

**WRITTEN EVIDENCE TO THE
INDEPENDENT WELSH
PAY REVIEW BODY**

December 2025

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Introduction

- i. Community is once again pleased to present our evidence to The Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB).
- ii. Community is a general trade union representing thousands of workers across diverse occupations and industries throughout the UK. Our education membership is made up of teachers and lecturers, classroom and administrative support staff, nannies and other early years professionals, tutors, site staff and more, who all work together to ensure the best provision possible is available to pupils and learners every day.
- iii. In this submission we comment on the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders, to ensure the teaching profession in Wales is promoted and rewarded to encourage recruitment and retention of high-quality practitioners.
- iv. We do this by reporting on:
 - the Graduate Labour Market;
 - the economic picture affecting the teaching profession; and
 - the forecast demand for teachers in Wales;
- v. And highlight the importance of:
 - pay and progression;
 - workload and wellbeing for teachers and school leaders; and
 - the right to disconnect.
- vi. We strongly urge the IWPRB to adopt the measures proposed in this document to ensure that the education sector retains the dedicated professionals who are so essential to its success.
- vii. **General Secretary Roy Rickhuss CBE** said:
“We appreciate the ambition of the Welsh Labour Government to develop learners into ambitious, capable and ethical citizens through education. Our members play a vital role in delivering this every day, through high-quality learning in classrooms up and down Wales.
- viii. *“But this submission to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body mirrors the strength of feeling amongst our members in the education workforce of the need to make the sector an attractive place to work once again. This should be reflected not just in a substantial pay uplift, but with improved conditions, and especially action to tackle unsustainable workloads.*
- ix. *“Inspiring and educating a generation is no small task, and our members are ready to meet this challenge head-on. Together with the support of parents and the Senedd, to address workload, pupil behaviour and to improve pay and conditions for all those*

working in education, there is a real opportunity to make a difference and we encourage the IWPRB to grasp it.”

- x. **Helen Osgood, Director of Operations**, said:
“Retention continues to be a critical issue for the education sector, and raising pay levels is a key part of the solution to address this, along with action to tackle workload and support for pupil behaviour.”
- xi. *“Community recognises the positive work that has already been undertaken on these issues, however there is always more that can be achieved, and this document outlines some of the positive changes that Community would like to see.”*
- xii. *We support the independence of the IWPRB – as highlighted in the name – and the process for sharing the views of teachers and leaders who work in the classrooms up and down the country. It is they who will be most affected by any recommendations made; therefore, it is vital that our members, and all constituent parties, have trust in the recommendations it makes.”*
- xiii. **National Secretary for Wales, Alun Davies** said:
“Community is committed to working together with the IWPRB and the Welsh Government to improve pay and conditions for our members and all those who work in education in Wales.”
- xiv. *“Once again, we submit a body of evidence that Community, alongside our sister unions, believes provides a detailed picture of what life is like for our dedicated teachers and educators in their workplaces every day.”*
- xv. *“We urge the IWPRB to acknowledge the commitment, dedication and determination of our school staff, and make the changes necessary to secure the workforce for future generations.”*

