



Cabinet Secretary's Response to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB) 6th Report

Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

Introduction

1. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) is a trade union and professional association representing 25,000 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice- principals, assistant heads, business leaders 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 children and young people across primary, secondary, post-16 and specialist education. 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 6th Remit (part 1). Our response is based on the views of our members, obtained through discussions at ASCL Council, with relevant advisory groups, and prompted and unprompted emails and messages.
3. When considering the impact of any proposals on different groups, it is ASCL's policy to consider not only the nine protected characteristics included in the Equality Act 2010, but also other groups which might be disproportionately affected, particularly those who are socio- economically disadvantaged. We have answered any equality impact questions on this basis.

Matters for consideration:

- a) 6th Remit Part 1 – Pay: Our response to the 4% uplift to all statutory pay points and allowances from 1 September 2025
- b) To remove the application requirements to move between the main pay scale and the upper pay scale implementing recommendation 1 of the IWPRB Strategic Review of the Structure of Teachers' and Leaders' Pay and Conditions in Wales.
- c) To implement recommendations 4 and 5 of the IWPRB's fifth report 2024 in relation to moving ALN coordinators to the leadership group pay and conditions. Strategic Review of the Structure of Teachers' and Leaders' pay and Conditions in Wales.
- d) To include a reference to Individual Development Plans in place of a reference to statements of special educational needs when calculating unit totals in ordinary schools.

a) 6th Remit part 1 – Pay: Our response to the 4% uplift to all statutory pay points and allowances from 1st September 2025

ASCL response:

4. The pay settlement for 2025/26 is not acceptable. In particular, we are disappointed with the 4% pay award and the Welsh Government's rejection of the IWPRB's recommendation of a 4.8% increase across all teacher and leadership pay scales. Whilst this is a comparable offer to that in England, it does not uphold the 'no detriment' clause established in 2018.
5. It is also not acceptable to refer back to the 5.5% settlement for 2024/25 as justification for a lower pay award for 2025/26. The cumulative effect of inflation since the pandemic is 27.3% (Bank of England compound inflation calculation¹) and there has been no commitment to fully restore the erosion of pay for teachers since 2010 (see paragraph 9).
6. Whilst this 2025/26 pay award is a fully funded pay increase, it is slightly below current rates of inflation (RPI 4.27%). Furthermore, due to the funding mechanisms applied by the 22 local authorities, each with their own idiosyncratic funding formulae, it is unlikely that schools will receive this 4% increase and will have to draw on their own reserves (see paragraph 12) leading to worsening school budget deficits and further job losses.
7. There is no commitment to a longer-term fully funded strategic plan to fully restore the erosion of pay which has taken place since 2010 together with the re-establishment of previous differentials between pay ranges, particularly as classroom teachers move into leadership. This is important and we urge that consideration for an above inflation pay settlement in line with IWPRB recommendations should take place for 2026.
8. We believe this pay settlement will further undermine a teaching profession in Wales which is already in crisis, affecting recruitment and retention figures as well as workload and morale.

Why are we saying this?

9. We have already submitted a weight of evidence to the IWPRB in response to the 6th Remit consultation regarding our concerns about schoolteacher and leader pay (paragraphs 27-73) – we are once again disappointed that these very valid points have not been heeded.
10. We are further concerned, due to the funding formula in Wales, that the 4% fully funded pay increase will not reach school budgets. With Local Authorities 'top-slicing' school budgets by an average of 17% (Sibieta, 2020), this will result in only 3.3% reaching school budgets, and the 0.7% shortfall having to be made up by the school. Schools are already struggling with their finances with many already in deficit. The result of this underfunding will lead to further job losses and redundancies.
11. Our members tell us that cuts to Senior Leadership Team capacity are already underway and that those left will have to carry an even higher workload. We have raised a number of concerns in response to the IWPRB 6th Remit question on Leaders conditions of service and working hours as part of the current consultation process.

