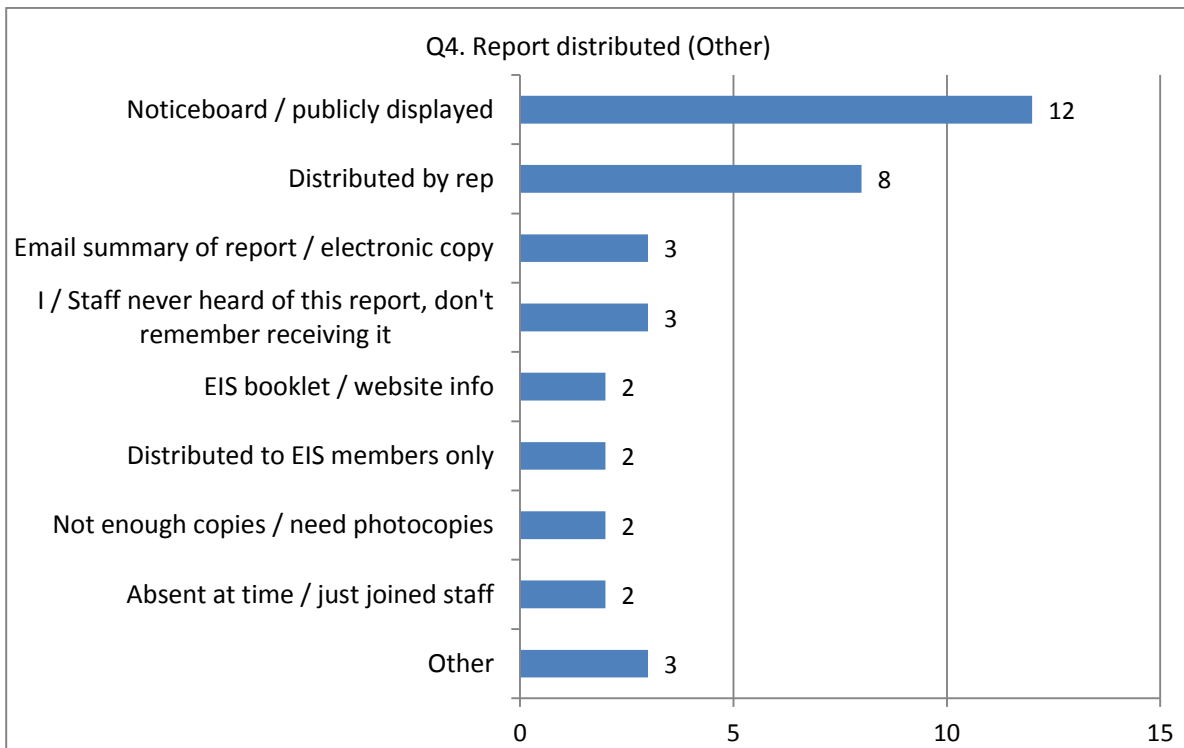
## Main questions

Q4. Was the Tackling Bureaucracy Report distributed to all staff at your school?



Base: 407

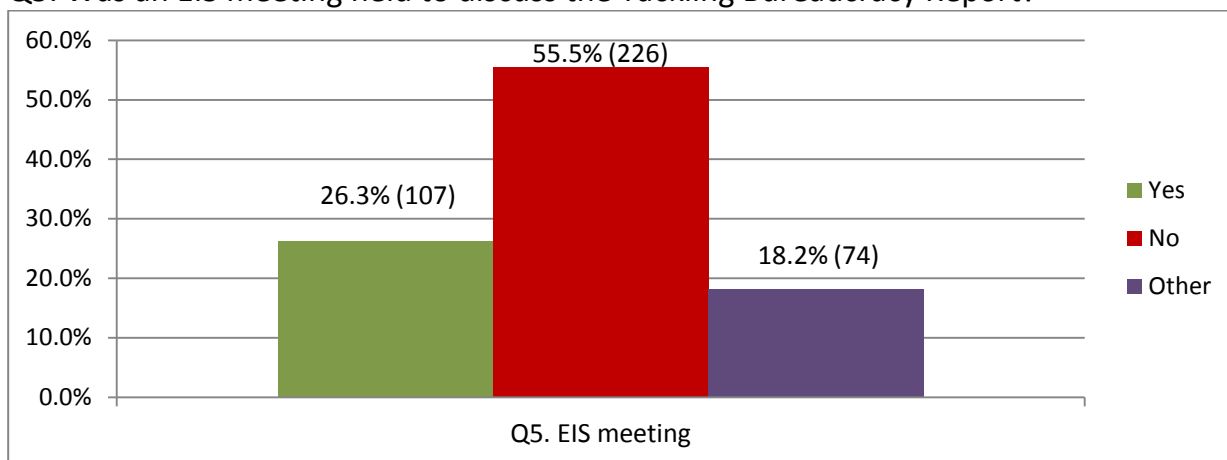
For the most part, the Tackling Bureaucracy report was distributed to all staff in the respondent school, but around 11 per cent of the sample found that this was not the case. An analysis of the 'Others' found the report was; publicly displayed, distributed by the EIS reps, or in some cases, copies were not available at all.