The Graduate Labour Market in the United Kingdom

1. Attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers is an essential task for a Welsh Government that is determined secure high standards and aspirations for all pupils. And we are pleased with the commitment of The Department of Education to work with the sector to recruit new teachers, to support career-long professional learning, and commit to managing workload and reducing bureaucracy, but more remains to be tackled.
2. It is vital that teaching is competitive in the UK graduate labour market and across Wales, and is sustainable as a long-term career option. Due to economic challenges and the changing nature of work for graduates within office-based graduate roles, the education sector must be equally appealing to graduates in the modern working world. Heightened competition for jobs, reduced opportunities and slow salary growth all persist, with three-fifths of graduate employers reporting a rise in applications,¹ with some seeing unprecedented numbers of applications, often exceeding 140 applicants per vacancy.²
3. Whilst much of the employment pain has been in sectors largely employing non-graduates, such as retail, and services³ companies across all sectors have scaled back their hiring due to economic pressures, leaving fewer openings for a growing number of jobseekers. And whilst sectors such as technology, finance and professional services remain in demand, even here, the competition is fierce.
4. Rising living costs, inflation and constrained employer budgets have created a tougher environment for young professionals. At the same time, employers are increasingly turning to automation and AI-driven tools in recruitment processes, changing how candidates are assessed and selected.
5. According to *What do Graduates do?*, 7.2% of the 2021/22 cohort of graduates are employed as education professionals 15 months after graduation, with primary and secondary teaching professionals occupying positions four and five in the list of top ten professional jobs held by first degree graduates.⁴
6. Whilst teaching in secondary education comes third in the list of top ten professional jobs held by first-degree graduates, teaching does not feature in the list at all for Computer Science.⁵ Only around 9% to 15% of biology, chemistry, physics, and physical and geographical sciences graduates entered the education/teaching sector⁶ and the speed at which the market changes means that many will have discounted a career in education in favour of better paid employment in another sector.
7. Pay is a significant issue for graduates who are leaving university with some of the highest debt ever seen in the UK. Current estimates indicate that students leave

¹ *High Fliers Research Centre*, "The Graduate Labour Market in 2024." (2024). Page 25.

<https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>

² *Institute of Student Employers*, "5 trends you need to know from ISE's Recruitment Survey 2024." (2024)

https://ise.org.uk/knowledge/insights/260/5_trends_you_need_to_know_from_ises_recruitment_survey_2024/

³ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, "What Do Graduates Do?" (2024/25). Page 11.

<https://luminare.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

⁴ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, "What Do Graduates Do?" (2024/25). Pp 6-7.

⁵ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, "What Do Graduates Do?" (2024/25). Pp 51-53.

⁶ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, "What Do Graduates Do?" (2024/25). Page 77.

university with £45,000 of debt⁷ to be repaid over an average of 40 years. When coupled with a standard 7.1% interest rate, and the requirement to repay undergraduate and postgraduate loans at the same time on earnings above the threshold, students can find themselves being deducted around 41% of salary, once pension, tax and National Insurance deductions, and student loan repayments are included.

8. The median graduate starting salary on offer from the UK's leading employers has risen to more than £34,000 for graduates starting work in 2025. This is an increase of £500 compared to the median salary paid to new graduates in 2023 and means that graduate pay has risen by over 13.3% since 2021.⁸ In Wales, the starting salary for teachers has also risen since 2021 to its current rate of £33,731. This remains comparable to many graduate roles, although there is significant difference when considering that more than a quarter of graduate jobs at the country's leading employers now have initial salaries of £40,000 or more.⁹
9. It is interesting to note that if the median graduate starting salary of £29,500 paid by the country's top employers a decade ago had kept pace with inflation over the past ten years, it would now be worth approximately £41,122 – over £6,000 more than this year's median pay for new graduates¹⁰ and nearly £7,400 more than the starting salary of M2.
10. But, as we noted in our evidence last year, it is not just pay that is important. According to *What do students want?*, “*Money isn't everything*”. While presenting clear salary information is important, graduate jobseekers also want to hear about the wider opportunities that organisations will provide them with, the likely work-life balance, and the ethical and environmental positioning of organisations.¹¹ And flexibilities, such as hybrid working, compressed hours and mentoring support, are all things which new graduates are looking for in their first employment.
11. And it's not just the employees, “*the shift to hybrid work remains pivotal*”,¹² according to employers, with only 5% expecting their graduate hires to be fully office based.¹³ Therefore, to make teaching more attractive to graduates, we encourage the IWPRB to further consider flexibilities within a teacher's terms and conditions.

⁷ *Community Trade Union*, “The Hidden Costs of Student Loans” (2024)
<https://community-tu.org/who-we-are/our-sectors/education-and-early-years/early-career-teachers-ect/university-student-loans-campaign/>

⁸ *High Fliers Research Centre*, “The Graduate Labour Market in 2024.” (2024). Page 16.

