School Teachers' Review Body (STRB): Remit for the 34th 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 34th 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.

2 It is again pleasing to see so much consensus amongst the majority of consultees, as demonstrated in the joint union statement from ASCL, Community, NAHT, NASUWT and NEU and in our individual submissions.

3 We must reiterate our frustration and disappointment at delays to this process, yet again, caused by the Department's inability to meet the published deadline, despite commitments made by the Secretary of State in her letter of 14 July 2023 to trade unions to settle the pay dispute.

4 This delay was also accompanied by delays in the publication of the HM Treasury Economic Evidence to the Pay Review Bodies[1], the Schools' Costs Technical Note[2] (SCTN) and the Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders[3] (WLTL) Wave 2 Report. Some of these were used by the Department in putting together their evidence, but other consultees were prevented from doing the same due to the fact that they all adhered to the deadline set by the STRB but the Department did not.

5 We note that, at the time of writing, we have still only received the executive summary of the WLTL.

6 The whole process this year has afforded privileges to the Department over other consultees. This is not appropriate or acceptable.

United views

7 It is important that the Review Body takes note of the areas of agreement between the majority of consultees (generally with the exception of the DfE).

8 These include the most important issues covered by this remit:

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[1] Economic Evidence to the Pay Review Bodies: February 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[2] Schools' costs: technical note
[3] Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 2 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- ✓ The need for a fully funded, above inflation pay award which is undifferentiated and must be part of a strategic approach to the restoration/correction of teacher and school leader pay.
- ✓ The lack of competitiveness of the £30,000 starting salary which has now been implemented.
- ✓ The impact that the erosion of pay has had on the profession, both in terms of recruitment into the profession, and more widely on the retention of teachers and leaders at all levels.
- ✓ The need to focus more on retention and not just primarily recruitment to the profession.

9 There is also strong consensus that affordability is not an area which should be considered by the Review Body or have any influence on its recommendations. Rather, this is a political decision for the government to make after receipt of the Review Body's recommendations. Given the lack of evidence presented by the government in this area, we think this point has been well made.

Level of pay award

10 It was surprising to see that the DfE made no specific recommendation on pay, as it has in previous years.

11 However, we note that in its evidence[4] (paragraph 12), it said '*Pay awards should strike a balance between providing a fair and reasonable offer for public sector workers whilst delivering value for the taxpayer and being mindful of the wider economic situation*'. This fails to recognise that they also need ensure that pay is appropriate in order to ensure sufficiency in terms of recruitment and retention.

12 We note again the celebratory and self-congratulatory language used in relation to the number of teachers since the school workforce census (SWC) began (paragraph 19). This is meaningless given the higher pupil teacher ratio (PTR) rates due to the higher rates of increase in pupil numbers over the same period.

13 In paragraph 107 the DfE points out that it is important to consider the context of the most recent pay awards. This is something with which ASCL agrees. The awards in 2022 and 2023 were made amid a cost-of-living crisis, and still represented below inflation increases, which means further erosion of teacher and school leader pay due to real-terms cuts.

14 Pay settlement data is cited as the most appropriate comparator for pay review body decisions. In our submission we provided significant evidence to show that, whilst pay settlements and pay growth are important, they must not be the only factor that influences the STRB's recommendations.

15 The data cited was XpertHR's median settlements across the economy, saying that '*median settlements across the economy have been between 5% and 6% so far in 2023-24, making the 6.5% award for teachers slightly above the wider economy*.'

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[4] Government evidence to the STRB

16 However, as we highlighted in our evidence[5], ONS data shows that annual growth in regular earnings between September and November 2023 (the period during which the teacher pay award was effective) was 6.6%, higher than the 6.5% award for teachers and leaders.

17 ONS[6] also reported that average earnings growth in the year to December 2023 continued to be lower in the public sector than the private sector.

18 The section on *'Financial support for early career teachers'* includes information on the Levelling Up Premium (LUP), stating that it provides '*one clear offer to new teachers and potential teachers'*.

19 In the 2022/23 academic year, it is cited (paragraph 68) that 4,615 teachers received LUP payments, which is estimated to be over 90% of eligible teachers.

20 This represents less than 1% of the teaching workforce (FTE).

21 Furthermore, if 4,615 represents 90% of eligible teachers, this means that only 5,127 teachers are indeed eligible for the payment. These are tiny numbers compared to the record number of teachers who left the profession last year, the disastrous recruitment to ITT and the severe shortages across the sector.