Base: 37

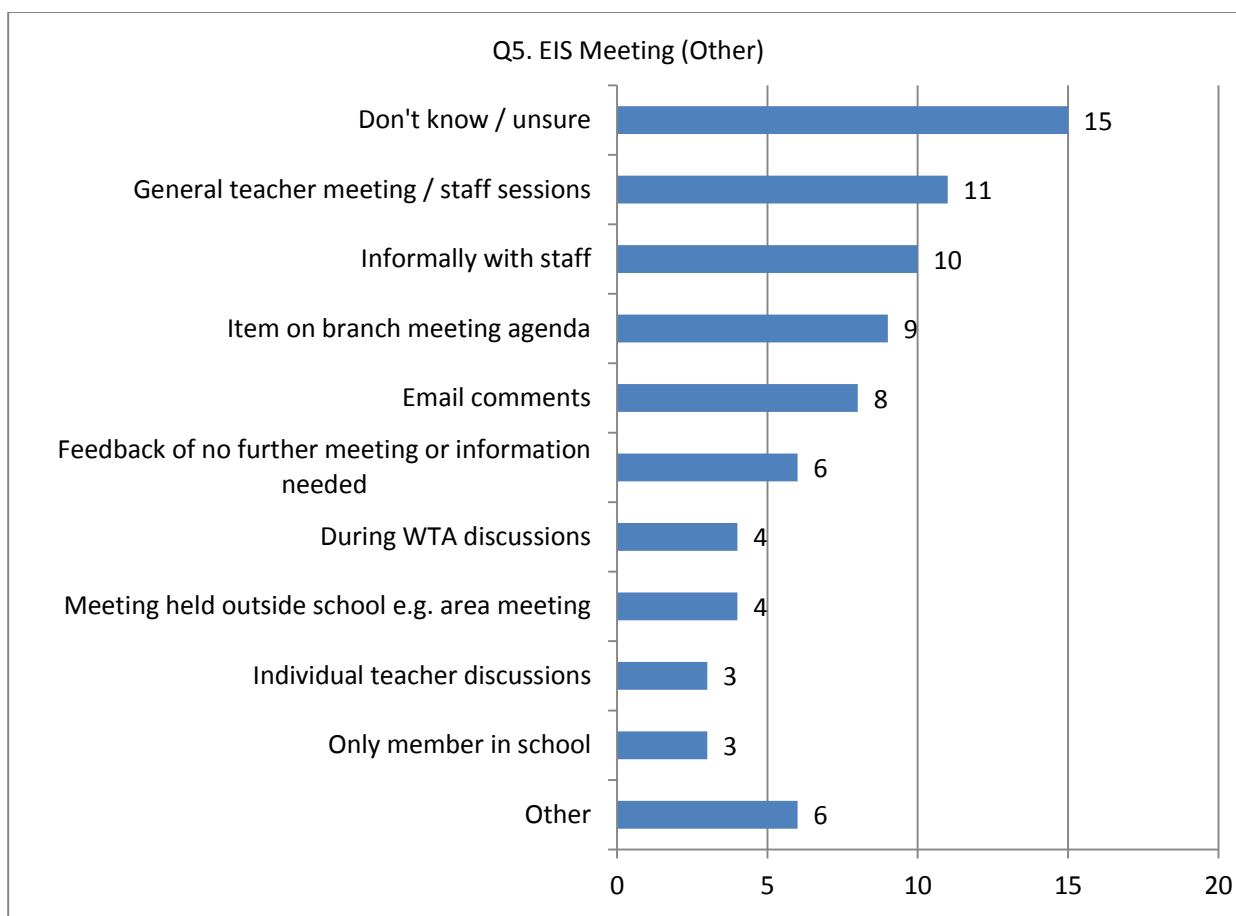
# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

## Q5. Was an EIS meeting held to discuss the Tackling Bureaucracy Report?



Base: 407

Over 50 per cent of reps did not hold an EIS meeting to discuss the report, while a further quarter of reps did. Over 18 per cent either held generic staff meetings, raised the report during other discussions, or in the case where they were the only member in school, an EIS meeting was not necessary. Some initial answers to Q5 were recoded when respondents ticked 'other' but answered 'yes' or 'no' within their answers.

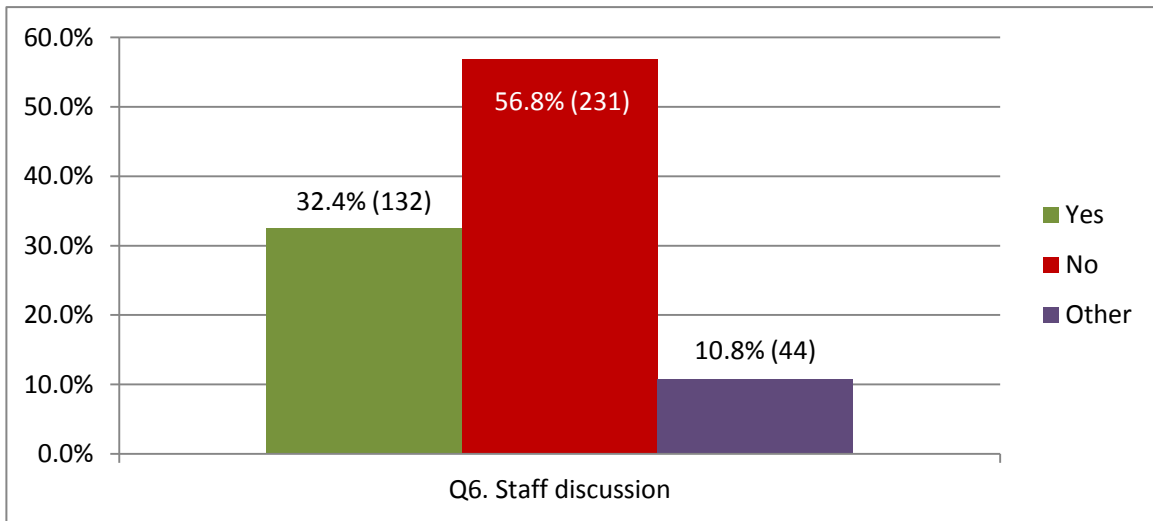


Base: 74

Of the six 'other' responses, these included that the meeting was still be held; that it was arranged jointly with the head teacher; and that particular sections of the report were highlighted to staff (but no clarification of an actual meeting).

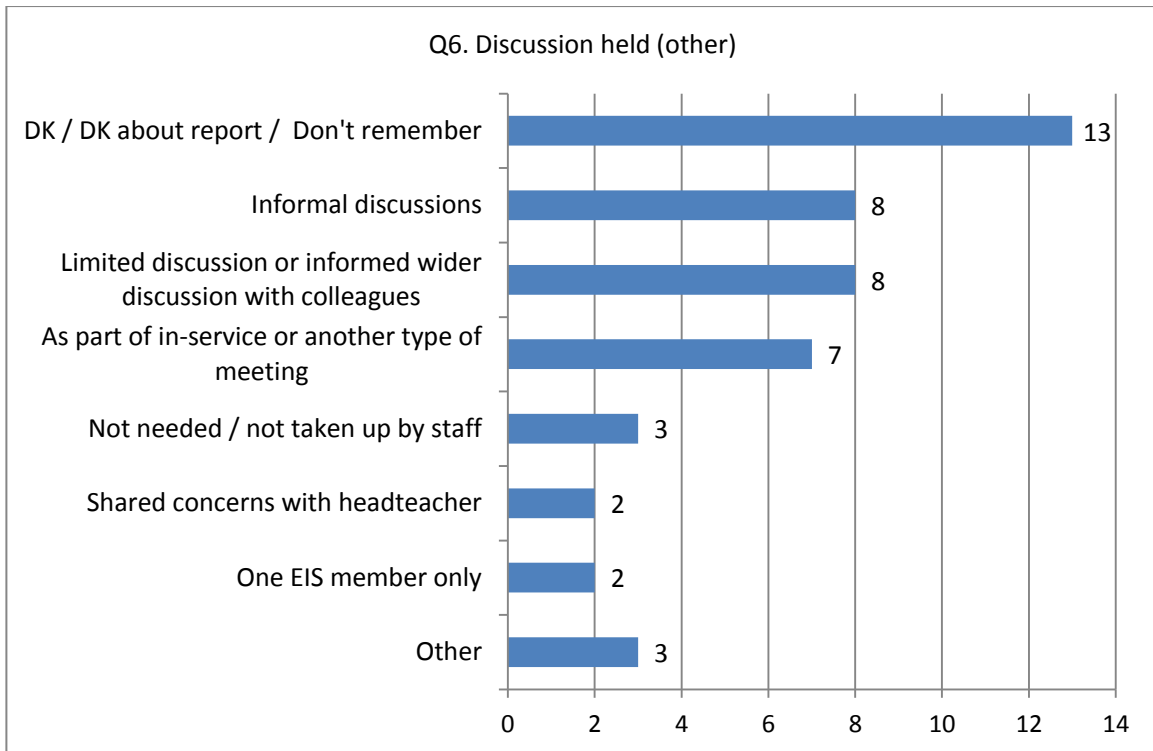
# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