⁹ *High Fliers Research Centre*, “The Graduate Labour Market in 2024.” (2024). Page 16.

¹⁰ According to the Bank of England inflation calculator, £29,000 in 2014 would now be worth £41,122 (August 2025).

¹¹ *Institute of Student Employers*. & *Debut*, “What do students want?” (2020). Page 20.

https://ise.org.uk/global_engine/download.aspx?fileid=0784B0F6-9ACF-48AA-8793-08E17AF84870

¹² *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, “What Do Graduates Do?” (2023/24). Page 13.

<https://luminare.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

¹³ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, “What Do Graduates Do?” (2023/24). Page 16.

The Economic Picture

12. In the five-year period to 2023/24, the real-terms purchasing power of UK earnings fell due to high inflation, with median household incomes decreasing significantly, exacerbated by high energy and commodity prices and made worse through high food costs.¹⁴
13. In particular, food prices have risen by almost 5%, with the British Retail Consortium noting that *"with food inflation now outpacing wages, many families will be struggling with the rising cost of living"*.¹⁵
14. This recent high inflation continues to be a major factor in reducing the purchasing power of teacher salaries. Between the 2010-11 academic year and 2023-24, teacher earnings across the UK (after accounting for inflation) fell in real-terms by about 18.2%, with experienced teachers seeing the most substantial real-terms cuts to their salaries.¹⁶
15. Over the past twelve months, the annual growth in average regular earnings, not including bonuses, across the private sector was 4.8%.¹⁷ This is lower than the rise of 5.7% seen across the public sector, but notably higher than the 4% teachers received in 2025.
16. UK Consumer Prices Index, including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) interest rates in the year to August, rose to 4.2%, according to official figures published in September, meaning that the 4% pay award teachers have recently received has been all but negated by inflation, price rises and the cost-of-living increases.¹⁸
17. The latest predictions from the Bank of England are that CPIH inflation will reach 4% and stay above its 2% target until the spring of 2027. This prediction means that any public sector pay award must be in excess of 4% to be anything other than a pay cut.

¹⁴ Brigid Francis-Devine for *The House of Commons Library*, "High cost of living: Impact on households." (2025)
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10100/>

¹⁵ Dr Kris Hamer for *The British Retail Consortium*, "Food prices rise as Budget looms." (2025)

<https://brc.org.uk/news-and-events/news/corporate-affairs/2025/ungated/food-prices-rise-as-budget-looms/>

¹⁶ Lydia Chantler-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/>

¹⁷ *The Office for National Statistics*, "Average weekly earnings in Great Britain: August 2025." (2025)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsin-greatbritain/august2025>

¹⁸ Dearbail Jordan for *The BBC*, "Food prices continue to surge as inflation remains at 3.8%." (2025)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cderznjj4r7o>

Demand for Teachers

19. Significant demand exists for teachers across the education sector in Wales. Across the 2023/24 academic year, there were 2,172 teaching posts advertised, attracting an average of 10.0 applications per post advertised. Of these, 246 remained unfilled at the end of the year. 1,465 teachers left the profession during the 2023/24 academic year – an increase of 9.3% over the previous academic year. Of those teachers leaving, 455 retired, an increase of 26.4%.¹⁹
20. More concerning is the fact that 27.6% of those who left had less than five years' experience, leaving a retention issue that risks gaps in provision. Despite having the youngest teacher workforce in the OECD, the high turnover of younger teachers entering the profession risks causing a top-heavy age profile within the workforce. Measures such as tackling levels of stress and addressing working conditions within the workforce are key to retaining younger teachers and ensuring that there is a pipeline to meet the needs of the sector in the future.
21. As of November 2024, there were 25,115 teachers in local authority maintained schools across Wales. This is a 2.4% decrease from the previous year but is consistent with previous decreases.²⁰ The pupil population has also continued to decrease, with 460,091 pupils attending schools in Wales. Of these around 2.1% in independent provision which is consistent with previous data.²¹
22. Pupil-teacher numbers across mainstream schools remains broadly consistent, however, the recruitment and retention difficulties identified back in 2022 in subjects such as “*Welsh, maths, science and modern foreign languages*,” continue to persist.²² This mirrors a UK-wide situation, with *Schools Week* reporting “*Fewest ever teachers join*,” recording the number of new full-time teachers down a further 4,100 over the previous year.²³
23. The findings from wave three of *The Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders in England* show that 34% of teachers and leaders were considering leaving the sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement, which is consistent with 2023 and remains much higher than the 25% seen in 2022.²⁴ In Wales, Senedd research²⁵ suggests 16% of teachers plan on leaving within the next 12 months, but research by NASUWT²⁶ suggests this could be as high as 75%!