22 In reality, this section of the Department's evidence only applies to a tiny proportion of the workforce.

23 We note that the example used in paragraph 111 to demonstrate the '*highly competitive salaries achievable for those who are looking to pursue a leadership career'* is the median salary for headteachers in LA maintained secondary schools (£99,660). This is literally the highest figure available within the SWC.

24 What this actually demonstrates is the potential salary available only for those who go into secondary headship in the maintained sector.

25 It is also important to note that there are almost 21,000 headteachers in England[7], but there are only around 3,500 secondary schools in England, and just 17.8% of these are LA maintained.

26 For more common leadership roles such as assistant headteacher or deputy headteacher, the average salary is much lower.

27 The SWC 2022[8] shows that the average salary for 'other leadership teachers' in the state-funded secondary sector was £62,561 – significantly lower than for headteachers.

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[5] ASCL evidence to STRB 34th Remit
[6] ONS Labour market overview, January 2024
[7] School teacher workforce, GOV.UK
[8] SWC 2022

28 For state-funded nursery and primary, the average salary for headteachers was £67,668 and for other leadership teachers it was £52,723. These figures are much more relevant as there almost five times as many primary schools in England than secondary schools.

29 The overall averages across all phases of state-funded schools were £56,796 for other leadership teachers and £70,831 for headteachers.

30 It is disingenuous at best to use the role with the fewest numbers and the highest salary as an example of an achievable salary for those looking to move into leadership.

31 Furthermore, the example cited for teachers taking on additional responsibilities being able to earn up to £72,649 is using the maximum of the upper pay range in the highest of the London pay areas and the maximum possible TLR allowance payable. This is all very misleading on the part of the government.

32 The reduction in National Insurance contributions in January 2024 is cited (paragraph 115) as an improvement to the teacher reward package. Yet again, this claim is disingenuous as the reduction applies to all professions, and improving teacher take-home pay was not the driving factor behind this. Additionally, this does nothing to improve the competitiveness of teacher and leader pay, as the reduction applies to other professions.

33 We were disappointed to see the government conflating, in paragraph 112, pay decisions based on career progression with the principle of a separate cost-of-living award. Governance boards and school leaders are best placed to assess a teacher or leader's career progression and to support them to move up through the pay ranges. However, consideration of the wider implications for the pay of the profession on recruitment and retention cannot, and must not, play a part in that process. This is most properly the role of the STRB. A key part of that role is to ensure that the pay of teachers and leaders remains competitive and supports wider government policy on recruitment and retention. As such it is imperative that cost-of-living awards remain separate from any pay increase enjoyed as a result of career progression. It is therefore unhelpful to have the government add the two figures together. It is also misleading, as well as being unrepresentative.

Starting salary

34 It is interesting to see how differently the Department views the impact of the £30,000 starting salary from other consultees.

35 Due to the delays in the implementation, the cost-of-living crisis and significant increases to graduate starting salaries, £30,000 has not improved pay competitiveness, nor has it closed the gap with the most well-regarded professions.

36 It is quite puzzling to read the impact that the Department believes that this policy has had, especially considering that the disastrous recruitment to ITT

targets last year were from the first cohort who would have benefited from the £30,000 starting salary.

Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS)

37 ASCL concurs with the DfE evidence (paragraph 116) that the teachers' pension scheme (TPS) is '*one of the most generous pension schemes available'*. However, the assertion that equates the increase of the employer contribution to 28.6% from April 2024 to '*the private sector, where 85% of employees receive less than 10% employer contribution and more than half receive less than 4%'* is both misleading and disingenuous.

38 Most private sector pensions are Defined Contribution (DC) schemes. In such schemes, both employer and employee contributions are invested to build a pot of money, which the employee will live off once retired. Clearly in such a case, the higher the employer contribution the more will be available in the invested fund.

39 The TPS is a Defined Benefit (DB) pension scheme which, governed by regulation, operates in an entirely different way. There is no pot of money. Instead, for a fixed (and compared to the private sector, a high) contribution teachers are assured a guaranteed income upon crystallisation, dependent upon pensionable service and salary.

40 Consequently, the level of contributions, both employer and employee, make no difference whatsoever to the benefits received. The increase in the employer contribution from April 2024 does not impact on benefits.

41 The DfE submission (paragraph 116) refers to the 2020 valuation and associated Treasury Directions within the aegis of the Public Service Pensions (Valuation and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2023, and as informed by the Government Actuary Department (GAD).