¹ [Bank of England Inflation calculator](#)

12. For example, in our June member survey², in terms of work/life balance, almost every respondent (97%) felt that their job interfered with their family or personal life, with 85% having to miss family events such as parents' evenings for their own children. In terms of health, 91% felt the job interfered with their sleep patterns, 84% claiming that their physical and mental wellbeing was affected.
 13. Overall, 40% of our members felt that they enjoyed their job less than the year before, but these issues have not been a year in the making – they are cumulative leading to a loss of job satisfaction and motivation to leave a career that they once held dear.
 14. As a result, the percentage of school leaders considering retiring, leaving the profession, taking on less responsibility is over half (55%) leading to a catastrophic future recruitment crisis.
 15. As a result, this pay settlement, and the level of top-slicing by local authorities is likely to exacerbate these problems further.
- b) To remove the application requirements to move between the main pay scale and the upper pay scale implementing recommendation 1 of the IWPRB Strategic Review of the Structure of Teachers' and Leaders' Pay and Conditions in Wales.**

The draft STPC(W)D states: 15.1:

Qualified teachers will move from the main pay scale to the upper pay scale following completion of a year of employment completed on M6 during the previous school year, unless the teacher has been notified that capability procedures are underway in respect of that year.

ASCL response:

16. We do not support this proposal. We have provided evidence when this has been considered under previous remits.
17. We believe that the main pay scale and upper pay scale are two separate and distinct pay ranges to represent different stages of a teacher's career. This makes it sensible to retain an application process to move from one to the other supported by an assessment against the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership which were published in September 2017 and are used by all teachers and leaders in Wales.
18. However, we believe that this should be a light touch and non-bureaucratic process to alleviate any workload implications previously associated with this.
19. It is our view that it would be more appropriate to provide more clarity around this area rather than remove it. School leaders need more flexibility in order to recruit and retain staff, not less. They value teachers and want to be able to give them the opportunity to progress, reflecting their skills and they want to attract quality teachers.

Why are we saying this?

20. Wales already has an agreed set of teacher standards agreed and established in 2017 and our members are used to assessing against this set of national criteria
21. The assessment process for teachers on the main pay scale progressing onto the upper pay scale should be non-bureaucratic and simple to complete, using their last two performance reviews

² ASCL Cymru evidence to IWPRB 6th Remit – part 2

22. We welcomed the removal of performance-related pay, and whilst there is no link between performance and pay in the Document, the reference to the term 'performance objectives' could be misleading.
23. Recent research suggests that performance-related pay does not work in schools in the same way that it does in business. Linking pay to performance, which can be difficult to effectively and accurately measure in an increasingly subjective accountability system, can actually demotivate teachers.
24. Instead, we would like to see a focus on new appraisal arrangements involving a thorough annual assessment against agreed professional learning and growth targets

c) To implement recommendations 4 and 5 of the IWPRB's fifth report 2024 in relation to moving ALN coordinators to the leadership group pay and conditions. Strategic Review of the Structure of Teachers' and Leaders' pay and Conditions in Wales.

ASCL response:

25. We support this proposal. The ALNCo role should be a senior leadership role. There should be appropriate remuneration to reflect responsibilities, working time and workload.
26. We also support the findings of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) code 2021.

Why are we saying this?

27. We recognise that there is an increase in children being taught in mainstream schools in Wales with additional and complex needs. Elevating the role of the ALNCo to a school's leadership team reflects strategic level to which the role should be appointed and ensures that there is statutory compliance.
28. We believe that the reference to the ALNCo role in the ALN Code needs to be amended to reflect that it should be a leadership role, and not just a role which has a clear line of communication to the senior leadership team.
29. ALNCo's should be paid on the Leadership Pay Range, subject to context, school size and ALN intake.
30. It is positive to see the amendments being made to the STPC(W)D to enable schools to appropriately recognise and remunerate those working in ALNCo roles. This must be accompanied by significant investment by the Welsh Government so that schools can afford the not only the implementation and assimilation costs, but the ongoing costs related to this.
31. It is important that ALNCo's are paid on the leadership pay range, as headteachers, deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers are. This allows ALNCo's to have annual pay progression in the same way as other senior leaders. However, there will be incremental costs, and we are concerned that the additional money set aside by the Cabinet Secretary (£5.1m) is insufficient to provide year-on-year financial support.
32. Furthermore, we are extremely concerned to learn from Welsh Government that this money was allocated to local authorities in 2024/25, when this recommendation was not implemented and that there is no funding available in this financial year to support the implementation and assimilation costs.