¹⁹ *Welsh Government*, “School Workforce Census results.” (2025)

<https://www.gov.wales/school-workforce-census-results-november-2024-official-statistics-html>

²⁰ *Welsh Government*, “School Workforce Census results” (2024)

<https://www.gov.wales/school-workforce-census-results-november-2023>

²¹ *Welsh Government*, “Schools’ Census results” (2025)

<https://www.gov.wales/schools-census-results-january-2025>

²² Anusha Ghosh and Jack Worth, for *The National Foundation for Education Research*, “The Teacher Labour Market in Wales Annual Report,” (2022). Page 3.

https://nfer.ac.uk/media/4zznpyqz/teacher_labour_market_in_wales_annual_report_2022.pdf

²³ Jack Dyson in *Schools Week*, “Fewer teachers quit and more return: 10 key workforce findings” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/fewer-teachers-quit-and-more-return-10-key-workforce-findings/>

²⁴ *The Department for Education*, “The Working lives of teachers and leaders: Wave 3 Summary report,” (2024). Page 20.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

²⁵ *Senedd Research*, “Teaching Matters” (2023)

<https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/teaching-matters/>

²⁶ Sue Austin in *The Shropshire Star*, “Many Welsh teachers considering leaving the profession, says union” (2023)

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/education/2023/04/10/many-welsh-teachers-considering-leaving-the-profession-says-union/>

24. This is confirmed by recent TUC polling, which states two-fifths of education workers have already taken steps to leave their profession to get a job in another field, or are actively considering it.²⁷ Government data shows that this is particularly acute among early-career teachers, where one-third leave during the first five years of their career.
25. Recent Welsh Government data indicates that the number of teachers under the age of 25 continues to fall, with the highest concentration of staff aged between 30 and 49 (61%), which is consistent with previous years. We also note that the number of older teachers continues to increase slowly.²⁸
26. Projections suggest that the demographic ‘bulge’ recently seen in secondary school pupil numbers is now peaking at 161,615 (a 2.33% increase on 2020-21) and will start to slowly decrease over the next few years. Primary pupil numbers have already begun declining, falling 3.21% since 2020-21.²⁹
27. As noted in our previous submissions, these projections are useful to allow us to understand the short to medium-term impact of the changing pupil population, but it is vital that provision is protected and enhanced during times when pupil numbers dip, to ensure that there is ample sufficiency for when additional capacity is needed.
28. The Welsh Government and Education Wales strode ahead of England and Northern Ireland in pushing for a starting salary for teachers of £30,000. This has since risen to £33,731, but teachers continue to leave the sector, with a 2.7% increase in 2023.
29. Staff retention must be prioritised. Not everything can rest on the shoulders of recruitment. As the EEF notes: *“The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve pupil attainment,”*³⁰ We must do more to retain the staff we already have and to support them to stay in the classroom where their expertise can truly be utilised. It now takes ten newly qualified teachers to replace every seven more experienced teachers who leave our schools – and they continue to leave in significant numbers, early in their careers.³¹
30. Community believes there is a need for coherence across the teachers’ pay system in Wales, providing simplification and standardisation, rewarding all teachers fairly for the work they do, and which is applied to all teachers and school leaders in Wales.