42 Here, it is important to note that the 2020 valuation lay entirely within the cost cap mechanism corridor (+/- 3%). The analysis shows that most assumptions that determine the employer contribution rate (such as longevity, demographics, fund and contribution changes) put downward pressure on the rate.

43 The overwhelming factor creating upward pressure was the effect of the cut in the SCAPE discount rate from CPI+2.4% to CPI+1.7%. This was due to a worsening of long-term predictions of economic growth, predicated on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), on which the SCAPE discount rate rests.

44 It is worth noting that ASCL opposed[9] what it considered to be this flawed model in its response to the 2022 SCAPE rate consultation, opting for the more stable Social Time Preference Rate as its preferred predicator.

45 Other factors contributing to the increased rate include the impact of the Goodwin legal challenge and the McCloud judgement, both of which were of

[9] ASCL response to HM Treasury consultation on discount rate methodology for public sector pensions

the government’s making but whereby the costs are vectored into the scheme valuation.

Inclusion in Document of leadership scales

46 It is pleasing to note that the National Governance Association (NGA) also calls for the reintroduction of the leadership pay scales (paragraph 2.17). This is something that ASCL and other consultees have long called for. It is nonsensical to reintroduce pay scales for all pay ranges except leadership and leading practitioners. We would like to see this rectified.

47 We note with interest NGA’s suggestion of the establishment of a pay scale for middle leaders to reduce the necessity to award teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) allowances.

48 We are supportive of the introduction of a variety of career pathways, as detailed in our evidence on this remit item for the 33rd remit. We are also continuing to look at ways to enrich the opportunities available to teachers and leaders as they get older to increase the time they spend in the profession, and this suggestion may support that aim.

49 However, this is something on which we would need to see more detail, particularly in relation to how it would align, not only with the current leadership pay scales, but also in relation to terms and conditions.

50 It would need careful consideration to assess any potential unintended consequences.

51 We have already voiced our concerns over a number of years about the protections our members lose when they move into a role which is remunerated on either the leading practitioner pay range or the leadership pay range, in that the provisions of directed time (195 days/1,265 hours) do not apply to them.

52 We know that many middle leaders are reluctant to progress into leadership roles because of this so, within the current provisions of the Document, this could potentially be a deterrent for teachers to move into middle leadership roles.

Business leaders

53 It is pleasing to see our sister leadership union NAHT also raising the issue of business leader pay (paragraph 108) and repeating the call for business leaders to be included in the STPCD within the leadership pay range.

54 We highlighted the results of our business leader pay survey, which showed that 50% of respondents planned to leave the profession within the next three years and that 70% of respondents felt that their pay was below that of senior leadership colleagues.

55 NAHT's evidence cites survey results from business leader members (paragraph 117) showing that 81% of respondents did not feel that their salary fairly reflected the role and responsibilities that they undertake.

56 It is clear, from the ASCL and NAHT surveys, that those working in business leadership roles are not served well by the NJC pay arrangements, and this presents a huge risk to the sector if we see the mass exodus suggested in our results.

57 We urge the STRB and the Secretary of State to take urgent action to address this issue and bring business leaders into the scope of the STPCD.

Workload

58 **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** In its submission, the DfE claims that AI will support teacher workload reduction (paragraph 87), citing Oak National Academy (ONA) as the preferred resource.

59 ASCL is concerned that the establishment of Oak National Academy as an arm's-length body, supported by government funding, constitutes a drift towards a government-approved curriculum. This runs the risk of undermining curriculum diversity and innovation, and represents an inappropriate use of public money, when other approaches to reducing teacher upload may have more impact.

60 ASCL believes that Oak National Academy should not be constituted and funded in this manner (with £2m already given to ONA from the DfE for AI resource development), Furthermore, ONA should not be given preference over any other provider of curriculum resources.

61 Moreover, not all teachers use ONA resources, and so for the DfE to include this in its STRB evidence is a step towards the compulsion that ASCL has already raised concerns about. One of ONA's key principles is its optionality. If we take this as a given, then the fact it is optional does not reduce the workload for most teachers.

62 Overall, implementing AI in schools could hold enormous benefits for teachers and pupils but it will require investment in terms of IT infrastructure, school policy development and staff training. In the short-term, therefore, it is likely to lead to more costs than benefits.

