



SUPPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE TO THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' REVIEW BODY

November 2025

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Introduction

1. Following publication of the evidence to The Review Body from the Department for Education (DfE), our sister unions and other stakeholders, Community is pleased to present our supplementary evidence, in which we draw attention to, and challenge, some assertions, and share additional evidence to aid in resolution.
2. We applaud the fact that this government has taken decisive action and accepted the recommendations of the Review Body in the past two years. These rises have been hugely important in the journey towards pay restoration, with the Department's evidence to the Review Body last year stating that "*teacher pay competitiveness is set to improve in 2024/25*,"¹ however there remains scope for further work to achieve this.² And, despite the welcomed teacher pay rises of 26% collectively since 2018, teacher and school leader pay remains around 18% lower in real terms than in 2010.³
3. Community is clear that this degradation in pay and conditions for teachers and school leaders must be addressed to fix the recruitment and retention issues that continue to plague the sector. And we call on The Review Body to make a recommendation for a funded 6% uplift for September 2026, as well as considering restorative uplifts to teacher pay rates over the next three years.

The Pay Award

4. We acknowledge that over this parliament, teachers have received above inflation pay awards of almost 10%.⁴ However, with Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) inflation in September 2024 of 2.6%, and 3.9% in September 2025, the real-terms increase in teacher pay was 4%.⁵ Given the proposed 6.5% increase over the next three years, and CPIH inflation averaging 4.1% for the year to date, this would likely result in a real-terms pay cut even if inflation were to rapidly fall to the Bank of England's target of 2%.
5. With this in mind, Community contends that a comprehensive pay uplift is necessary for September 2026 and in subsequent years in order to continue restoring the value of teacher pay. This is why we have proposed a fully-funded 6% uplift for September 2026, as well as further restorative uplifts to teacher pay rates over the next three years.

¹ The Department for Education, "Government Evidence to the STRB" (2024). Page 5, paragraph 12.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-to-the-strb-2025-pay-award-for-teachers-and-leaders>

² The Office for National Statistics, "Average weekly earnings in Great Britain" (October 2024).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsingreatbritain/october2024>

³ Lydia Chatler-Hicks in *Schools Week*, "Five things we learned about the teacher workforce from the STRB report" (2025).

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/five-things-we-learned-about-the-teacher-workforce-from-the-strb-report/>

⁴ The Department for Education, "Government Evidence to the STRB" (2025). Page 5.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-to-the-strb-2026-pay-award-for-teachers-and-leaders>

⁵ The Office for National Statistics, "Consumer price inflation, UK: September 2023 (2023).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/september2023>

6. It is critical that there is a robust national pay framework that all teachers can rely on. This is why we are interested in the Department's suggestion that, "*all state school teachers can rely on a core pay offer and all schools can innovate to attract and retain the best teachers that they need for our children.*"⁶ However, it will be vital that this 'core' offer does not in any way lower the basic rate of pay in the expectation that it will be 'topped up' by bonus payments, as this would fundamentally undermine the integrity of the national pay agreement and would worsen pay equality.
7. There is also the risk that this proposal would have a negative impact on the retention of staff, as it could put downward pressure on the pay scales and undermine pay certainty, a key component of the teacher pay scales which supports teacher retention.
8. The same risk exists around the potential use of bonus payments. As we noted in our primary evidence, the recent move away from performance-related pay was very welcome, because pupil performance was decoupled from teacher pay. We feel that bonus payments, which by their very nature are rewards for performance and difficult to assess objectively, would also be seen in the same way. What we want to see is a robust, nationally agreed, pay award that recognises the achievements of all teachers. And Community would object to any system which used pupil-level data to make any such determination.
9. We note the Department's comment that "*some academies offer non-consolidated payments or bonuses to their staff, such as a "golden hello" for new staff, rewards for staff who have delivered a long service in their particular school, and one-off payments to reward exceptional performance.*"⁷ As outlined above this proposal gives us real cause for concern.
10. For example, it is unclear what might constitute "*exceptional performance*" and how this would be measured objectively without referring to pupil progress or outcomes. We fear that this could lead to unintended consequences and practices which focus purely on pupil assessment and outcomes. This is reminiscent of performance-related pay and should not be re-introduced.
11. We welcome the Department's proposal of the following safeguards:
 - *Schools wishing to use non-consolidated payments must clearly outline their approach in their local pay and conditions policy, including eligibility criteria and allocation processes.*
 - *Non-consolidated payments must not be used as a substitute for pay increases agreed by government. The department is clear that this would be an inappropriate use of the policy.*
 - *Decisions must be made in compliance with equalities and employment legislation.*⁸However, Community argues these safeguards are currently insufficient and should be expanded to provide the objective and universal opportunity of a national pay framework.