²⁷ *The Canary*, “Tories have missed their own teacher recruitment targets for NINE out of TEN years” (2024)

<https://www.thecanary.co.uk/analysis/2024/04/20/teacher-recruitment-crisis/>

²⁸ *Welsh Government*, “Stats Wales: Teacher Characteristics” (2024)

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Pupils/pupils-by-localauthorityregion-agegroup>

²⁹ *Welsh Government*, “Stats Wales: Pupil Characteristics” (2024)

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/pupillevelannualschoolcensussummarydata-by-localauthority>

³⁰ Harry Quilter-Pinner et al., for *The Institute for Public Policy Research*, “Out of Kilter – How to rebalance our school system to work for people, economy and society,” (2023). Page 29.

<https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/out-of-kilter>

³¹ Mary Boustead in *Schools Week*, “Here’s how we can finally begin to fix the teacher supply crisis.” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/heres-how-we-can-finally-begin-to-fix-the-teacher-supply-crisis/>

Matters for Recommendation

Pay

31. Despite the recent, very welcome, pay awards, it is evident that teacher pay is lower than it should be had it kept pace with inflation and the wider economy. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) said in its public sector pay report that the pay rise for 2024-25 put real-terms pay for new teachers at about the same level as 2010, and “*roughly matches*” recent growth in private sector wages.³²
32. Across Britain, annual growth in employees’ average regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 4.6%, covering the period July to September 2025. This is slightly down from the previous three-month period and shows wage growth is cooling and not driving inflation.³³ This means that last year’s teacher pay award was below average annual wage growth, despite the 4.8% recommendation of the IWPRB.
33. This means the gap between teachers and other graduate pay continues to widen,³⁴ with teachers and other public sector occupations falling further down the pay distribution scale, even when their usually more generous employer pension contributions are taken into account.³⁵
34. Therefore, teacher and school leader pay is around 22% lower in real terms than in 2010 when measured against Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation. Additionally, the IFS calculated that long-serving and senior teachers, who could account for over 55% of teachers in Wales, would have been earning the equivalent of £50,300 in 2010, but below-inflation wage increases over the past 12 years has meant their pay in 2022 was just £43,700.³⁶
35. The IWPRB agrees, commenting that “*teachers saw large reductions in average real pay from 2010 to 2019 (falling 13%)*”.³⁷ And although, salary points may have risen by over 16% (consolidated) since 2021, data shows that, over the three-year period between May 2021 and May 2024, “*prices increased by 20.8% in total.*”³⁸
36. Private sector wages have seen some fluctuations over the same period, but have risen by an average of 21.8% in that same time period.³⁹

³² Jonathan Cribb et al. for the *Institute for Fiscal Studies*, “Pressures on public sector pay,” (2024) <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/pressures-public-sector-pay>

³³ *The Office for National Statistics*, “Average weekly earnings in Great Britain (October 2024)” <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsin-greatbritain/october2024>

³⁴ *The Office for National Statistics*, “Average weekly earnings in Great Britain (December 2023)” <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsin-greatbritain/december2023>

³⁵ Jasmine Norden in *TES*, “Experienced teacher pay 9% below 2010 levels despite rise.” (2024)

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/experienced-teacher-pay-below-2010-levels-despite-rise>

³⁶ Richard Adams in *The Guardian*, “Teachers’ pay cut by £6,600 since 2010, says Institute for Fiscal Studies.” (2023)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/jan/12/teachers-pay-cut-by-6600-since-2010-says-institute-for-fiscal-studies>

³⁷ *The Independent Welsh Pay Review Body*, “5th Report,” (2024). Paragraph 6.24, page 83.