## Q6. Was a staff discussion held on the Report?



Base: 407

Over 30 per cent of reps / individuals held, or took part in, a staff discussion on the report. As previously mentioned, some schools only held one EIS member, or staff reported that a meeting or discussion was not necessary, which accounts for a portion of the 56.8 per cent of respondents who did not hold a staff discussion. A further 10.8 per cent recorded their answer as 'Other', which is detailed below.

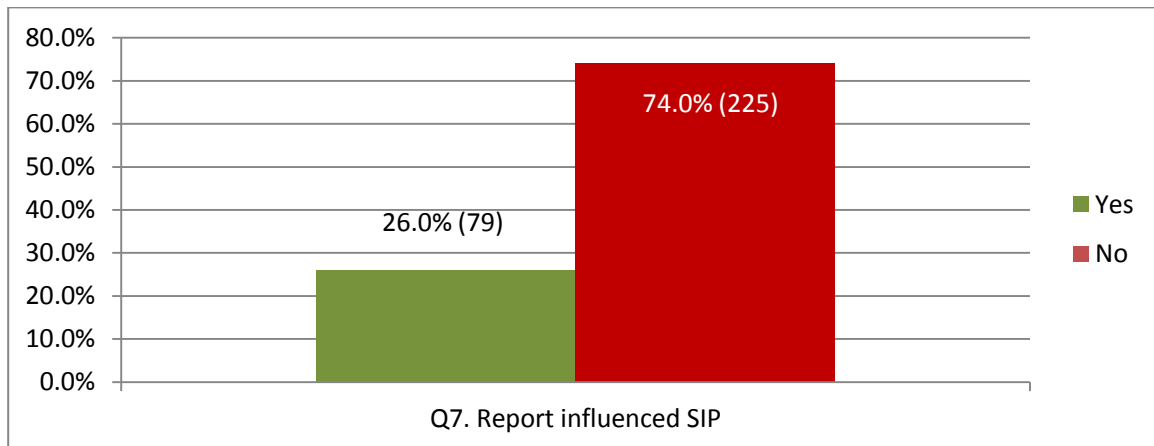


Base: 44

After question six, 103 respondents exited the survey, and so the base size reduced to 304 people for consequent questions.

# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

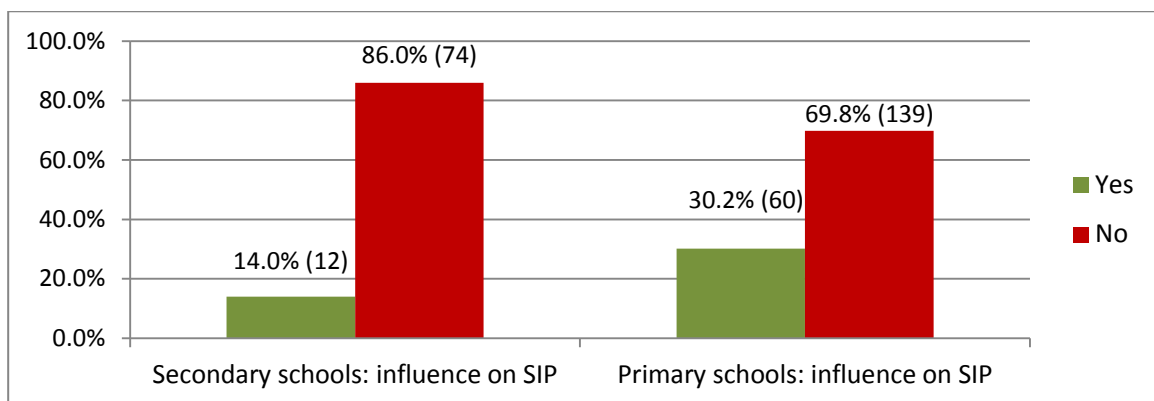
## Q7. Has the Report influenced your school's Improvement Plan?



Base: 304

The School Improvement Plan (SIP), which contains each school's targets for the next year, examines the establishment in terms of performance, ways in which to achieve internal / external initiatives, and any highlighted areas for improvement. In recent times, the SIP has been criticised for accommodating too many priorities and expanding workloads for teachers. It was hoped that the Tackling Bureaucracy report would help streamline SIPs or clarify immediate or extraneous priorities. Over a quarter of those who responded did in fact find that their SIP was influenced by the arrival of the report, but this still leaves 74 per cent of respondents who saw no changes at all as a result of the paper.

A closer look at the data by secondary and primary school reps shows that there were distinct differences to what extent the SIP was influenced by the report.

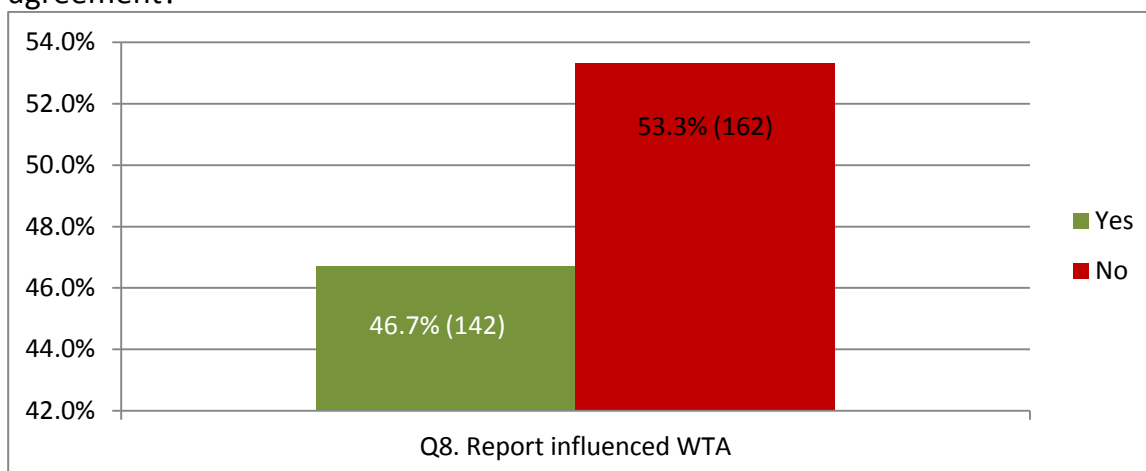


Base: 86 (Secondary), 199 (Primary)

It is clear that there has been very little influence on SIPs at secondary school level, with more than eight tenths of respondents noting no changes. A look at primary school rep responses demonstrates that the SIP was influenced to a greater degree by the report than the secondary schools: 30.2 per cent 'yes' versus 14 per cent.

## Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

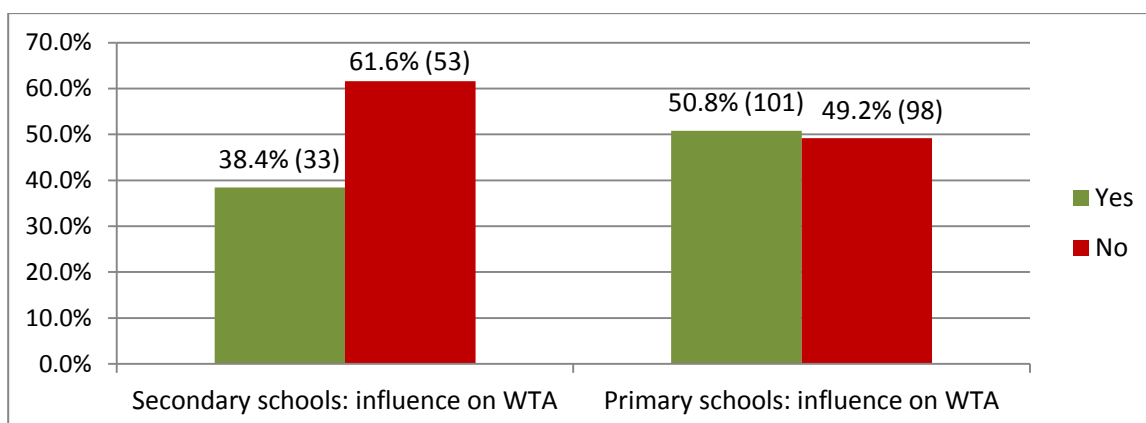
Q8. Has the Report influenced negotiations on your school's working time agreement?



Base: 304

The Working Time Agreement (WTA) is a mechanism with which to control teaching hours, workload and any other demands on a teacher's time in or out the classroom. The bureaucracy report brought greater change to the WTA, with around 47 per cent of respondents noting an influence on negotiations. As the SIP is influenced by external demands from local directorates and other education bodies, it may be more challenging for the report to directly reduce priorities in this way.

Examining the survey results by primary and secondary school reps also reveals an immediate difference between the two types of institutions.



Base: 86 (Secondary), 199 (Primary)

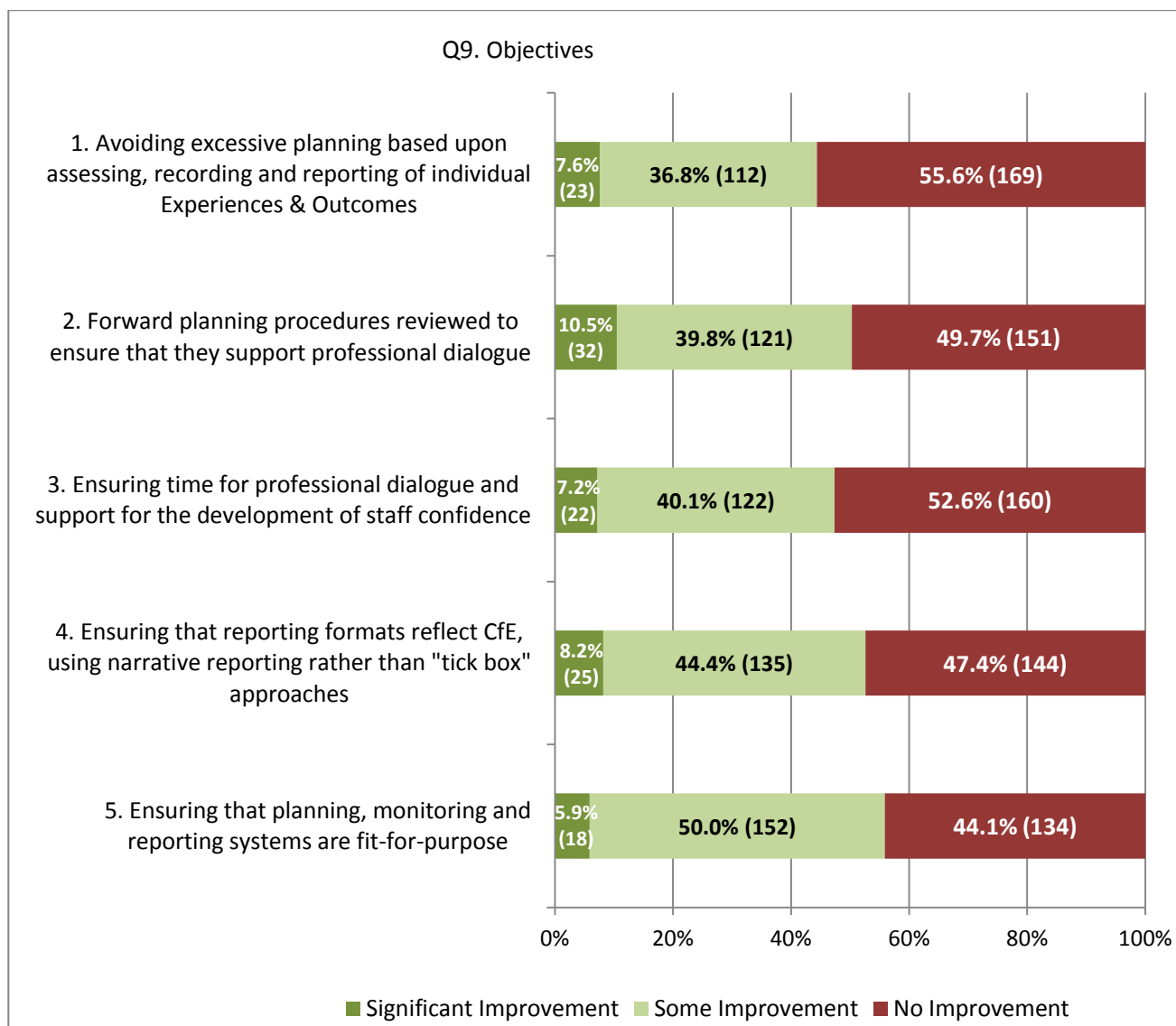
The analysis shows that similar to SIPs, there is a greater degree of change for WTAs by primary school establishments: 50.8 per cent reported that their WTA had been influenced by the report, in contrast to 38.4 per cent of secondary school establishments.

