



Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
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20 September 2023

Dear Secretary of State

Joint union statement on Performance-Related Pay (PRP)

This joint union statement on PRP supplements the joint union response to the STRB's 33rd Report and the Government's response and includes an urgent call for action from the Government on the key issue of PRP.

The STRB's observations on PRP represent a major development in this important area of teacher and school leader pay. The STRB's comments, from a body which has previously been supportive of PRP, are striking.

- "We have heard repeatedly from all consultees their concerns relating to the operation of performance-related pay progression and workload."
- "The burden of administering (PRP) exceeds any benefit that it is achieving."
- "The obligation on schools to use the current model should be removed."

We also note the STRB's comment that the Government offered to take this approach as part of a settlement to the pay dispute.

PRP continues to be imposed on the profession without evidence and against the united opposition of teachers and school leaders. The damage it has caused has strengthened the view of teachers and school leaders that it must be removed and replaced with fair pay progression to recognise the acquisition of experience and expertise.

A number of Multi Academy Trusts agree with the concerns expressed about PRP by teachers and school leaders and have already dropped PRP. The STRB's conclusions now leave the Government completely isolated on this issue.

Over the decade since the imposition of PRP, its impact has resulted in many teachers and school leaders being unfairly treated, with a major impact on pay outcomes and the persistence of a pronounced gender pay gap that increases with age and role seniority. Many have been denied pay progression due to factors completely outside of their control.

Not only does this undervalue teachers and school leaders, but it also creates additional recruitment and retention problems. Existing teachers and school leaders are more likely to leave the profession when they see their pay and career prospects unfairly damaged. Potential teachers are less likely to join the profession when they see the arbitrary and unfair way in which PRP damages career development.

In addition to the damage done to teacher and school leader pay, PRP also makes the critical workload problems worse. Additional bureaucracy is created and PRP contributes to the excessive accountability which drives workload and wellbeing problems. PRP also damages relationships within schools, undermining positive appraisal and creating conflict between staff.

Despite the clear statement by the STRB, the Government's response to the STRB report does not include removal of the obligation on schools to operate PRP. A failure by the Government to do so will put it at odds with the profession, the evidence and the STRB. Unless the Government changes course, it will have no credibility on this key issue and will confirm that its approach is based on nothing more than discredited dogma.

We call on the Government to make good on the STRB's observations by immediately removing the obligation on schools to operate performance-related pay progression, with this change given effect in the 2023 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, a draft version of which is currently the subject of consultation.

The Government must go further and move to urgently replace PRP with fair pay progression to recognise experience and expertise. We call for a fair national pay structure with no PRP, fair pay progression and the immediate restoration of mandatory pay points for all teachers and school leaders as a minimum entitlement. These steps, alongside a major correction in teacher pay levels, are essential to ensure that we value, recruit and retain the teachers and school leaders our education service needs.

Yours sincerely



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