<https://www.gov.wales/independent-welsh-pay-review-body-fifth-report-2024>

³⁸ Brigid Francis-Devine et al., for the *House of Commons Library*, “Rising cost of living in the UK,” (2024)

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9428/#:~:text=Inflation%20rate%20from%202021%20to.of%20Ukraine%20in%20February%202022.>

³⁹ *The Office for National Statistics*, “Average weekly earnings in Great Britain (February 2025)”

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsin-greatbritain/february2025>

37. And although wage growth has begun to slow in the private sector, annual average total earnings growth in the period from July to September was 4.6%.⁴⁰ Therefore, in order to even remain competitive, teacher pay must at least match these annual rises.
38. Community agrees that, *“salary levels need to be sufficiently competitive to attract the best graduates to the profession”*.⁴¹ And the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) support this, stating that pay, *“must remain competitive throughout a teacher’s career and steps must be taken to dial down the accountability system and workload pressures that are driving many teachers away from the profession.”*⁴²
39. Therefore, Community calls on The IWPRB to make a 6% uplift to teacher pay rates, across all scales and allowances to begin to close this gap.
40. TUC general secretary Paul Nowak said: *“We all know the pressure on public finances from the mess the Tories left things in. But as the government’s evidence acknowledges, the recruitment and retention crisis in our public sector has been driven in part by pay.”*⁴³
41. Schools must receive additional funds from the Department to cover the costs of any recommendation. Failure to provide this will exacerbate the funding crisis in our schools and will lead to further restructuring and redundancies. Most importantly, it will not improve conditions for staff and will harm the outcomes for pupils. Therefore, Community calls on the IWPRB to make the case to the Senedd that a funding settlement is necessary to support the effective realisation of any uplift.
42. This is crucial for both recruitment and retention and is key to ensuring effective teacher supply and quality. We must ensure there is sufficient financial resource for schools to provide high quality education and support to children and young people.⁴⁴
43. We have made the case before that a truly independent review body must feel empowered to make the recommendations needed to reverse the real-terms pay cuts since 2010, restore pay competitiveness and tackle the workload problems. And we have been tentatively pleased with the stance taken by The Review Body over the past three years to recommend awards in excess of government suggestions, but the fact remains that teacher pay is below where it should be.

⁴⁰ *The Office for National Statistics*, “Average weekly earnings in Great Britain (November 2025)”
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsin-greatbritain/november2025>

⁴¹ *The Independent Welsh Pay Review Body*, “5th Report,” (2024). Paragraph 6.16, page 82.

⁴² Lydia Chantler-Hicks in *Schools Week*, “Teacher retention payments not as effective as first thought, study suggests.” (2025)
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teacher-retention-payments-not-as-effective-as-first-thought-study-suggests/>

⁴³ Brian Wheeler for *The BBC*, “Improve productivity for more pay, public sector told.” (2024)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c24n10p7e4zo>

⁴⁴ *Education Support*, “The Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2023). Page 59
https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/0h4jd5pt/twix_2023.pdf

Workload and Wellbeing

44. The excessive workload and the culture that sustains it in our schools must be tackled. Despite the work of the Welsh Government, unions and employers, much more needs to be done, because workload is consistently cited as the number one issue for teachers and is a major reason hundreds of teachers leave the profession each year.⁴⁵
45. Schools are places of education and learning, but they are also places of trust and, increasingly, places of help and support due to the withdrawal of vital social support services.
46. Almost 90% of teachers are involved in providing mental health support to pupils, and three in four put a pupil's psychological needs ahead of teaching the curriculum at least once a week.⁴⁶ According to *The Guardian*, mental ill-health among school-age children "is at epic proportions and should be a national scandal. There's just not enough [NHS] provision. Our children are suffering under a system unfit for purpose," one teacher said.⁴⁷
47. Data from *YoungMinds* confirms this, with 78% of UK teachers saying pupils' mental health has got worse since they joined the profession, going on to note that only half or fewer of the pupils who they believe need help with their mental health receive it, and that this is having a damaging impact on all pupils' ability to learn.⁴⁸
48. This additional workload burden means that teachers can no longer complete their teaching, planning and assessment within directed time. Therefore it is clear that the number of working hours that can be expected of teachers, leaders and all those who work in our schools should be carefully examined, and that tasks, as with the recent list of administrative tasks, which do not fall within scope should not be expected to be completed.
49. According to *The Independent*, if action is not taken to address workload, 9% are "very likely" to quit in the next 24 months, due to overwhelming or unsustainable workload. With 468,258 teachers in England and 25,740 in Wales, this could amount to more than 44,500 leaving the profession – a figure that dwarfs the 6,500 Labour has promised to hire⁴⁹
50. *Kahoot's* Vice President of Schools, Sean D'Arcy, warned that an exodus of teachers from the profession would, "heap further pressure on an education system that already has some of the highest class sizes in the industrialised world".⁵⁰
51. Community believes that the current terms and conditions – which place no cap or limit of any kind on teacher or school leader workload – is having a damaging impact