⁶ The Department for Education, "Government Evidence to the STRB" (2025). Page 17.

⁷ The Department for Education, "Government Evidence to the STRB" (2025). Page 45.

⁸ The Department for Education, "Government Evidence to the STRB" (2025). Page 46.

12. In the same way, pay flexibilities can lead to obfuscation and a lack of transparency within the system, and enable pay inequality to arise. We have seen reports that some Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)⁹ have particularly high levels of staff turnover, despite having additional opportunities to innovate around pay, and for this reason Community would much prefer all schools to follow the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, and for subjectivity and bonuses to be strictly limited.
13. Community argues that this would not unduly limit a school's ability to make efficient staffing and deployment decisions, as suggested by the Department's evidence, and we do not feel that reducing the length of salary safeguarding would improve flexibility. Community's view is that reducing the safeguarded salary period would impact any affected teachers greatly but would be unlikely to have any notable impact on school budget planning and would not achieve the stated goal of removing inefficiency.

Funding

14. Community welcomes the recent spending review settlement that means that overall schools funding is increasing by £4.2 billion between 2025 and 2029 – a real-terms increase of around 6.6%. However, the overall costs for schools are forecast to increase by around 6.5% in the next academic year alone. This suggests that schools will not be in any better financial position by the end of the parliament and does little to protect small schools whose funding is more impacted by per-pupil funding and affected by falling roles.¹⁰
15. As we have previously outlined, schools across the country have been operating on ever-decreasing resources over the past decade, and have already removed all unnecessary spending.¹¹ Therefore, it is difficult to see how schools can *“proactively drive better value from their budgets across the next three years”* when there is little left to cut other than staff.
16. Community is concerned that the proposal of an unfunded pay award in the government evidence, does not adequately take into account the financial strain schools are experiencing on the ground. For this reason, it is imperative that funding for any pay award is provided centrally to ensure that it does not cause schools to reduce staff to meet the pay award, as this is likely to result in even larger class sizes and higher staff turnover.
17. There are nascent positive signs that the government's pay strategy is starting to deliver improvements to the recruitment and retention of teachers, and now is the time to build upon these to recruit and secure a workforce capable of delivering the changes envisioned by this Labour government.

⁹ Jack Dyson in *Schools Week*, “Big MATs have highest teacher turnover, EPI finds” (2024).
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/big-mats-have-highest-teacher-turnover-eqi-finds/>

¹⁰ *The Department for Education*, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 34.

¹¹ Chaminda Jayanetti in *Schools Week*, “School budgets slide further into the red” (2025).
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-budgets-slide-further-into-the-red/>

18. To maintain the recent above-inflation pay awards for teachers and to commit to a longer-term funding agreement would provide financial stability and predictability for employers and staff alike, supporting investment into buildings, technology and improvement programmes as well as leading to better staff retention.
19. Community has previously expressed support for multi-year pay awards, when they are combined with sufficient multi-year funding agreements. The pay award suggested by the Department is not sufficient to risk entering a multi-year funding agreement that may result in real-terms losses for teachers.
20. Community has concerns that, over the next three years, teachers may find that their wages stagnate and become devalued. CPIH inflation currently sits at 4.1%, with the Bank of England again holding interest rates at 4% in November, and with predictions that they will not quickly fall.¹² This would erase more than half of this pay award in one single year, eliminating any real-terms improvement and further damaging the competitiveness of teacher pay.¹³ Furthermore, over the past 25 years, teachers have become used to an annual pay increase, and this change may cause discontent and worsen the current recruitment and retention issues.
21. In contrast, the teacher pay awards over the past two years (5.5% in 2024, and 4% in 2025) were both above the average CPIH inflation for the year, albeit only just.¹⁴ And as inflation continues to remain high, and significantly above the Bank of England's target of 2%, schools may find it difficult to use their pay flexibilities since their budget will be unlikely to permit it without first cutting costs elsewhere.
22. We are concerned by the Department's comment that, *"There is significant potential in under-utilised assets across the school sector, including sizeable financial reserves and physical assets such as land and buildings."*¹⁵ Whilst we would support greater community use of school facilities, we would not be able to support the selling off of playing fields or other resources as a one-off capital gain to cover underfunding or ongoing costs.
23. What is needed is a multi-year agreement which includes built-in cost-of-living adjustments to protect employees' purchasing power over time.