For both WTAs and SIPs, it is clear that the report has enabled greater change to be effected at primary school level.



## Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

Q9. Which of the following stated objectives, for schools and staff, have been improved by acting on the report?



Base: 304

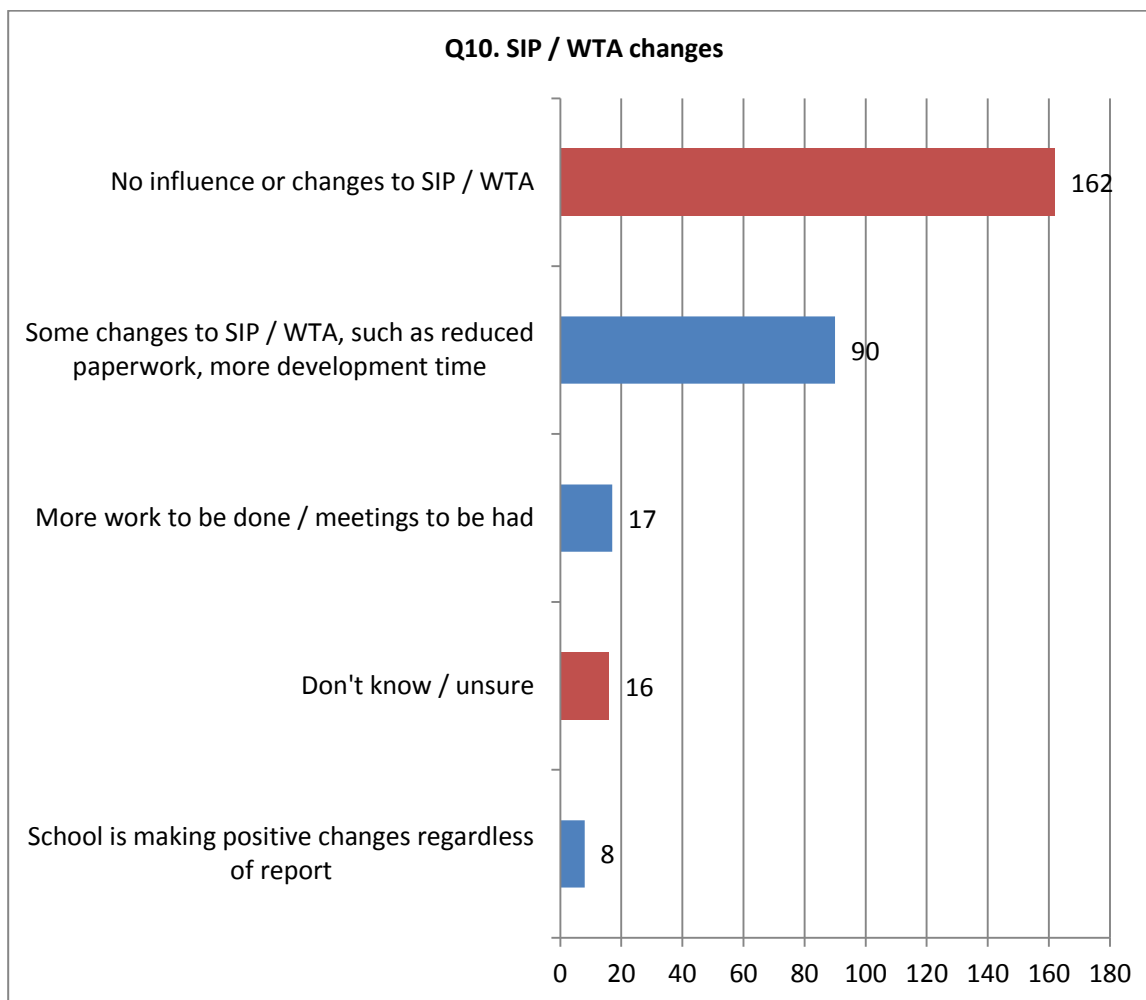
Although the results above largely point to 'no improvement' in all areas at first glance, especially points One and Three, they do show that in over half of the rest of the areas, that there was 'some' to 'significant' improvement made by acting on the report. In the case of reviewing 'forward planning procedures to support professional dialogue', 10.5 per cent of respondents reported significant improvement, with a further 39.8 per cent seeing some improvement.

The most improvement could be seen in 'ensuring that planning, monitoring and reporting systems are fit for purpose', where only 44.1 per cent had reported no improvement. If all answers are combined, then there was an overall move towards improvement; of the 1520 responses to all five questions, 50.1 per cent (762 people) rated some form of improvement for all areas.

## Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

Q10. Please detail any other ways in which the report has influenced either the SIP or WTA.

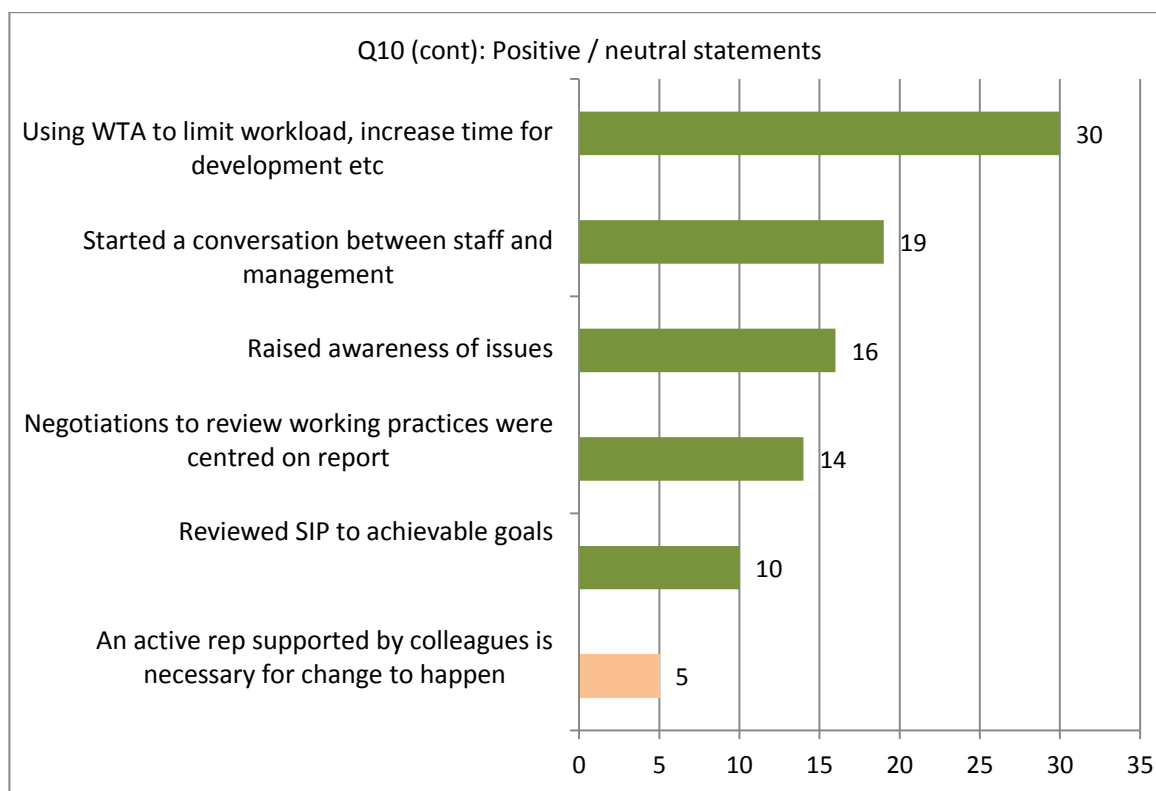
All open-ended responses for this section fall into the following five main categories. The chart bars are coloured red for negative statements and blue for positive / neutral statements.