⁴⁵ *The Department for Education*, "The Working lives of teachers and leaders, Wave 3 Summary report." (2024) Page 20.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁴⁶ Denis Campbell in *The Guardian*, "Teachers regularly helping pupils in distress in attempt to fill NHS funding gap." (2024)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/10/teachers-mental-health-support-pupils-uk>

⁴⁷ Denis Campbell in *The Guardian*, "Teachers regularly helping pupils in distress in attempt to fill NHS funding gap." (2024)

⁴⁸ Denis Campbell in *The Guardian*, "Teachers regularly helping pupils in distress in attempt to fill NHS funding gap." (2024)

⁴⁹ Millie Cooke in *The Independent*, "Schools 'facing disaster' as one in 10 teachers set to quit in two years." (2025)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/school-teachers-strikes-union-matt-wrack-b2803738.html>

⁵⁰ Millie Cooke in *The Independent*, "Schools 'facing disaster' as one in 10 teachers set to quit in two years." (2025)

on the physical and mental wellbeing of the workforce, and that this needs to be investigated as a health and safety risk.

52. This is particularly notable for school leaders, who regularly worked an average of 56.6 hours per week in 2024. While this is a minor decrease from 57.4 per week in 2023, and consistent with 56.8 in 2022, this level of workload remains both excessively high and unsustainable.
53. Behaviour is also becoming a major concern in school across Wales and the UK as a whole. A recent report by *Education Support* noted that 57% of all staff feel pupils and students have become more disruptive in lessons, 51% citing an increase in verbal abuse, and 29% noting students have become more physically abusive, which is also having a negative impact on staff wellbeing and mental health.⁵¹
54. Added to this is a sizeable increase in challenging behaviours from parents and guardians through vexatious complaints, verbal abuse, and in some cases physical abuse too.⁵²
55. We have worked together with the Department of Education and other stakeholders to consider how to approach the matter. The Teacher Wellbeing Index notes a number of potential reasons for this escalation in abusive behaviour, including: “A lack of will amongst senior staff to tackle low level disruption and challenge problematic behaviour,” “Increased class size,” reduced “school resources and staff time to properly deal with pupil issues,” “More children with complex needs without additional funding,” “COVID and the closure of schools has had a lasting impact on pupils’ and parents’ attitudes towards school,” “Impact of child poverty,” and the broader challenges within society.⁵³
56. The report concludes that the rise in poor student behaviour is driven by unmet needs. 84% of staff who think verbal or physical abuse towards teachers has increased in the last 12 months, believe that poor behaviour arises due to lack of provision for their unmet needs, such as basic physical needs, emotional needs, or mental health needs.⁵⁴
57. Dedicating funding to ensure wider support services to meet pupil and family needs will have a positive impact on reducing teachers’ workload as they are freer to concentrate on their key teaching duties and, by addressing these needs, poor behaviour is expected to reduce.⁵⁵
58. Community has long been a proponent of the need for sufficient time for teachers to properly plan lessons. Research shows that properly planned lessons have one of the most positive impacts on pupil achievement.⁵⁶ And, despite the amount of time

⁵¹ *Education Support*, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 10.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

⁵² *Education Support*, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 11.

