

School Teachers' Review Body (STRB): Remit for the 31st Report

Supplementary Comments from the Association of School and College Leaders on the Evidence Provided by Statutory Consultees

- 1 Following the submission of evidence provided by the statutory consultees with regard to the 31st remit of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB), we wish to thank the organisations involved for the considerable thought and wisdom demonstrated in their responses.

Opposition of the public sector pay freeze

- 2 With the exception of the Department for Education, consultees were united both in their opposition to the public sector pay freeze, and the narrow remit set to the STRB by the Secretary of State.
- 3 There is a significant amount of evidence from these consultees, including ASCL, on why the pay freeze is neither fair nor appropriate. All were clear that teachers and school leaders are key workers who have gone above and beyond, working tirelessly throughout the pandemic under the most challenging circumstances.
- 4 A comment in NEOST's evidence¹ also highlights this '*All teachers, especially Headteachers have been essential in managing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.*'
- 5 Put simply, they deserve to be rewarded for this, not penalised.
- 6 In our evidence, we cited the governor of the Bank of England, who said that the economy looks likely to bounce back in Spring 2021 due to the (coronavirus) vaccine, and we also provided various other evidence around employers in the private sector who were already budgeting for pay increases for their employees in 2021².
- 7 We have seen no assurances given, by either the Chancellor or the Secretary of State for Education, that the pay freeze will only be for one year, with the department's evidence simply stating that they will '*revisit the pay policy in 2022 to 2023 once the economic outlook is clearer.*'
- 8 As the remit for the 2022/23 pay award would need to be issued in 2022, this does not instil us with confidence that the pay freeze will indeed be for just one year.

¹ NEOST evidence to STRB 31st remit

² ASCL evidence to the STRB's 31st remit

- 9 A recently published research report by CIPD³ states that ‘around 56 per cent of UK firms surveyed planned to hire in the first three months of 2021.’ Gerywn Davies, of CIPD said ‘Our findings suggest that unemployment may be close to peak and may even undershoot official forecasts, especially given the reported fall in the supply of overseas workers.’⁴
- 10 The introduction to the report⁵ states: ‘The overall picture on pay remains subdued with median basic pay increase expectations staying at 1 per cent. But behind this net figure is a dramatic reversal of recent trends: pay expectations in the private sector has shot up from 0% last quarter to 1.5%, while the public sector went the opposite way from 2% to 0%.’
- 11 The findings also showed a drop from 34 per cent to 20 per cent in firms planning to make redundancies in the first quarter of 2021, compared with the previous three months.⁶
- 12 We believe that the decision to freeze pay for teachers and leaders in 2021/22 was taken very prematurely, bearing in mind that any pay award would not be applicable until September 2021. This means that no matter what happens in the economy and the private sector, teachers and leaders will see no increase in their pay until September 2022 at the very earliest. The information above supports that view.
- 13 It is therefore, not surprising that when we recently surveyed our members, 81 per cent of respondents did not agree with the Chancellor’s decision to freeze public sector pay, 9 per cent were unsure/had no opinion and just 10 per cent agreed with it. (Appendix 1).

Impact on £30,000 starting salaries

- 14 Another area of concern as a result of the pay freeze, is the delay to the move to £30,000 starting salaries for teachers. This manifesto commitment was due to be implemented by September 2022, but has also been paused, again, we have had no assurances on how long this will be for.
- 15 The aim of this policy was to make teaching more attractive with a salary more in line with other graduate professions in order to help address recruitment and retention issues.
- 16 Many trainee teachers will have applied with that in mind, only to find out once they had been accepted, or even started on their teacher training courses, that this would no longer be the case.
- 17 This could have a dramatic impact on the retention of those trainees once they qualify, and could actually have the opposite effect of the intention of the policy.

³ [Labour Market Outlook: Winter 2020/21, CIPD, 22/02/21](#)

⁴ [More than half of UK firms plan to hire new staff, BBC news, 22.02.21](#)

⁵ [Ibid](#)

⁶ [Ibid](#)

- 18 The CIPD report⁷ looks at ‘hard to fill’ vacancies and says: ‘*Recruitment difficulties are slightly higher in the public sector (62 per cent) than the private sector (56 per cent) and are most prevalent in healthcare (75 per cent).*’
- 19 Notwithstanding our position that any increases applied to starting salaries should be applied across all pay ranges and allowances, we fail to see how delaying this is going to do anything to support recruitment, and it may actually have a negative impact on retention.