Base: 293

Further analysis of these comments revealed ways in which workload has been reduced or reasons for changes being delayed. The following two charts<sup>2</sup> are taken from 198 key points made by survey respondents. Some respondents gave up to five key points. These have been split by negative and positive / neutral statements. Neutral statements are identified by their orange hue.

<sup>2</sup> 'Q10 (cont): Positive / neutral statements' on P9 and 'Q10 (cont): Negative statements' on P10.



## Selection of quotes illustrating open-ended comments

### Raised awareness of issues:

- “Bureaucracy hits small schools especially - fewer staff to share the load and severe budget cuts which actually have a more severe impact on small schools - fewer families to raise money to supplement the shrinking budget, and less opportunity for the school to make savings.”
- “Made SMT more aware of workload and have tried to address this but staff are in agreement that it is so difficult to prioritise and cut back. CfE has had a huge impact on teacher preparation.”

### Negotiations to review working practices were centred on report

- “A recent review of pupil assessment profiles took into account the report and it was agreed that unnecessary repetition of information would be avoided and certain admin tasks handed over to clerical staff.”
- “Although no significant change yet, our forward planning procedures are being reviewed and will be taking the report into account so hope to move to 'some improvement' this session.”

### Using WTA to limit workload, increase time for development etc.

- “Helped people to see the importance of contributing to WTA - new stronger McCrone Committee formed to discuss the WTA”
- “It has had no impact on SIP. However the WTA now has time set aside to allow staff to familiarise with new forward plans.”

### Started a conversation between staff and management

- “Highlighted the need for dialogue with SMT and SRG re planning.”

## Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

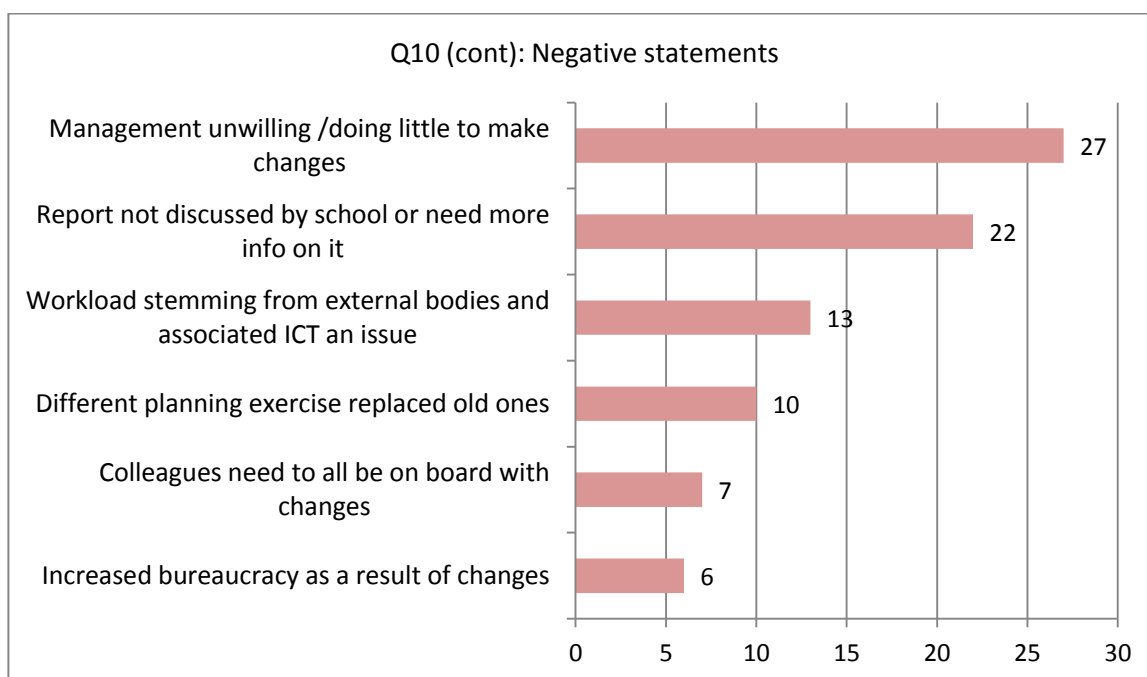
- “Management acknowledge and talk about trying to avoid excessive planning based upon assessing, recording and reporting of individual Experiences & Outcomes.”

### Reviewed SIP to achievable goals

- “The SIP has been reduced both in volume and content. The WTA was discussed and negotiated for longer.”
- “The SIP has been reduced to 3 Priorities.”

### Having an active rep (from all trade unions) supported by colleagues is necessary for change to happen

- “Impact of the report very much depends on how active a rep you have and how on-board HT is. The format the report was released in made it seem like an advice leaflet not an official document.”
- “If you have an active rep in a school and supported by staff you will get the necessary discussions happening leading to change. If there is no rep or a rep that is untrained, unsure or lacking in confidence it will not happen properly.”



### Selection of quotes illustrating open-ended comments

#### Management unwilling /doing little to make changes

- “It has been roundly ignored by almost all senior management and the authority.”
- “It is down to the management within the school that there has been no impact; it is still very much ‘don't question what I'm telling you to do’. If you do question issues, it turns out to you being shot down / ridiculed in front of colleagues. Being told if you moan (if you ask a question) then this has a negative outcome on the moral of the staff; you'll bring everyone down.”

# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

## Different planning exercise replaced old ones

- “Prioritising is something we do but increased expectations and government initiatives keep coming i.e. - GIRFEC and 1+2 so work on the SIP has to stop until these are implemented.”
- “Every time an education officer visits the school new excessive paperwork is demanded.”