¹² *The Office for National Statistics*, "Inflation and price indices" (2025)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices>

¹³ *The Department for Education*, "Government Evidence to the STRB" (2025). Page 35.

¹⁴ Figures from the *Office for National Statistics* indicate that average CPIH inflation was 3.3% in 2024 and 3.4% in 2025, meaning teacher pay rose just 2.8% in real-terms in the past two years.

¹⁵ *The Department for Education*, "Government Evidence to the STRB" (2025). Page 40

Staffing

24. Community is pleased to note the recruitment and retention figures outlined by the Department record a slight decrease in the rates of teachers leaving state funded schools, *“with the overall leaver rate now the lowest, excluding pandemic years, since the School Workforce Census (SWC) began, at 9.0%. The census data also shows that there are already 2,350 more teachers in secondary and special schools in 2024/25 than there were in 2023/24.”*¹⁶ However, there remains substantial work to be done to build on this improvement.
25. The fact that the number of teacher vacancies in November 2024 decreased by around 600 to 2,200 in November 2024 is also only a nominal success at best, given the rate more than doubled in the previous three years; from 1,100 in November 2020 to a peak of 2,800 in November 2023.¹⁷
26. *“Since a peak in 2018/19, pupil numbers in primary schools and nurseries have declined by 3%. The number of pupils in primary schools is projected to continue to decrease and be around 6% lower by 2028/29 compared to 2024/25. Pupil teacher ratios have remained relatively flat and were 20.8 in 2024/25 (20.8 in 2023/24).”*¹⁸ But, a fall of a further 3% is unlikely to reduce the number of teachers required in primary schools, and this is confirmed by the stability in the pupil teacher ratio.
27. It is also worth pointing out that the number of Post-Graduate trainees (PGITT) recruited has fallen in the last two cycles, with provisional statistics showing that only 88% of the primary PGITT target was met in 2024/25.¹⁹ This means that, in order to maintain the current pupil teacher ratios, we need to ensure that existing staff are retained alongside new joiners to the profession.
28. Retention remains an issue, and although we are pleased to see a slight improvement (0.3pp) in retention rates since last year and improvement in retention of Early Career Teachers (1.6pp), the data also shows there is still room to improve retention further. *“Despite the increase in the science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) retention rate, the gap between STEM and non-STEM teacher retention rates remains.”*²⁰
29. The withdrawal of vital social support services and provision over the past 15 years, has pushed additional duties onto school leaders, teachers and support staff, increasing their workload and is having a detrimental impact on their ability to prioritise the job they were employed for, which is damaging to job satisfaction, personal wellbeing, and quality of teaching. In response, schools have deliberately recruited additional support staff to address the gap in provision which is why we have seen *“a 30% increase in teaching assistants, compared to a 7% increase in teachers since 2011.”*²¹

¹⁶ The Department for Education, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 5.

¹⁷ The Department for Education, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 5.

¹⁸ The Department for Education, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 7.

¹⁹ The Department for Education, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 11.

²⁰ The Department for Education, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 8.

²¹ The Department for Education, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 41.

Developing Teachers and PPA time

30. There is some evidence that National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) have improved teacher development across England by increasing access to high-quality, research-based training, which has caused schools to take a more evidence-led approach to staff development across schools.
31. There are currently ten NPQs. Five designed to support the development of leadership skills or progression into a leadership role with the other five aiming to support leading teachers within schools.²² Community is very supportive of the revised suite of NPQs, but we note that they do nothing to support the vast majority of classroom teachers to develop their practice, if they do not wish to become leaders.
32. We also have some concerns that the announcement last year, to significantly cut funding, will have a disastrous impact on access to this well-regarded and important training.²³
33. It is similarly alarming to imply that staff may need to use *“Teaching Vacancies, the department’s free service for schools to list all their vacancies ... to allow teachers to continue their learning, growth and professional development goals”* when staff development is a requirement of the current employer.²⁴
34. As mentioned in our primary evidence, Community advocates a personal entitlement within continuing professional development.²⁵ Together with quality-assured whole-school training, Community believes this would have a positive impact on retaining teachers in classrooms and that it would also have a similarly positive impact on pupil outcomes. With the independent review of teachers’ professional development in schools concurring: *“High-quality professional development that improves teachers’ knowledge, practice and confidence can have a positive impact on pupils’ outcomes. Teachers also feel more satisfied in their roles and are more likely to stay in their jobs when they regularly access high-quality training.”*²⁶
35. Community is pleased with the decision to allow teachers to take Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time at home, as outlined in the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (2025). This has the potential to improve workload and wellbeing through flexible working arrangements.
36. *What Do Graduates Do?* highlights that only 5% of employers expect their graduate hires to be fully office based and nearly a quarter expect them to work from home for at least three days per week.²⁷ Yet in 2021/22, just 2% of primary

