

Minister for Education's Response to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB) 1st Report

Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

Introduction

1. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 19,000 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL members are responsible for the education of more than four million young people in more than 90 per cent of the secondary and tertiary phases, and in an increasing proportion of the primary phase. ASCL Cymru represents school leaders in more than 90 per cent of the secondary schools in Wales. This places the association in a strong position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of schools and colleges of all types.
2. ASCL welcomes the opportunity to make a written response to the Government's proposals following the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body's (IWPRB) recommendations to the 1st Remit.

Matter for recommendation

What adjustments should be made to the salary and allowance scales for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders, to ensure the teaching profession in Wales is promoted and rewarded to encourage recruitment and retention.

3. ASCL welcomes the recommendations made by the IWPRB in their 1st Report, and also their signalling '*that a fundamental review of teachers' and leaders' pay and conditions in Wales is essential in order to fulfil the ambitions of the national mission for education.*'¹
4. We are pleased to see that the Welsh Government stood by the previous First Minister's commitment that there would be no detriment between teachers in Wales to those in England by matching the pay award given by the Westminster Government's Secretary of State for Education.
5. However, the Government needs to find a way to do this which does not hold up the process as it has this year. It is not acceptable for the report to be released when schools are breaking up for the summer. Schools need to know what the proposed pay award is before the final Governing Body meetings of the academic year. Therefore, it is vital that the Teachers' Pay & Conditions timetable agreed at the Partnership Forum is adhered to and that the report and written statement are published by the end of March.

¹ Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, 1st Report

IWPRB Recommendations

6. As well as considering the annual uplift, the IWPRB considered a number of related issues, many of which impact on the implementation of the award.

Recommendation 1

That the statutory minimum of the MPR be increased by 5 per cent and that the statutory maximum of the MPR be increased by 2.4 per cent.

Recommendation 2

That the statutory minimum and the statutory maximum of all other pay ranges (UPR, LGPR and unqualified teachers), and all allowances, be increased by 2.4 per cent.

7. We were disappointed that the IWPRB did not make a recommendation for the minima and maxima of all of the ranges to be uplifted by the 5 per cent that the minimum of the MPR has been as this would have recognised the significant real terms decrease in teachers' pay over the last few years.
8. We acknowledge and welcome the Minister's decision to increase the IWPRB's recommendation of a 2.4 per cent uplift to 2.75 per cent. It is essential that the Welsh Government continues to stand by the previous First Minister's commitment that there would be no detriment between teachers' pay in Wales and England, and by matching the pay award given by the Westminster Government's Secretary of State for Education this has been achieved. However, it is our position that a higher uplift was warranted regardless of decisions made in Westminster.
9. It is also the case that the timeline in Wales cannot be at the mercy of Westminster internal politics and negotiations. It is essential that schools know as early in the calendar year as possible what the teacher pay award will be in order for them to be able to budget accordingly.
10. Whilst it is essential that the commitment to no detriment remains, a mechanism for ensuring a timely announcement of the award must be found.

Recommendation 3

That the current discretionary point 6a be removed, with those currently on 6a moving to the new statutory maximum of the MPR.

Recommendation 4

That discretionary scale points M2-M5 on the MPR be increased to remove the detrimental effect of the 1 per cent differential relative to points M1 and M6 that was introduced through the implementation of the 2017 pay award; and be increased by a further 2.4 per cent.

Recommendation 5

That the discretionary scale points on all other pay ranges (UPR, LGPR and unqualified teachers) be increased by 2.4 per cent.

Recommendation 6

That revised pay scales incorporating recommendations R1-R5 (shown as Appendix B) be implemented by all local authorities and local authority maintained schools in Wales.

11. The Minister has rejected Recommendations three to six on the grounds that they '*relate to matters for consideration by employers and therefore cannot be accepted by Welsh Ministers. However, I recommend that employers give them close consideration.*'
12. We do not agree with this statement, and feel that the Minister could, and should, instruct employers to implement these recommendations by amending the STPCD. By leaving this to employers, the Government is perpetuating the current 'postcode' lottery system of what pay framework is in place as well as avoiding the issue of the costs that would be incurred by these recommendations and pushing the burden of responsibility for them on to employers.
13. These recommendations should be fully implemented by the Government and funding provided to cover the costs.

Recommendation 7

That the pay scales at Appendix B should become statutory and published in the STPCD for Wales. Ideally this recommendation should be implemented for 2019 but, if not, there should be a commitment to do this for 2020 onwards.

14. Whilst we appreciate the timescales required to implement Recommendation seven may be problematic for September 2019 given the delay in releasing the IWPRB's Report, there is nothing to prevent them implementing this for September 2020 as indicated by the review body. There should be a clear commitment to do this, rather than simply stating it will be a *consideration* in future remits.

Recommendation 8

A fundamental review of teachers' and leaders' pay and conditions of service in Wales to support the education reform agenda.

15. We welcome this recommendation and look forward to working with the Review Body and the Government on this.

Targeted Awards

16. The award of 5 per cent to NQTs on MPR1 is welcomed in light of the recruitment issues and the repeated failure to meet ITE targets, but we remain disappointed that this was not extended to all teachers as called for in our joint union submission.
17. The review body agrees with the concerns raised by consultees on teacher recruitment, '*particularly given the demographic trends which are resulting in an increase in pupil numbers*'.²
18. However, the targeted 5 per cent at NQTs will do nothing to help with recruiting to posts other than ITE: this increase needs to be applied to all pay ranges.
19. Given the differentiated award in 2018, experienced teachers and senior leaders have been left with an award that across the two years gives them a real terms cut in their pay yet again. Drastic action is needed to address this and to assist with the recruitment and retention of senior leaders as well as teachers.

² Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, 1st Report

20. The review body states that it is concerned '*about the recruitment of teachers and leaders generally and in particular the recruitment and retention of teachers in certain subjects*' yet disappointingly has done nothing to address this other than for NQTs.

Affordability

21. The litmus test is always to ensure that increased cost pressures are fully met by comparable increases in grant funding. Surplus balances, where they are available at individual school level, should not be the 'go to' to make up the short fall between increased staff costs and grant income. This is not good practice and does not indicate a sustainable strategic plan. The level of reserves nationally must not be allowed to obfuscate the issue of viability and sufficiency of the funding pot available to schools.

Funding

22. We are very concerned that there has been no indication of how the pay award will be funded. This should have been decided and announced prior to the commencement of the consultation period. Consultees will not be able to respond fully without this information.
23. We were clear in our evidence, as were other consultees, that any award must be fully funded by the Welsh Government and we call upon the Minister for Education to ensure that this happens and that it is announced without delay.
24. Furthermore, the funding needs to be made clear before the pay order is laid.
25. It is essential that we do not find ourselves in this position in following future reports, therefore we call on the Welsh Government to ensure proper processes are in place to address this most important issue.
26. We hope that this is of value to your consultation, ASCL is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that it can.

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Association of School and College Leaders
5th September 2019