## Increased bureaucracy as a result of changes

- “School piloting OTW but no extra time has been made available for staff to enter classes, courses into this.”
- “The report has been ignored. The amount of bureaucracy has actually increased.”

## Report not discussed by school or need more info on it

- “It hasn't really had a major influence as most people feel the report is a bit 'woolly' and doesn't give clear directions.”
- “None, it has been dismissed by HT and has never been mentioned.”

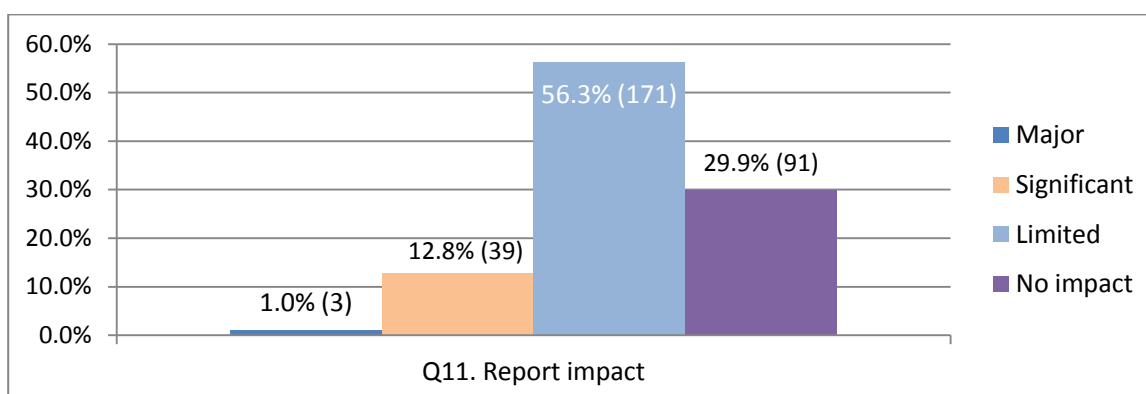
## Colleagues need to all be on board with changes

- “There seems to be an overly compliant attitude amongst staff to simply follow orders, without challenging or questioning them.”
- “A lot of staff feel they have to do things because it is expected of them.”

## Workload stemming from external bodies and associated ICT an issue

- “Our work time agreement was in line with EIS recommendations. We feel that the Local Authority has too much say in what goes into SIP and doesn't take account of the size of the school.”
- “The report has highlighted concerns many were aware of but the continued pressures on staff have not changed. As an authority using Seemis there are continuing difficulties with its use and excessive planning and reporting continues unabated.”

Q11. How would you rate the Report’s overall impact in terms of cutting bureaucracy and reducing workload?



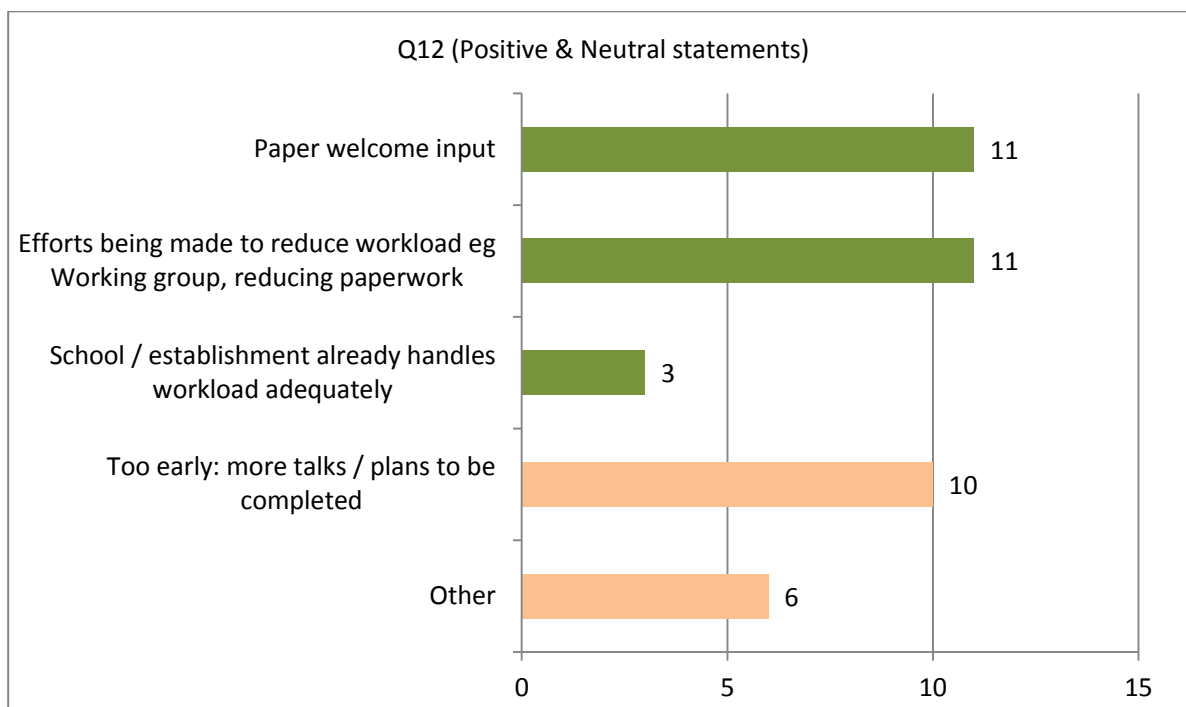
Base: 304

It is promising that over 50 per cent have reported ‘limited’ change, implying that some moves have been made to reduce workload and tackle bureaucracy since the report was published.

# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

## Q12. Are there any further comments you would wish to make?

The Q12 charts are taken from 132 comments made by survey respondents. Some respondents gave up to three key points. These have been split by neutral, positive, and negative statements.



Neutral statements are signified by their orange colour

### Selection of quotes illustrating open-ended comments

#### Paper welcome input

- “Most people are supportive of the report in theory.”
- “I have welcomed the report and hopefully over the next few years we will see a more significant reduction in workload but I feel it is too soon to acknowledge any real changes so far.”

#### Efforts being made to reduce workload e.g. Working group, reducing paperwork

- “We have a working party that will be moving changes forward for the better.”
- “We are trying to formulate new planners that take less time to complete and cut down on paperwork but this will take some time to do. The report has been very useful in provoking discussion on workload and empowering staff to say no to specific daily planning requirements.”

#### School / establishment already handle workload adequately

- “We have been striving for some time to reduce bureaucracy as we are well aware of teacher workload.”
- “We are lucky to have a very sensible management team who believe planning, assessment, reporting and tracking should be fit for purpose and sustainable.”

