



Supplementary Evidence submission to the School Teachers' Review Body

March 2022

Introduction

1. Helen Osgood, National Officer for Education and Early Years, said:
"Community Union want to work with the Government to ensure that the issues that our members are facing are addressed."
2. *"Teachers have for too long suffered pay freezes, and this evidence is aimed at securing the necessary support, through appropriate remuneration and increased PPA time, to be in the best possible position to help and support pupils"*
3. *"If we get the provision for the staff right – and make them feel valued and supported – the rest will follow and be a profession that young people will aspire to be part of in the future."*
4. But this will be an uphill battle. A real-terms pay increase is necessary, one which restores the value of teachers in the face of inflation, increased living costs and rising energy prices. Morale is rock bottom and "now, more than ever, experienced classroom teachers are feeling abandoned."¹ And the submission from the Department does not even seem to acknowledge this. Again, the strategies put forward focus on early career teachers rather than addressing the whole workforce from ECT through to experienced teachers and school leaders.
5. Not just any pay increase will suffice. It must have meaning in our increasingly volatile economy. It must be restored to have financial value, but also be sufficient to recognise the professional status of teachers. And, once this has been achieved, it will be essential that teacher pay maintains this restored value in the future.
6. Voice Community believe that a fully-funded increase of 10% is fair and reasonable. It is "patently not the case" that the Government's proposed increases to teacher pay over the next two years are affordable from existing school budgets.² And in any case, it is unreasonable to require schools and academies to fund this in addition to the rising costs of employment – such as National Insurance, rising energy costs as well as providing for the continuing pressures of pupil improvement and educational recovery.

¹ Hailli Hughes, "Preserving Positivity" (John Catt Educational, 2020). p15

² <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/news/anger-at-dfes-casual-claim-that-schools-can-afford-pay-rises-early-career-teachers-strb-salaries-30000-starting-wage-schools/>

The Case for Change

7. Voice Community are pleased to see that the Government recognises the need for a substantial uplift to teacher pay. We do not agree that this should be differentiated by stage nor geographic location - this needs to be seen across the whole education workforce, recognising that schools are at their most effective when all staff work together for the benefit of the children.
8. Salary demands are rising across private sector employment and are being achieved. And the Chancellor noted that unemployment continues to fall. The impact of this can be seen in the rapid drop-off of numbers being recruited into Initial Teacher Training, which are down 23% and heading below the levels for 2019. This is similar to what was observed following the 2008 financial crash.
9. As we pointed out in our submission to the Review Body; Teacher pay has for too long suffered and deteriorated in value. It is no longer sufficient and has never been acceptable to draw new applicants into the profession leaving “experienced teachers who are close to the top of the pay scale [to] feel like the forgotten.”³ Put simply, for many, it does not pay to be a teacher.
10. There is clearly a case for change, but the arguments set out by the Department do not propose change, they are instead a restatement of arguments that have been previously made and rebuffed – notably front loading the pay scale with a sizeable starting salary, but largely neglecting experienced teachers and leaders, and failing to address the issue of retention.
11. Growth in average earnings, according to the Office for National Statistics data, was between 3.8% and 4.8% in the three months to January 2022.⁴ But this still resulted in a negative increase due to rising levels of inflation which, at the time of writing, is running at around 8%, its highest level in 30 years.
12. Even without a pay-freeze the average salary of teachers has not kept up with inflation over the past decade, with some calculations indicating that the cost of living has increased by as much as 31.5% since 2010 (£100 in 2010 is now equivalent to £131.53 today), yet UPS3 has only increased 13.2% in the same time period. And, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies⁵, experienced teachers have seen pay cut by 8% since 2007.
13. Put simply, the Department’s proposals, if accepted by the STRB, would yet again mean a majority of teachers facing a real-terms pay cut.