Performance Related Pay

- 20 We were pleased to note that for the second year, all of the teaching unions are calling for the removal of performance related pay (PRP) as a mandatory requirement from the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).
- 21 We were disappointed not to see this included as an item for review in this year’s remit following the united call last year. If the majority of statutory consultees are calling for its removal from the STPCD, we have to question why it has been omitted from the remit.
- 22 Furthermore, we must object to the statement in the department’s evidence⁸, that performance related pay is an important part of their teacher pay offer and that schools could choose to provide accelerated pay progression. They say that this flexibility ensures that schools are still able to use pay to support retention and reward performance, despite the pay freeze.
- 23 Performance related pay and annual uplifts are two completely separate things. Pay progression should not be confused with annual uplifts. Even if a teacher or leader was awarded pay progression or accelerated pay progression, the value of the new salary would be lower than it should be due to the pay freeze, so effectively yet another real-terms cut.
- 24 As stated in our submission for the 30th and 31st remits, there is no evidence to suggest that PRP has a positive impact on student outcomes and increasing evidence that it has a negative impact on workload and retention.⁹
- 25 Additionally, we voiced our concerns last year on the department’s evidence for the 30th remit, stating the need to keep PRP in order to make their proposals affordable. They stated¹⁰ that this ‘*requires schools to continue with their current policies towards performance based pay for all teachers, allowing similar numbers of high-performing teachers to progress more rapidly as now, and likewise continuing to constrain pay progression for similar numbers of lower-performing teachers as now.*’
- 26 Pre-determining the outcomes needed from decisions on teachers’ pay progression in order to ensure a proposal is affordable is wholly inappropriate.

⁷ [Ibid](#), pg 9

⁸ DfE evidence to STRB 31st remit

⁹ [Factors affecting teacher retention: qualitative investigation, DfE March 2018](#)

¹⁰ [Ibid](#), page 42, paragraph B22

PRP was introduced to improve standards, and there is no evidence to demonstrate that this has been the case.

27 ASCL's position on PRP is that employers should have the autonomy to choose whether or not to continue with a PRP system, or whether to develop an alternative robust appraisal system that is not linked to pay progression.

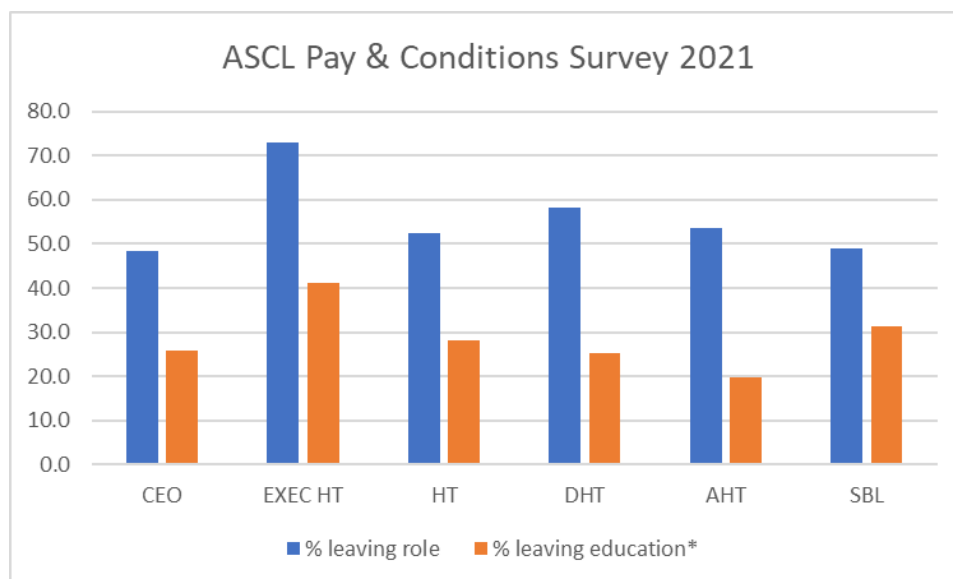
28 We stand by the comments we made on this last year, that we cannot commend a model that relies on PRP to make it affordable.

ASCL Member Pay and Conditions Survey

29 In our initial evidence submission we stated that we were conducting a survey of our members on matters relating to this. The survey results and summary report are appended to this evidence. (Appendix 1).

