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Teaching unions call for urgent review of teachers and school leaders' pay

Teacher unions representing the majority of education staff in England and Wales have submitted a joint statement calling for a significant pay increase for teachers and school leaders, and setting out their views on the most pressing issues facing the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB).

ASCL, NAHT, NEU, UCAC and Voice believe that the STRB needs to set a benchmark for teacher and school leaders' pay which will make teaching competitive with other graduate professions and aid both recruitment and retention.

The evidence from our organisations of a growing crisis in recruiting and retaining teachers and school leaders means that the STRB must take this opportunity to fully exercise its functions as the independent pay review body for the profession. We believe that this must lead the STRB to recommend a significant increase in pay for **all** teachers and school leaders, irrespective of their career stage, setting or geographical location.

We believe it is a matter of 'justice and fairness' that all teachers and school leaders should receive an annual cost of living increase to prevent them from being worse off year-on-year. The current policy of differentiated pay awards is not working and is demoralising the profession.

We are calling for a significant pay increase for all teachers and school leaders to begin to address the decline in teachers' real pay over the last seven years.

It is also vital that any pay increases arising from the recommendations of the STRB are fully funded by the government. School budgets are at breaking point. Without additional funding, paying staff fairly whilst fully funding the curriculum will be impossible.

Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said: "After seven years of government-imposed austerity, teachers need and deserve a decent pay rise, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it is essential in tackling the ongoing recruitment and retention crisis. And the government must fund any pay award rather than expecting schools to foot the bill from budgets which have already been cut to the bone."

Paul Whiteman, General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, (NAHT) said: "Teaching is a demanding and important profession and teachers' pay should reflect this. At the moment, it doesn't. The recruitment crisis continues unabated and the teacher supply pipeline is leaking at both ends. At present the government is failing to recruit enough new teachers, and doing nowhere near

enough whilst too many experienced teachers leave prematurely. A pay rise for school staff is long overdue.”

Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union (NEU), said: “Children’s education is at risk – insufficient recruitment and retention of high quality teachers is a very real problem. To begin to address this, it is essential that teacher workload is reduced and that the government now commits to making a restorative pay rise, starting with a significant real terms increase in 2018, which is fully funded. Ministers are right when they say an education system is only as good as its teachers and leaders. The public is demanding government values these hardworking professionals who can make such a positive impact on young people’s futures.”

Elaine Edwards, General Secretary of UCAC, said: “For years teachers have not been properly valued or remunerated for their crucial contribution to the education and social development of our children and young people which has led to serious recruitment and retention problems in Wales and England. The UK Government must now address the issue of teachers’ pay and provide a fully funded restorative pay award as a matter of urgency for the next academic year.”

Deborah Lawson, General Secretary of Voice said: “After years of austerity measures, it is time for the pay of teachers and school leaders to reflect the value of their work, and the importance of the teaching profession to both our children’s education and the future of the country. Without substantial pay increases, the current recruitment and retention crisis will continue. However, the pay rises required must be fully funded so that schools can afford to recruit and retain the teachers and headteachers they need.”

Unions will be submitting detailed evidence separately from each other on 25 January 2018.

ENDS

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