63 **Teachers' working week:** NASUWT (paragraph 6.25, 6.26) is proposing the removal of open-ended working time for teachers and restricting this to a 35-hour week. In addition, the NEU (paragraph 195) has requested that the STRB should remove or place a limit on the overarching requirement on teachers to *'work such additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties.'*

64 ASCL supports the removal of open-ended working time and the removal of the wording highlighted by the NEU. However, we believe more research needs to be done in this area in relation to setting specific limits. It remains our position that it is anomalous that there is no provision within the STPCD for the payment of excessive additional hours. We believe that if this time had to be accounted for then it would be more highly valued and more strategic decisions would be made at a local level as to what was important and what was unnecessary, thereby driving down workload.

65 ASCL is in support of the NEU's request (paragraph 192) that the STRB should ask schools to commit to dedicating time to address workload via an additional inset day and agree with staff what steps they are taking to tackle workload and improve wellbeing.

66 ASCL has requested that the DfE Workforce Reduction Taskforce (WRT) consider all of the points raised above in their deliberations.

Performance Related Pay (PRP)

67 ASCL welcomes and supports the removal of performance-related pay. We welcome further clarity regarding the subsequent implementation and assimilation process as part of WRT discussions.

68 However, the NASUWT's call for automatic incremental progression, giving teachers greater certainty over their future pay levels (paragraph 6.3), is problematic. ASCL believes that there should be greater clarity with regards to annual appraisal and we look forward to what DfE has to say about this process with regards to appraisal review.

69 NASUWT raises the issue of pay portability in its submission (paragraphs 6.1, 6.5, 7.2). ASCL's position on pay portability is that it can be an important recruitment element but is not right for every employee is every circumstance, so we do not support its reintroduction as a requirement. Rather we would look to see employers have pay portability as the expectation, but with the possibility for people to take a role in a lower pay range if that suited their current circumstances. We think this has the potential to support teachers and leaders who may otherwise be lost to the profession.

70 NEU (paragraph *112*) has said: '*Schools should be compelled to assess cases where teachers have been denied pay progression since 2013 but would have received pay progression under the previous arrangements. This is needed to correct cases where there has been unfair denial of pay progression*.' ASCL is not supportive of this, as it is unworkable. Schools and academies include,

within their pay policies, provision for any member of staff to complain or raise a grievance with regards to their pay on an annual basis.

ITT recruitment

71 The DfE includes in its submission steps that have been taken to increase the recruitment of overseas trained teachers (OTTs) (paragraphs C13, 35 and 57). This has led to a record increase in applications from abroad, but ASCL shares some of the concerns raised by NEU.

72 It is important to understand that increasing OTTs will not address the dire situation in terms of teacher recruitment and retention. The DfE forecast for 2022/23 was for 2,303 OTTs to acquire QTS[10], but the actual number was 1,100, despite over 21,000 applications. These numbers compare to a total of 31,747 QTS trainee teachers for the same period.

73 Overall, there is a lack of empirical data regarding the success of the initial steps taken to incentivise teachers from abroad to relocate and teach in the UK.

74 ASCL recommends that it would be more prudent to further explore the reasons why ITT targets are not met or why teacher attrition is so high rather than assume that teachers from abroad will address the problem.

Retention

75 The leadership leaver rates as reported by the DfE (paragraph 47) are simplistic and fail to explore trends over time, future forecasts and variation in terms of key factors, such as levels of deprivation or Ofsted category.

76 Using DfE data, Figure 1 compares of leaver rates for senior leadership positions over time:[7]

Figure 1 A comparison of senior leadership leaver rates within a year in post

Secondary Sector	2011	2015	2021
Headteachers	8%	13%	12%
Deputy & Assistant Headteachers	11%	15%	7%

Primary Sector	2011	2015	2021
Headteachers	6%	10%	10.1%
Deputy & Assistant Headteachers	10%	10%	6%

77 This is, however, a simplistic analysis recording leaver rates in a given year. A more valid statistic would be to report on the percentage of school leaders still in post after five years. This would record an alarming attrition rate of 35% in

[10] DfE Projected Numbers of Overseas teachers awarded QTS in England

secondary and 25% in primary across all leadership positions[11], which shows no sign of abating.

Shorter pay scales / one pay range

78 This issue has been raised and considered in previous remits. ASCL does not support a move to a single pay range, or the removal of threshold assessment for progression on to the upper pay range.

79 We believe that it is important to retain two separate pay ranges, not for the sake of having two pay ranges but because they need to be seen as two distinct career stages with clearly differentiated reward packages.

80 The upper pay range and the threshold standards were introduced as an aide to recruitment and retention and brought about a positive impact.

