



Joint Statement to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) Fair pay for teachers and school leaders

The united view of teachers and school leaders

- 1 Over recent years, our organisations have made a series of joint written representations to the STRB. We have, consistently, argued that significant improvements in teacher and school leader pay are essential if we are to tackle the recruitment and retention crisis.
- 2 Across this period, these recruitment and retention problems have worsened, as has the position on pay. Teacher supply problems have been, in the words of the STRB last year, “severe and persistent.” Any improvements due to the pandemic will be temporary and limited. They do not change the long-term pattern, which can only be reversed by positive and decisive action to address workload and to improve teacher and school leader pay.
- 3 Once again, however, Government policy on teacher and school leader pay is heading in completely the wrong direction. Without a change of course by the Government, the urgent action required will again be avoided. Instead, with inflation expected to pick up in 2021 and the economy expected to recover, a pay freeze will inflict yet another real terms cut to teacher and school leader pay. This further attack on teacher and school leader pay will cause yet more damage to recruitment and retention. In normal times, this would not be in the interest of children and young people, their parents, Government, teachers or school leaders – but even less so during a pandemic.
- 4 Our organisations represent the overwhelming majority of teachers and school leaders in England. We know from what our members tell us that teachers and school leaders are united on the key issues facing the profession, including the need for a significant pay increase and pay structure reform in 2021. We know from the detail that we will present in our separate written submissions to the STRB that the evidence supports our members' views on pay.
- 5 In contrast with the united, evidence-based position of teachers and school leaders, the Government is out of touch with the profession and its position is not credible. Its attempts to use the impact of the pandemic to justify further attacks on pay, despite the huge contribution made by teachers and school leaders to the national response to the pandemic, have created enormous anger. The Government's message on pay is in sharp contrast to its focus last year on rewarding teachers.

- 6 Teachers and school leaders are key workers. They deserve to be rewarded and valued, not singled out for attack. A demoralised and under-valued workforce is unlikely to be able to deliver the ongoing support our children and young people need, particularly those who have suffered a detriment due to the disruption caused by the pandemic.
- 7 This year, the STRB has a clear opportunity to say what pay increases and reforms are needed to restore the value and competitiveness of teacher and school leader pay, without being limited by the current inadequate funding envelope.
- 8 We urge the STRB to reflect in its analysis, and also in its recommendations, the concerns of the hundreds of thousands of teachers and school leaders we represent. We call on the STRB to refuse to be constrained by the Government's political choices and to reflect in its report the full range of factors relevant to the pay and conditions framework.
- 9 We also call on the STRB to set out in its report the pay increase it would have recommended for September 2021 – and we call on the STRB to present that as a formal recommendation.
- 10 We also jointly call on the STRB to recommend the significant reforms required to the pay structure. This includes the removal of performance-related pay (PRP) and the restoration of the national pay structure with the mandatory pay points as a minimum entitlement.

Reject the pay freeze

- 11 The attacks on teacher pay since 2010 have caused lasting damage. The Government should be working with us to repair that damage, not seeking to inflict more real terms pay cuts on teachers to add to those suffered since 2010.
- 12 The Secretary of State has used the pay freeze to exclude from this year's remit the crucial and central issue of teacher and school leader pay. We totally reject the Government's attempt to constrain the STRB, which if successful will cause lasting damage to the credibility of the review body process.
- 13 The Government's unjustified pay freeze proposals leave it isolated and out of touch. Its presentation of the public/private sector pay issue is misleading and disingenuous. Its position on teacher and school leader pay is simply not credible.

Restore the pay losses

- 14 The pay losses against inflation suffered by teachers and school leaders since 2010 have been substantial. The pay increase of September 2020 provided only a small restoration of those pay losses. The decision in September 2020 to once again differentiate the annual uplift in favour of early career teachers created disquiet and anger amongst experienced teachers and leaders, when the profession already faces severe retention problems.
- 15 As has been noted consistently by the STRB, teacher and school leader pay has deteriorated relative to that in comparable graduate professions.