³ Hailli Hughes, “Preserving Positivity” (John Catt Educational, 2020) p158

⁴ ONS, Employment Labour Market Bulletin March 2022, available from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

⁵ <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/pay-freeze-means-experienced-teachers-have-seen-pay-cut-by-8-since-2007-ifs/>

Recruitment & Retention

14. Whilst figures showed an increase in applications to ITT during the pandemic last year, that bloom has well and truly withered and figures for this year are down 23%.⁶ And latest analysis from NFER explains that these are the same supply challenges that previously existed.⁷ The number of newly qualified teachers joining the system has fallen to around 20,000, down from a peak of 26,494 in 2015. It remains to be seen how many of these will graduate as qualified teachers and mature in the profession. And to compound recruitment difficulties, over 20% of new teachers leave within their first two years of teaching and 33% within their first five years, a situation which has worsened year on year since 2010.⁸
15. The reasons for this huge drop off are as myriad as there are leavers, but the key driver is workload. Jack Worth, the lead economist and school workforce lead for the National Foundation for Educational Research, notes the Government needs to improve the work-life balance for teachers, saying "Reducing teacher workload and supporting wellbeing should remain a priority for the government in the post-pandemic recovery phase."⁹
16. New police constables start their career on £20,880, rising to over £40,000 within seven years. Whilst Early Career Teachers are recruited to an initially higher salary, many are stuck on £36,646 after seven years and that is for those who have remained in teaching for that long.¹⁰
17. And if the median graduate starting salary of £29,000 paid by the UK's top employers a decade ago had kept pace with inflation, it would now be worth over £37,200 – some £7,000 more than this year's median pay for new graduates.¹¹
18. Not only this, but almost a decade after performance-related pay reforms were introduced, DfE analysis¹² has found that they have "disproportionately disadvantaged" women. This surely must be the death knell for a system which we have argued against and reported as being unfair for a number of years.
19. The DfE evidence analysis goes on to show that progression rates declined for all teachers after reforms in 2014 moved away from automatic pay progression to performance-related decisions, but this was "more pronounced" for part-time staff. And since Wales scrapped performance-related pay in 2020, there is no excuse for this deeply flawed and divisive experiment not to finally be surrendered to the scrap heap.

⁶ www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/itt-applications-fall-23

⁷ <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/news/teacher-recruitment-targets-likely-to-be-missed>

⁸ The Thirty-First Report of the School Teachers' Review Body (OME, 2021) p48:3.44

⁹ Jack Worth, "The Teacher Labour Market in England" (NFER, 2021). p4

¹⁰ Haili Hughes, "Preserving Positivity" (John Catt Educational, 2020) p158

¹¹ High Fliers Research, "The Graduate Market in 2021", (2021). p18

¹² <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/pay-reforms-leave-women-teachers-out-of-pocket/>

20. And, as we noted earlier, it's not just about pay, the Teacher Wellbeing Index confirms that over half of all education staff have considered leaving the sector due to workload. And of those who were not planning on immediately leaving, 57% reported they would like to work fewer hours than they currently do.¹³
21. 70 per cent of teachers are working over 50 hours a week just to keep on top of their workloads. Prompting some to note that "if a teacher's salary was divided by the hours worked ... teachers would be paid less than many unskilled workers."¹⁴
22. As we have previously recommended in our submissions to the Review Body, evidence shows that "teacher workload remains a significant issue as more than half of full-time teachers perceive that they work too many hours."¹⁵ Allowing adequate time to undertake all of the duties will significantly improve morale and motivation for teachers, and this should be considered a long-term strategy alongside other workload strategies and a substantial pay increase to restore and re-establish teacher pay and support recruitment and retention.
23. According to the DfE's own figures, recruitment targets have systematically failed to be achieved over the past decade, and this is more worrying when placed alongside projected pupil growth of 15% between 2018 and 2025.
24. And it does appear as if "workers might be developing a different attitude towards the jobs market. Job searches have less urgency, job quality is more important than pay."¹⁶

¹³ Jack Worth, "The Teacher Labour Market in England" (NFER, 2020). p12

¹⁴ Haili Hughes, "Preserving Positivity" (John Catt Educational, 2020) p157

¹⁵ <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/news/teacher-recruitment-targets-likely-to-be-missed>

¹⁶ <https://luminare.prospects.ac.uk/uk-graduate-labour-market-update-21-december>