81 When introduced over twenty years ago, the bottom of the upper pay range (UPR) was approximately £2,000 higher than the top of the main pay range (MPR), which represented 8.35% at that time. The top of UPR was approximately £6,500 higher than the top of MPR, which represented 25.3% at the time.

82 The difference between the top of MPR and the bottom of UPR today is £1,933, which represents just 4.7%. The difference between the top of MPR and the top of UPR today is £5,192, which represents 12.6%.

83 The differentials have more or less halved due to the erosion of teacher pay over time, through public sector pay restraint and differentiated pay awards which have consistently targeted early career teachers.

84 This has undermined the purpose of the two pay ranges and has clearly reduced the effectiveness that was seen initially.

85 It is ASCL's view that, rather than return to a single pay range which was deemed to be the cause of recruitment and retention problems at the time, the differentials should be restored to allow the separation between the pay ranges, and to ensure the career stage expectation is distinct and meaningful once again.

86 We note that the changes recently made on the Isle of Man are cited by NASUWT (paragraph 6.25) in support of this change. However, the situation on the Isle of Man is very different from that in England, and that context is key to some of the changes made there. The erosion of teacher and leader pay on the Isle of Man has been more significant that in England due to higher inflation.

87 Living costs and house prices on the Island are way in excess of those in England, and more needed to be done to attract teachers from England to work on the Island.

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[11] School leadership in England 2010 to 2020: characteristics and trend, DfE (2022)

88 Furthermore, it's important to note that these changes were not well received by experienced teachers and school leaders on the Isle of Man, who were yet again in receipt of lower pay awards than those on the main pay range due to repeated differentiated increases which targeted early career teachers.

89 The result is that starting salaries for teachers are 30% higher than in England, but for experienced teachers and leaders are only 7% higher. This has done nothing to improve the supply pipeline into middle and senior leadership roles and would be a disastrous move in England.

90 If the differentials between the pay ranges were restored and the distinction between career stages reinforced, it may be that consideration could be given to the possibility of teachers in leadership roles or on UPR stepping down into a lower pay range by their own choice, as suggested by NEOST (paragraph 50). In some circumstances we can see merit in this, for example, as part of a phased approach to retirement.

91 However, as things stand, this is not an option we feel able to support due to the risks it presents to our members, who may find themselves being pressurised into moving to a lower pay range to avoid being made redundant or without the appropriate safeguarding protections being applied.

Funding / affordability

92 We submitted our own evidence on affordability and cost pressures[12], and we offer the following challenges to the assumptions used in the Department's affordability assessments, as set out in the Government evidence to the STRB[13], and Schools' Costs Technical Note[14] (SCTN).

93 The SCTN 2024 shows improvement in transparency regarding how government assumptions on funding levels have been calculated.

94 In its evidence the government indicates that revenue income increases by 3.1% and that costs (excluding teacher and support staff pay) will increase by 1.9%. On this basis SCTN estimates that school expenditure could increase by 1.2% within existing budgets.

95 The SCTN is immediately problematic for ASCL members because it adopts a methodology and calculations based on national averages. However, we do acknowledge that the government does comment on the challenges presented by school-level variations. We attempt to bring these challenges to life in our supplementary evidence.

96 SCTN Funding assumptions for 2024: Core funding going into mainstream school in 2024/25 shows an increase of 3.1%.

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[12] ASCL evidence to STRB 34th Remit
[13] Government evidence to the STRB
[14] Schools' Costs Technical Note

Schools subject to minimum per pupil levels funding

97 The assumption includes an increase to mainstream revenue funding through the national funding formula (NFF) of 2.2%. In our initial evidence on affordability, we recognised an inbuilt challenge to achieving the national average uplift.

98 Minimum per pupil funding levels (MPPL) were introduced as part of the government's levelling-up agenda and to support the development of an NFF[15], based on need. (MPPL is a factor in the Schools' NFF only.)

99 We note that in this spending review period the MPPL has not kept pace with the GDP deflator. This means that for schools that are relying on the MPPL achieving the national average uplift is extremely unlikely and contributes to their inability to meet cost pressures. In 2024/25 the MPPL factor will increase by 1.4%.

100 In 2024/25 we estimate that around 23% of primary schools will be funded at or within 5% of the MPPL £4,610.

101 In 2024/25 we estimate that around 25% of secondary schools will be funded at or within 5% of the MPPL £5,995.

102 These schools are most unlikely to evidence the financial capacity to increase spending by 1.2% after non-staff cost pressures have been absorbed.