- 16 The “significant gap” between earnings in the profession and pay in other comparable graduate professions noted by the STRB in its July 2020 report has developed over a long period and has not been addressed by any temporary factors relating to the pandemic.
- 17 The fundamental causes of the recruitment and retention crisis which has developed over the past decade have not been removed by the impact of the pandemic. Teacher pay cuts have not been restored, the pay structure is neither fair nor transparent, workload is still too high and pupil numbers continue to rise significantly.
- 18 DfE projects such as the Early Career Framework, while welcome, are not sufficient to address the range of teacher supply problems and will be undermined by further attacks on pay. Indeed the delivery of this programme itself will be undermined by the continuing teacher shortage. The pipeline to school leadership is still broken.
- 19 The pandemic has added further pressure, creating severe stress and other health and well-being issues for teachers and school leaders. The STRB was right to say in its 30th Report of July 2020 that the impact of the pandemic represents an opportunity to restore the position of teaching in the graduate labour market. We are sure that the STRB will agree with us that this is the least that teachers and school leaders deserve given their contribution to the nation’s response to the pandemic. It is also, of course, what is required as the foundation for a teaching profession that is able to compete and reward effectively.
- 20 Teachers and school leaders demand fully-funded restoration of the real terms pay cuts since 2010. A pay freeze would take us in the opposite direction, increasing the real terms pay cuts and further damaging the ability of the profession to recruit and keep the teachers and school leaders we need. This would in turn impact on the delivery of the support that children and young people need.

Reform the pay structure

- 21 Our organisations are united in our opposition to PRP. Teachers and school leaders should receive pay progression in recognition of their developing experience. Instead, many have not received pay progression due to factors completely outside their control.
- 22 PRP is unfair. It damages the teamwork that is central to teaching and undermines appraisal by linking it to pay outcomes. Teachers and school leaders are clear: there is no evidence that it impacts positively on student outcomes, and growing evidence of a negative impact on retention and workload for all involved. We urge the STRB to listen to the collective voice of teachers and school leaders on this key issue and recommend that statutory PRP is removed from the STPCD.

- 23 The restoration of advisory pay points for the Main and Upper Pay Ranges, with values based on the joint advice we have issued in recent years, is a step in the right direction. Our joint advice is adhered to by the great majority of schools and was used as the basis for the advisory pay MPR and UPR pay scales implemented in September 2020. However, this did not go far enough and we call on the STRB to recommend the restoration of a mandatory pay structure. This should include mandatory pay points for all pay ranges, with the points regarded as a minimum entitlement for all teachers and school leaders. This would represent a step towards a fair and transparent national pay structure.
- 24 Teachers and school leaders know that we need this structure to properly reward teachers and school leaders, and to enable serving and potential teachers and school leaders to map out a clear career pathway.

Conclusion

- 25 The impact of Government policy – pay cuts, divisive differentiation of pay increases, dismantling of the national pay structure and imposition of PRP – continues to be central to any credible evaluation of teacher and school leader pay.
- 26 The underlying causes of recruitment and retention problems must be urgently addressed. We jointly call on the STRB to reject the pay freeze proposed by the Government and to recommend the action required to restore the value and competitiveness of teacher and school leader pay.
- 27 The STRB should recommend, based on the overwhelming evidence of teacher pay losses relative to inflation and to other graduate professions, a significant and undifferentiated pay increase for September 2021. Implementation of the increase is then a political matter for the Government. The STRB would have done its job by providing an objective response to the evidence and clarifying the benchmark against which Government policy on teacher and school leader pay is to be measured.
- 28 We call on the Government to engage properly with the unions on designing a pay system and pay levels capable of supporting teacher and school leader supply over the medium and long term. This means a strategic and evidence-based review of teacher and school leader pay levels, and urgent repair to the fragmented teacher pay structure to restore pay portability and supportive appraisal not linked to pay outcomes.

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