²² *The Department for Education*, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 23.

²³ Gareth Conyard in *Schools Week*, “Another NPQ funding cut is more evidence of damaging short-termism.” (2024) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/another-npq-funding-cut-is-more-evidence-of-damaging-short-termism/>

²⁴ *The Department for Education*, “Government Evidence to the STRB” (2025). Page 24.

²⁵ *Community Union*, “Evidence to the School Teachers’ Review Body” (2025). Page 17. <https://community-tu.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Community-Union-Written-Evidence-to-the-School-Teachers-Review-Body-October-2025.pdf>

²⁶ *Ofsted*, “Independent review of teachers’ professional development in schools: phase 2 findings.” (updated 2024). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-professional-development-in-schools/independent-review-of-teachers-professional-development-in-schools-phase-2-findings>

²⁷ *Luminate / Prospects and AGCAS*, “What Do Graduates Do?” (2023/24) Page 16

classroom teachers and 1% of secondary classroom teachers reported that they had a formally-agreed arrangement to work remotely.²⁸ This indicates that, despite government guidance and support (eg PPA time at home), a significant number of schools continue to deny or fail to support these flexibilities.²⁹

37. Community has long argued for an increase in the amount of PPA time. Doubling the amount of PPA time from 10% to 20% would reduce workload, helping schools to support flexible working, manage workload, improve staff physical and mental health, and reduce staff absence.
38. We acknowledge the challenges, financial and in relation to staffing numbers. This is why Community proposes a phased introduction to allow schools and budgets to adjust over a number of years.
39. According to the School Workforce Census, there are 468,700 FTE³⁰ classroom teachers in England on a median salary of £43,801,³¹ generating an approximate national wage bill of £20,529,528,700. We calculate that we would need one additional teacher for every ten teachers currently employed to increase PPA to 20% per full-time teacher. This would require an additional 47,000 teachers and cost somewhere in the region of an additional £2bn.³²
40. Other organisations, such as Teach First, have also put forward the proposal for an increase in PPA, *"The ECF has set the precedent that ringfenced PPA time is important for professional development ... This rationale should be extended across a teacher's career, so all teachers can keep improving, as well as avoid getting burned out in the process."*³³
41. Community would like to see a consultation or stakeholder engagement on increasing PPA time to be opened, as this would support professional development, flexibility and workload and wellbeing.

Working Hours and the right to disconnect

42. Workload surveys, including the Department's own *Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders*, have highlighted the issue of excessive hours, with primary school teachers working an excessive 52.5 hours per week and secondary teachers

https://graduatemarkettrends.cdn.prismic.io/graduatemarkettrends/bb6dc6da-0786-4c17-aa74-af4607d20bb0_what-do-graduates-do-2324.pdf

²⁸ National Foundation for Educational Research, "The Teacher Labour Market in England" (2024).

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2024/>

²⁹ National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, "Flexible Working Survey" (2023).

<https://www.nasuw.org.uk/static/44c65415-8095-4917-81d661e22fb70e12/eefcd53f-9633-4b01-ae49edaa09a5df1c/Flexible-Working-Survey-Report-2023-England.pdf>

³⁰ Department for Education, "The School Workforce in England" (2024).

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>

³¹ Department for Education, "Median teacher pay using teacher pension scheme data" (2023/24).

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/median-teacher-pay-using-teacher-pension-scheme-data/2023-24>

³² The 2024 pay award of 5.5% cost the govt. £1.1bn.