The Pay Award Proposals

25. Last year's pay pause attempted to reassure the public that the government could manage the increasing costs of a pandemic. This year the headline will undoubtedly be "The highest pay award since 2006"¹⁷ despite the fact that teachers in London and experienced teachers across the country are once again disregarded and forgotten.
26. The Retail Prices Index (RPI) is currently running at around 8%, its highest level in 30 years, and analysis from Bank of America Merrill Lynch predicts a year of 7% inflation for most of 2022.¹⁸ It is clear that the Department's proposals would, once again, lead to the majority of teachers facing a real-terms pay cut.
27. Voice Community acknowledges the increases to core funding that have been made by the Department, but it is equally important to note how much further that core funding now has to stretch. Any funding increase must be sufficient to serve the purpose for which they were intended.
28. Costs are rising across the board. The deteriorating condition of school buildings and the rising costs of maintaining them is almost double the previous estimate, according to key findings from a DfE data collection.¹⁹ Energy costs have skyrocketed by over 50%, which will also increase school buildings costs. And this is on top of planned increases to pension and National Insurance contributions.
29. The percentage of English local authority secondary schools in deficit has more than trebled since 2014, rising to over 30% in 2018. The numbers of primary, nursery and special schools in deficit also continue to rise, meaning that 12%, or one in eight LA schools are in deficit.²⁰
30. Successive funding cuts have withered school support services so that they are no longer effective nor functioning at a time when there has never been a greater need. The disadvantage gap is growing because these services are unable to bridge the gap and support children's physical and emotional needs. Any withdrawal or diversion of existing funding from schools would jeopardise further the support that vulnerable children and young people are receiving. Therefore, the pay increase for teachers must be fully funded by central government to protect these learners and the schools and staff they rely on.
31. Finally, affordability should not come at the expense of pupil learning, nor of a dedicated and committed workforce. If DfE can find £26 million additional funding for Ofsted, then funding for pay – which would be spent on staffing, and circumvent the need for schools to raid their own budgets to fund a pay rise – would allow the already reported budget increases to be spent on improving learning and outcomes for children so desperately affected by COVID-19 over the past 24 months.

¹⁷ Department for Education "Evidence to the School Teacher Review Body" (March 2022) p4

¹⁸ <https://www.ftadviser.com/fix-income/2022/03/07/manager-predicts-year-of-7-inflation-for-uk/>

¹⁹ <https://www.building.co.uk/news/englands-schools-repair-bill-doubles-to-114bn/5112037.article>

²⁰ <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/1-in-8-la-maintained-schools-now-in-deficit-as-primaries-financial-health-worsens>

Summary

32. Teacher pay has for too long suffered and deteriorated in value. It is no longer sufficient to draw new applicants into the profession and “experienced teachers who are close to the top of the pay scale can feel like the forgotten.”²¹ Put simply, for many, it does not pay to be a teacher.
33. School Workforce Lead for NFER, Jack Worth commented, “Improving the competitiveness of teachers’ pay is important for both recruiting and retaining teachers, but while the government has proposed pay increases for teachers, the increases seem insufficient on their own to address the emerging recruitment and retention challenges.”²²
34. Workload and wellbeing are significant contributors to staff happiness. Currently, there is a requirement for staff to receive a minimum 10% PPA time. Some schools see this as a target, and others fail to achieve the minimum on a regular basis. More graduates are seeking improved working conditions, and this can be achieved through additional time to complete duties. Therefore, Voice Community is recommending an increase of PPA to 20% for all teaching staff and those who are directed to lead classroom learning.
35. A culture needs to be developed so that staff have the right to disconnect from the workplace, ie not being expected to answer emails and phone calls out of hours, to support mental health and wellbeing. This would be in line with the aims of the Staff Wellbeing Charter which was launched earlier this academic year. Furthermore, the Government needs to adhere to this charter, to which it has signed up, to ensure that all school staff, including leaders, are given the right to disconnect.
36. Voice Community believes that a real-terms pay increase is necessary, one which restores the value of teacher pay in the face of inflation, increased living costs and rising energy prices. So, we are calling for a government-funded increase of 10% across all pay points. Without this, the Government’s proposals simply do not support their statement to “support teachers to join and stay in the profession”²³.

²¹ Haili Hughes, “Preserving Positivity” (John Catt Educational, 2020) p158

²² <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/news/teacher-recruitment-targets-likely-to-be-missed>

²³ DfE Evidence to the STRB (March 2022) p5