



## **Joint Statement to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) Reverse the pay cuts**

**This joint union statement sets out the clear priority for the Government – invest properly in our education service to reverse the huge real terms pay cuts**

- 1 Our unions represent the majority of teachers and school leaders in England. This joint statement once again underlines the unity in the profession on the key issues facing our education service.
- 2 The period since 2010 has seen huge real terms pay cuts against RPI inflation for teachers and school leaders. Even the September 2025 pay award is likely to be below RPI inflation, according to the latest forecasts available at the time of writing. On the basis of those forecasts, teacher and school leader pay is around 23% lower in real terms against RPI inflation than it was in 2010.
- 3 The above-inflation increase of September 2024 should have been, as we pointed out at the time, only the first in a series of urgent steps which together needed to amount to a significant pay correction. Instead, the danger is of a return to the years of pay cuts under the Conservatives and all the problems that come with those pay cuts.
- 4 The pay cuts against inflation have done enormous damage to teacher and school leader living standards. They have also hit the position of teacher and school leader pay in the wider labour market hard. The pay cuts against inflation have been much greater for teachers and school leaders than they have been for other comparable professions.

- 5      Alongside pay cuts, excessive workload drives the recruitment and retention problems. Teachers and school leaders continue to face overwhelming demands on their professional time, poor work/life balance, and increasing stress and burnout.
  
- 6      Pay structure problems also contribute to the recruitment and retention crisis. The dismantling of the national pay structure and imposition of PRP significantly reduced transparency, fairness and the ability of the profession to offer clear career development pathways to potential and serving teachers. Unfair PRP added hugely to workload and excessive accountability and contributed to the gender pay gap. A fair and transparent national pay structure is needed, based on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and with minimum mandatory pay points for all teachers and school leaders. Pay progression must be the norm, with mandatory removal of PRP, and pay portability must be restored. The current three-year pay safeguarding period must not be reduced.
  
- 7      School funding is another issue that must be addressed. The Institute of Fiscal Studies<sup>1</sup> has confirmed that school spending per pupil in England fell by 9% in real terms between 2009–10 and 2019–20, the largest cut in over forty years. There was some progress in the 2019 and 2021 Spending Rounds, but this proved insufficient due to the persistence of inflation. The Comprehensive Spending Review of 2025 did not represent the change of direction on school funding that is urgently needed.
  
- 8      The consequences of funding shortages, pay cuts and high workload can be seen in the severe and widespread recruitment and retention problems. Recruitment targets continue to be missed by huge margins. The widespread teacher shortages add to the workload of existing teachers and school leaders. High workload and pay cuts also have an impact on retention, with a quarter leaving the profession within three years of qualification and a third leaving within five years. The 2020s have seen record numbers leaving for reasons other than retirement.
  
- 9      Labour was elected on a promise of change. It must now deliver for teachers, school leaders, parents and pupils. Failing to invest properly in our teachers and school leaders means failing our education service. An urgent and radical change is needed from the failed policies of underfunding schools and undervaluing teachers and school leaders. The focus of Government policy on teacher pay must be on reversing the huge damage to the real value of teacher and school leader pay against inflation and pay in the wider economy.
  
- 10     Our unions therefore call for urgent, significant and fully funded movement towards complete reversal of the real terms pay cuts for teachers and school leaders since 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> '2020 Annual report on education spending in England', Institute for Fiscal Studies