³³ Grainne Hallahan in TES, "Why doubling PPA could help tackle the attainment gap" (2021)

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/why-doubling-ppa-could-help-tackle-attainment-gap>

recorded as working 50.3 hours per week. Of those working hours, just 45% (23.3 hours) were spent on actual teaching.³⁴

43. The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document '*limits*' teachers to 1,265 hours of directed time across 195 working days, with the caveat that teachers will also work "*such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties*"³⁵ There are no defined protections for school leaders.
44. The *Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders* report shows that 34% of teachers and leaders are considering leaving the sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement, with workload consistently cited as the top reason for teachers leaving the profession – this is consistent with 2023 and much higher than the 25% seen in 2022.³⁶
45. All teachers must be able to complete their work – the system needs to allow reasonable time to complete this, but it is clear that there is insufficient time to do so within the current directed time. Community has outlined the importance of PPA time and how an increase from 10% to 20% would help to address this workload issues, but a wider look at working hours as a whole, and staff expectations within schools, should be considered as part of a package of solutions.
46. The Department should look to define what reasonable maximum working hours are. For example, the working time directive mandates a maximum 48-hour working week, and teachers in Scotland have a 35-hour working week for teachers. We need to protect lunchtimes and holidays since we have found from our members that many teachers and leaders work through these times to complete work they could not otherwise do. This increases the risk of burnout, leading to attrition of teaching staff and feeding a cycle of increased workload for those remaining who then may also leave the profession.
47. As previously noted, we need to ensure there is flexibility. Just as many office workers send emails and respond outside of 'normal working hours', teachers and leaders must be able to work flexibly, should they wish to, wherever this is possible.
48. And all staff must have the right to disconnect. Whilst we appreciate that the Review Body does not have the authority to mandate this in statute, Community contend that working hours and the workload of teachers and leaders should be reviewed and guidance issued.

³⁴ Department for Education, "The Working lives of teachers and leaders, Wave 3 Summary report" (2024). Page 7.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

³⁵ Department for Education, "School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document" (2025). Section 51
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>

³⁶ Department for Education, "The Working lives of teachers and leaders, Wave 3 Summary report" (2024). Page 20.

Summary

49. Community welcomes the opportunity to provide supplementary evidence to the Review Body following the Department for Education's recent submission. While we acknowledge and welcome the government's positive actions in accepting previous Review Body recommendations, teacher and school leader pay remains around 18% lower in real terms than in 2010.
50. Community therefore calls for a fully funded 6% pay uplift from September 2026, alongside further restorative increases over the next three years. It is essential that these awards are centrally funded to avoid placing further pressure on school budgets, which are already facing significant challenges. The government's current proposals could lead to real-terms pay cuts and negate the recent modest progress on teacher retention.
51. Community opposes any move to introduce performance-related bonuses or "core plus top-up" pay models, which risk entrenching inequality, undermining pay certainty, and damaging morale. Pay flexibility and bonus schemes lack transparency and could reintroduce performance-related pay by another route.
52. While recruitment and retention data show slight improvement, staffing shortages persist, particularly in STEM subjects, and training targets continue to be missed. Community cautions against viewing the rise in support staff as inefficiency as it reflects schools compensating for the loss of wider social services.
53. Community advocates investment in professional development and workload reduction as vital to sustaining the workforce. We support expanding access to National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) and propose doubling Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time from 10% to 20% over five years to reduce workload, support wellbeing, and enhance teaching quality.
54. Teachers continue to work far beyond directed time limits. Community is pleased to note the Department's stated position is to tackle *"the systemic challenges that the sector faces which drive high workload and poor wellbeing."*³⁷ And therefore, we urge the Review Body to consider how working hours might be defined so that teachers and leaders do not work excessively, and to endorse the right to disconnect, bringing teaching in line with other professions that promote flexible and sustainable working practices.
55. In summary, to secure the future of the teaching profession, Community calls for:
 - a centrally funded 6% uplift in September 2026 and further restorative pay awards;
 - protection of the national pay framework with no performance-based or bonus models;
 - a multi-year funding agreement which factors increases to the cost-of-living;
 - increased PPA time and flexible working to tackle excessive workload; and
 - a renewed focus on professional development and staff wellbeing.

³⁷ The Department for Education, "Government Evidence to the STRB" (2025). Page 25

56. These measures are essential to restore the value of teaching, strengthen recruitment and retention, and enable schools to deliver the high-quality education that every child deserves.