



Joint Statement to the School Teachers Review Body

**Association of School & College Leaders
National Association of Head Teachers
National Education Union
Voice**

Teacher pay – the united view of the profession

Our organisations, representing the overwhelming majority of teachers and school leaders in England, set out below our united position on key issues for the STRB as it prepares to respond to the Secretary of State's remit.

The issue of teacher pay is high on the political agenda and will feature prominently in the General Election. That is as it should be – teachers and school leaders have seen the real value of their pay cut relentlessly since 2010, with cuts of some 15% against RPI inflation. The adverse impact on teachers, school leaders, schools and students is clear to see.

Our organisations are united in our determination that these real terms cuts must be reversed as a matter of urgency.

A significant, above-inflation pay increase sufficient to begin the urgent restoration of the real-terms cuts and damage to teacher and school leader pay since 2010, must be applied to all pay scales and allowances and fully funded by the Government.

This is the clear signal that needs to be sent to the profession to underline its value and begin to address the recruitment and retention problems the profession faces. It would constitute an important first step towards positioning teaching as an attractive career option for new graduates and offer some tangible proof to serving teachers and school leaders that their contribution to the future of the nation's children is valued.

Review of the pay structure

We need to make sure that pay levels and the pay structure support career progression and retention. Piecemeal reform of the teacher pay structure is not enough and any so-called “targeting” approach will simply create new problems.

All teachers and school leaders deserve a pay rise, and this is another clear signal that needs to be sent to address the recruitment and retention problems the profession faces. We therefore urge the STRB to undertake a holistic review of the pay structure, in order to create a positive proposition for teaching as a graduate career choice.

The fragmentation of the national pay structure and imposition of PRP have contributed to the teacher pay problems. Many teachers and school leaders get no cost-of-living increase at all. Others are denied pay and career progression, despite their acquisition of skills and expertise. This underlines the need to restore the national pay scales, including pay portability and a robust appraisal system that is not linked to pay, so that the serving and potential teachers and school leaders know that they will be valued within a fair and transparent pay structure.

Teacher supply – impact of pay cuts

In its 29th Report, the STRB was clear about the serious nature of the teacher recruitment and retention crisis and the widespread nature of the problems. The STRB concluded that the steady decline in the competitiveness of teacher pay is contributing significantly to the recruitment and retention problems. The 2.75% pay award recommended by the STRB and accepted by the current Government was not, however, sufficient to begin to tackle these problems. It was only just above RPI inflation and did not enable the decline in the competitiveness of teacher pay to be decisively reversed. Nor was this insufficient increase fully funded by the current Government. This followed the current Government’s decision to cut back the 3.5% recommended by the STRB last year, which was also not fully funded.

The latest evidence shows that the recruitment and retention problems continue to grow at all levels of the profession. Recruitment problems continue, but the teacher retention problems also continue to get worse. Our organisations are clear that the teacher recruitment and retention crisis, which has developed and deepened in recent years, cannot be solved without effective action to restore the real terms cuts to teacher pay and to significantly improve the position of teaching in the graduate labour market.

The current Government has declared its intention to increase teacher starting pay to £30,000 nationally by September 2022. This is welcome, but we need urgent action to improve pay levels and pay prospects for all teachers and school leaders. The current Government’s intention to implement starting pay of £30,000 must, therefore, be accompanied by equivalent increases to all teacher pay points and allowances, alongside reform to provide appropriate rewards within a fair and transparent pay structure. The recruitment and retention problems affect the whole profession and a holistic response is needed to re-establish the attractiveness of teaching as a long-term career choice.

School funding – cuts not reversed

Schools have suffered significant real-terms cuts since 2010. Despite the recent announcement on school funding by the current Government and claims by the current Prime Minister to be “levelling up” school funding, research for the School Cuts Coalition shows that 83% of schools will be worse off next year than they were in 2015.

The additional money announced is not enough to reverse the cuts. This is a political decision by the current Government. We call on the STRB to refuse to be constrained by the current Government’s failure to restore the funding cuts. The STRB must make the recommendations needed to improve teacher pay in real terms and relative to other graduate professionals and tackle the recruitment and retention crisis. Whichever Government is in power after the General Election must accept its responsibility to fully fund the increases in teacher pay needed.

Conclusion

Each of our organisations will be presenting separate evidence to the STRB on the matters included in the current Secretary of State’s remit letter to the STRB. It is important to note, however, that these separate sets of evidence will be underpinned by the recognition of all of our organisations of the need for urgent action to tackle the recruitment and retention crisis by significantly improving pay levels and prospects for all teachers and school leaders.

The biggest step forward in solving the teacher supply crisis would be to cut teacher leaving rates in early career. While we support the proposal for higher starting pay, without commensurate uplifts to subsequent years’ pay rates and to all teacher pay points the teacher supply crisis could be worsened.

We call on the STRB to reflect in its recommendations the united view of the teaching profession.

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