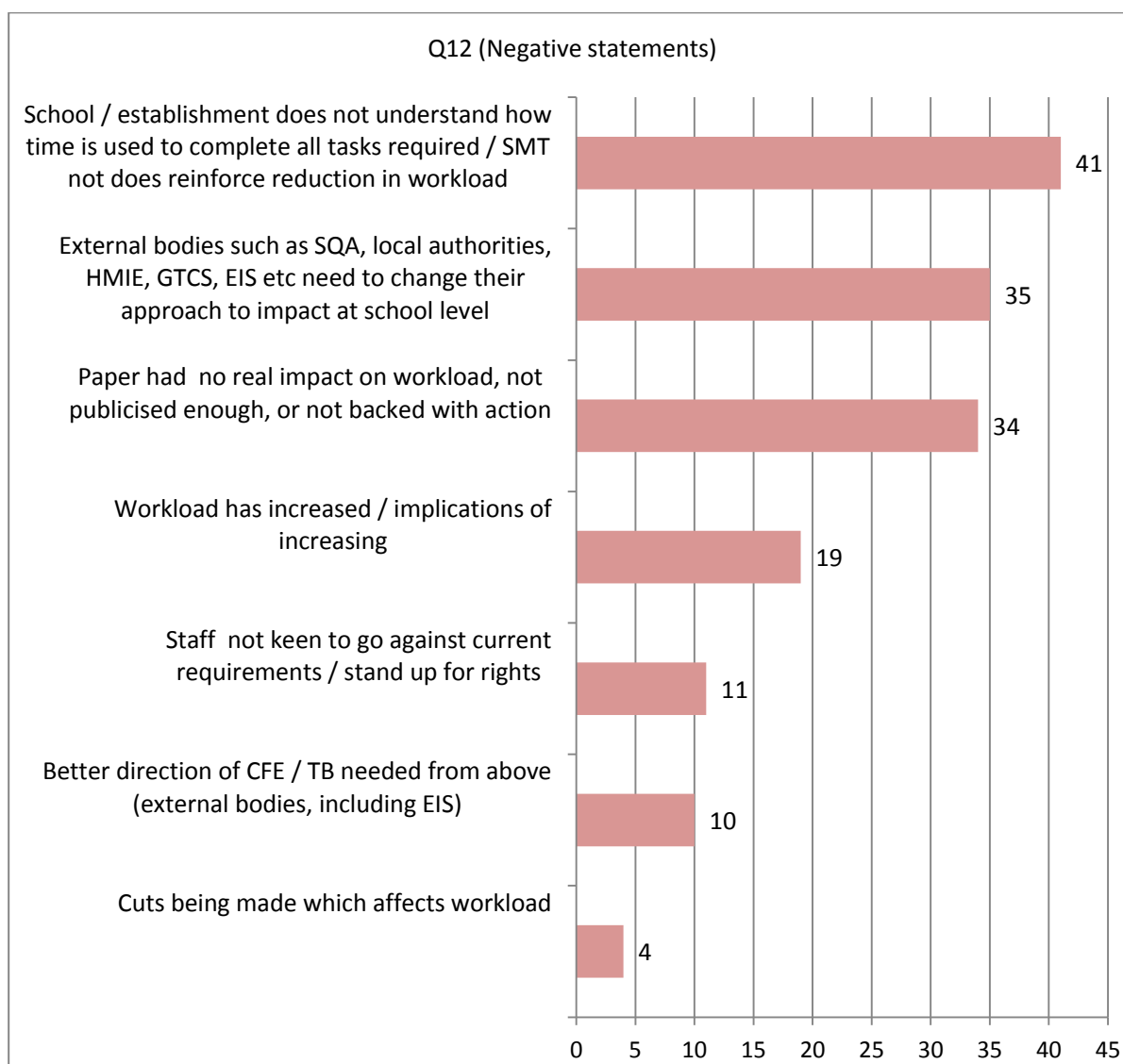
# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

## Too early: more talks / plans to be completed

- “As I don't remember getting the report, all of the above has not been done. As such, the above answers are not a reflection of the report itself, but rather that no one has read it yet.”
- “Still need time to put a lot of ideas into action.”

## Other

- “How can you reduce paperwork in a multi-composite class?”
- “I would like to be better informed about this report.”



## Selection of quotes illustrating open-ended comments

### Workload has increased / implications of increasing

- “Day to day paperwork has streamlined but the amount of excessive paperwork required by the authority is increasing.”
- “The workload in my school has increased whilst professional dialogue has decreased.”

# Tackling Bureaucracy Reps Survey

## **Paper had no real impact on workload, not publicised enough, or not backed with action**

- “In actual working practice, very little has improved.”
- “Report not much use by itself. WTA pro formas need to change overall. Current format takes it for granted that teaching staff routinely work more than 35 hours a week. Cut to admin support staff and support for learning staff also impacting on teacher workload.”

## **School / establishment does not understand how time is used to complete all tasks required / SMT not does reinforce reduction in workload**

- “HTs & DHTs should be asked to demonstrate how they have cut bureaucracy in the last year and prove it.”
- “Local authorities and therefore head teachers still have unrealistic expectations and lack confidence to trust teacher judgement. During WTA meetings there is stalemate because HT unwilling to reduce time for tracking etc.”

## **External bodies need to change their approach to impact at school level**

- “Our reports are done on SEEMIS system which is slow and cumbersome. School inspectors recommend writing reports in one format but Council dictates writing reports in another format.”
- “Now we have the GTCS on our backs, dumping a whole load of management-speak verbiage on our heads which no normal human can understand.”

## **Cuts being made which affects workload**

- “Much of it comes from our management and is exacerbated by issues such as chronic difficulties with supply staffing and severe budget cuts.”
- “It still feels as if more and more cuts are being made and, as teachers, we are picking up the pieces (and the extra work that results).”

## **Better direction of CFE / TB needed from above**

- “It is fine to write these things on paper pass it on and talk to our members about these issues, but people are under great demands due to CfE implementation.”
- “CfE still rather airy fairy about planning and tracking. Everyone seems to be doing their own thing could do with more direction to what inspectors are looking for.”

## **Staff not keen to go against current requirements / stand up for rights**

- “Teachers will keep on taking bigger and bigger workloads... because they are frightened of reprisals.”
- “We have very few permanent members of staff; nobody wants to stand up to our management team.”

In conclusion, it is still very ‘early days’ for the Tackling Bureaucracy report to have instigated a major impact on working conditions, but it is obvious that some moves are being made to address workload, external demands, and school improvement priorities. There is a clear request from members for a greater level of detail and instructions in order to achieve a reduction in bureaucracy, as well as greater levels of participation / discussion from management teams, local authorities, and associated education bodies. A multi-level approach is required to tackle the root causes of bureaucracy / workload to identify where the tasks stem from, be they directorate initiatives or in-school priorities.