30 Our concerns around the retention of school leaders are clearly well-founded.

31 Over 50 per cent of Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and Assistant Headteachers are considering leaving their role, with 28 per cent of Headteachers considering leaving education *for either a role outside education or early retirement. The graph below shows the full details.



32 Of all members who are considering leaving for either early retirement or a role outside education, pay is mentioned over seventy times as either the main reason for leaving, or a contributory factor. A sample of these are listed below:

- *Below inflation pay rises for the majority of past decade.*
- *Pay for responsibility too low.*
- *Pay is terrible for what is expected.*
- *Pay for the hours worked equates to minimum wage.*
- *Pay and working hours during the week.*
- *Workload, pay, hours worked. The usual!*

33 Other key headlines from the survey are:

- 71.3 per cent of respondents report working additional hours than pre-Covid-19; the 71.3 per cent is made up of 16 per cent working 1-5 hours more, 28 per cent working 5-10 hours more, 15.7 per cent working 10-15 hours more and 11.4 per cent working 15+ hours more per week.
- 72.4 per cent of respondents do not feel that they have an acceptable work/life balance, 7.9 per cent are unsure and 19.7 per cent do feel that they have an acceptable work/life balance.
- 47.7 per cent of respondents do not feel that their workload is manageable; 16.8 per cent are unsure, and 35.5 per cent feel that their workload is manageable.

Other issues

34 We note that both NASUWT¹¹ and Voice¹² call for an increase in PPA from 10 per cent to 20 per cent. Whilst in principle we can see the merits in this proposal, without significant investment from the government for schools to employ additional teachers to facilitate this, it would be totally unworkable.

35 Furthermore, with the current recruitment and retention situation, schools are already struggling to employ the number of teachers that they need to run their schools and curriculum efficiently and effectively, and without improvement in teacher supply and sufficient funding, this move would simply exacerbate the issue.

36 This would also have a disproportionate effect on those already facing particular recruitment and retention issues.

Recruitment and Retention

37 A research report 'Understanding Teacher Retention'¹³ by RAND Europe, published by the Office of Manpower and Economics (OME) on 9 February 2021, confirms what previous evidence has shown, that *'pay and rewards are important retention factors, but they are not the only factors that shape teachers' retention choices.'*

38 The report also states that respondents were more sensitive to the loss (reduction of pay and pension), compared to the gain (increase) of pay rewards.¹⁴

39 We acknowledge that pay is not the only retention factor, but it is an important one, and a pay freeze which will equate to another real-terms pay cut will clearly have an impact on this.

¹¹ NASUWT evidence to STRB 31st remit

¹² Voice evidence to STRB 31st remit

¹³ [Understanding Teacher Retention, RAND Europe, February 2021](#)

¹⁴ [Ibid, RAND pg 7](#)

- 40 In our initial evidence submission, we highlighted our concerns about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the recruitment and retention of experienced teachers and school leaders.
- 41 We reported that we had seen an uptick in pension enquiries from our members. This has been confirmed in the results of our survey.
- 42 In their evidence, Voice also report early anecdotal indications that *'an exodus of staff would well be on the cards, especially within senior leaders, and this should be a worry for the whole sector.'*¹⁵
- 43 NEOST also report similar findings in their evidence¹⁶, *'We are starting to hear anecdotal evidence from local authorities around a rise in the number of resignations and requests for early retirement. Most areas that raised concerns described an emerging trend in the numbers of teachers and school leaders resigning or teachers indicating there were not ready or willing to move into senior leadership roles e.g. Deputy Head Teacher.'*
- 44 A common theme through the feedback they received from local authorities, secondary and primary schools, is that the most difficulties in both recruiting and retaining were Headteachers, experienced teachers and Senior Leadership members.¹⁷
- 45 It is no coincidence that experienced teachers and school leaders have seen the worst erosion of pay since 2010 due to real terms cuts and differentiated pay awards.
- 46 They now face even further erosion of their pay due to the imposition of the public sector pay freeze.
- 47 This can only serve to worsen these recruitment and retention issues in these roles, and coupled with the projected increases in pupil numbers over the next few years, the situation will be beyond crisis point.
- 48 We look forward to discussing these issues further when we meet with the STRB on the 22nd March.

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26 February 2021

¹⁵ Ibid, Voice pg 6

¹⁶ Ibid, NEOST pg 10

¹⁷ Ibid pg 9