Schools subject to the funding floor

103 In its evidence to the STRB (paragraph 103) the government states that the funding floor within the NFF is designed to provide a minimum per pupil funding increase for all schools. The 2024-25 NFF funding floor is set at 0.5%. This means that every school will attract an increase in their pupil-led funding of at least 0.5% per pupil, compared to their baseline.

104 In 2024/25 we estimate that around 16% of primary schools will be floor funded.

105 In 2024/25 we estimate that around 17% of secondary schools will be floor funded.

106 These schools are unlikely to evidence the financial capacity to increase spending by 1.2% after non-staff cost pressures have been absorbed.

The funding context

107 The government evidence (paragraph 97) refers to the increases to the core schools' budget that have taken place during the current spending review (SR) period and the additions that have been made via the Autumn statement 2022 and the teachers' pay additional grant (TPAG) in 2023. We think it is important to properly understand the funding context more broadly. We agree with the

[15] National funding formula

IFS[16] in their summary of the funding challenges that schools currently face: *'Rising school costs are outstripping increases in funding and eroding real-terms value of government spending increases*

- *Pernicious effects of cash-terms freezes and sudden corrections.*
- *Levels of deprivation funding aren't meeting the current scale of challenges at individual school level.*
- *Falling pupil numbers result in reductions in income within one year, whilst reductions in costs take much longer to manifest themselves in budget plans.'*

What are other stakeholders saying?

108 We note that in their evidence NEOST includes survey results from schools which have responded to questions on assumptions and affordability.

109 We note that:

- the majority of respondents are modelling assumptions on their teacher pay bill increasing by between 3% and 3.99%
- the majority of respondents indicate affordability of between 2% and 2.99%
- this indicates an affordability gap of 1%

Impact on budgets according to SCTN calculations

110 The SCTN states that '*This note makes no assumption about the outcome of relevant pay award processes, nor should its analysis be seen as an indication of what might be agreed through these processes'*.

111 However, it also says that *'this estimate [headroom1.2%] will inform the Department's overall assessment of what pay awards, for both teachers and support staff, might be absorbed within schools aggregate budgets*.'

112 The IFS has assumed a pay award of 3% for teachers on the basis that CPI inflation and average earnings will both grow by 3% in 2024–25. It says that anything less than this would be unsustainable.

113 As an example, the DfE proportion of spend on teachers 'green flag' ICFP metrics are 49%-54% for an average secondary school.

- If 49% school expenditure is on the teacher pay bill, the impact of a 3% pay award would be1.5%. This exceeds the headroom indicated in the SCTN (1.2%).
- If 54% school expenditure is on the teacher pay bill, the impact of a 3% pay award would be 1.6%. This exceeds the headroom indicated in the SCTN (1.2%).

Safeguarding

114 We note that NEOST[17] (paragraph 50) is again calling for a review and reduction of the safeguarding provisions within the STPCD.

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16 The latest picture on school funding and costs in England, IFS, March 2024

17 NEOST evidence to STRB 34th Remit

115 It is not surprising that employers are requesting this – it is yet another example of the extreme pressures faced by schools caused by the funding crisis.

116 However, the answer is not that the safeguarding provisions need to be reviewed, but that schools need to be sufficiently funded to allow all provisions within the Document to be enacted appropriately.

117 This is something that NEOST itself reports in paragraph 49 of its evidence, which states: '*When asked how the 2024 pay award should be applied 83 per cent responded "equally". This may, in part, be driven by affordability challenges, as a significant number of schools indicate that is the reason, they do not currently use any or all of the pay flexibilities*.'

118 This item was considered by the STRB in its 23rd Report[18], where it concluded: '*We consider that the current safeguarding provisions remain appropriate, supporting schools' ability to restructure when circumstances change without causing excessive disruption to individuals or schools and providing reassurance for staff moving to take up their first management roles. We recommend the existing provisions be consolidated into one place in the STPCD.'*

119 This remains appropriate and relevant now, perhaps more than ever, particularly in light of the lack of teachers wanting to move into leadership roles, reducing it would simply serve as a further deterrent to that.

120 NEOST is correct that this proposal would be controversial with unions. At the height of a recruitment and retention crisis and in the current economic climate it should be a cause of concern for other stakeholders too.

121 ASCL is fundamentally opposed to this request and would not support its inclusion in future remits.

Conclusion

122 We look forward to discussing these issues further when we meet with the STRB on 9 April.

Louise Hatswell & Chris Ingate
ASCL Conditions of Employment Specialists: Pay
19 March 2024

[18] STRB 23rd Report