33. School leaders in Wales are currently not protected by the 1265 directed hour agreement or 195 days. We are pleased to see that this issue is being reviewed in the IWPRB 6th Remit Q2
 34. Whilst we are currently being consulted about this, it means that an existing ALNCo on the main or upper pay scale with a TLR may not want to a new contract on the leadership pay scale at is removing this protection. Furthermore, it is not clear what would happen in this situation if the ALNCo refused a change like this.
 35. Equally, there are some ALNCos who are not from a teaching background and these proposals do not accommodate such personnel. Therefore, we recommend that leadership roles such as ALNCo and business leaders should be included in the STPC(W)D
 36. Small schools and those in rural areas may find it difficult to recruit and afford to appoint an ALNCo on a leadership pay scale. Therefore, we would recommend that, in such circumstances, ALNCo's could work across a cluster of schools to ensure statutory compliance and quality assurance.
 37. However, we do have some concerns about the implementation of this, and suggestions that those currently working in ALNCo roles would move to the equivalent of their current salary on the leadership pay scale (point 11 on page 66 of the draft STPC(W)D).
 38. We do not support the inclusion of this point.
 39. This could immediately undervalue the role and mean that they receive no additional pay and at the same time lose the protections of 1,265 hours/195 days.
 40. Whilst we want to see this recommendation implemented, we feel that it is important that it is done correctly and ensures that the role receives the recognition and remuneration that it deserves, and if this process is rushed, there is a risk that will not happen.
- d) To include a reference to Individual Development Plans in place of a reference to statements of special educational needs when calculating unit totals in ordinary schools.**

ASCL response:

41. We support the move to calculate school unit totals based on IDPs as these are now a statutory part of additional needs assessment for pupils in Wales.
42. In the January 2024 census, there were 52,152 pupils with ALN or SEN in maintained schools (11.2% of all pupils), down from 63,089 (13.4%) in January 2023. However, the proportion of pupils with current Individual Development Plans (IDPs) is higher than those with Statements under the previous system. In January 2024, 40.9% of pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in maintained schools had an IDP³.
43. This is a substantial increase from the 16.6% who had IDPs in January 2023⁴. In contrast, Statements were only issued to pupils with the most severe/complex needs, which was around 15% of the total number of learners with SEN

³ [Schools' census results: January 2024](#)

⁴ [Schools' census results: January 2023](#)

Why are we saying this?

- 40 Paragraph 6.4 on the draft STPCD states that each pupil with an individual development plan (IDP) statement be counted as three units more than the pupil would otherwise be counted as by virtue of paragraph 6.2.
- 41 This generates the following unit totals which is used to calculate headteacher groups as set out in Section 5

| Key Stage | Units per pupil | Units per pupil with IDP |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| For each pupil in the preliminary stage and each pupil in the first or second key stage | 7 | 10 |
| For each pupil in the third key stage | 9 | 12 |
| For each pupil in the fourth key stage | 11 | 14 |
| For each pupil in the fifth key stage | 13 | 16 |

42. This formulaic method of calculating school unit totals, headteacher groups and headteacher salaries is a tried and tested method used in both Wales and England.
43. It is important that Wales maintains the additional points for pupils with an IDP as well as any additional funding the pupil may attract due to the nature of their learning needs. Schools with high numbers of ALN will therefore yield a higher school unit total.
44. It is also important that the methodology for calculating headteacher salaries in Special Schools is different (Section 7) to ensure that there are higher remuneration factors due to the often-smaller school roll.
45. As the ALN Code of Practice (2021) led to an increase in the number of pupils recorded with additional learning needs. Under the new ALN system, learners with ALN are required to have an IDP.
46. However, due to the increased number of learners identified with ALN, there are naturally more IDPs being created – this fact will benefit unit score totals for inclusive and Special Schools, helping Governors to attract headteachers with a commitment to ALN.

In summary:

47. We are disappointed with the 4% pay offer as it does not keep pace with the cost-of-living and the longer-term erosion of teacher and leader pay, and we urge the Cabinet Secretary to fully implement the recommendation of the IWPRB and provide funding to support the recommendation in full.
48. We also request a strategic review of the role that local authorities play in allocating funds to individual schools as we believe far too much is withheld.
49. We also want to see a pay award for 2026/27 along with a commitment to a longer term pay settlement.
50. We do not support automatic progression from the main pay scale to the upper pay scale for reasons already cited.

51. We are supportive of the measures being taken to place ALNCo's onto the school leadership teams but request that our concerns are considered as well as further funding to manage year-on-year increments for those in post.
52. We are also supportive of the additional weighting being afforded to pupils with IDPs in terms of calculating school unit totals.
53. We trust that this response is of value to your consultation. ASCL Cymru is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that it can.

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Conditions of Employment Specialists: Pay
Association of School and College Leaders
3 July 2025