⁵³ *Education Support*, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) pp. 39-40

⁵⁴ *Education Support*, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 63.

⁵⁵ James Hourihan for *Timian Learning & Development*, “How Unmet Needs Show Up as Behaviour—And What Teachers Can Do About It” (2025)

<https://timian.co.uk/how-unmet-needs-show-up-as-behaviour/>

⁵⁶ Asst. Prof. Qassem Farhang et al. in the *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, “Lesson Plan and Its Importance in Teaching Process.” (2023)

<https://ijcsrr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/57-2308-2023.pdf>

that is dedicated to classroom work, teachers across Wales are only afforded 10% of directed time for this vital task.

59. As we have said in multiple previous submissions, time is what is needed to support teachers to remain in the profession. Dedicated time for planning, preparing and assessing learning is part of the contracted 'directed time' rather than being a task which is completed during the *"reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties."*⁵⁷
60. The most recent survey by the Education Workforce Council indicates that workload has increased or increased significantly for 70% of teachers. And 13% of teachers in Wales⁵⁸ indicated that they were considering leaving the sector in the next three years for reasons other than retirement. High workload and stress and/or poor wellbeing remain the two most commonly cited reasons for teachers to leave the workforce early. Of the 1,465 teachers who left the profession in 2023/24, 1,010 left last year for reasons other than retirement, the highest number in over a decade.
61. This high-pressure toll has led to just less than half of teachers and leaders feeling satisfied with their job, with the proportion who enjoyed teaching most or all of the time decreasing from 84% in 2022 to 78% in just two years.⁵⁹
62. As the pupil bulge moves through the system, there is an opportunity to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio and attend to the workload burden of teachers through the volume of contact time. Because, despite working some of the longest hours in Europe – teachers report working between 50 and 53 hours each week – classroom-adjacent activities make up more than double teachers' classroom hours.⁶⁰ Much of which is *"depressingly bureaucratic and seemingly pointless"*.⁶¹
63. And the IWPRB agreed in its 4th Report that *"workload arising from non-contact tasks such as administrative and clerical tasks, PPA time, cover supervision and its management, examination invigilation, staff absence definition and management of staff absence, leadership and management time and the provision of school calendars,"* all needed much more clarity.⁶²
64. We are pleased to see the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document include the list of administrative duties and tasks list in Annex 3 and specifically reference them in Part 7 – Contractual framework for teachers. This list is the first step in recognising that there is a limit to what teachers can be required to carry out. It is important to recognise that this is an illustrative list, but we recommend that teachers, leaders and governing bodies use this as a guide to question the validity of all tasks, be they carried out by teachers or other staff. It may be necessary for the

⁵⁷ Welsh Government, "School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document" (2025). Page 53. Paragraph 50.7

<https://www.gov.wales/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions-wales-document-2025>

⁵⁸ Education Workforce Council, "National Education Workforce Survey" (2021)

<https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/about-us/policy-and-research/national-education-workforce-survey>

⁵⁹ Working lives of teachers and leaders: Wave 3 (2024) Page 15.

⁶⁰ Prof. John Jerrim and Sam Sims, "The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018" (2019) Page 75.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f6484c2e90e075a01d2f4ce/TALIS_2018_research.pdf

⁶¹ Mary Boustead in *Schools Week*, "Here's how we can finally begin to fix the teacher supply crisis." (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/heres-how-we-can-finally-begin-to-fix-the-teacher-supply-crisis/>

⁶² *The Independent Welsh Pay Review Body*, "4th Report," (2022). Paragraph 6.25.

<https://www.gov.wales/independent-welsh-pay-review-body-fourth-report-2022>

specific circumstances of the workplace to be taken into account, as this duty is likely to weigh more heavily on small primary schools, which should be afforded further support, as necessary.

65. We recommend that schools carry out an audit to consider the following questions:
 1. Does the task need to be done at all?
 2. Can administrative or non-teaching staff do it?
 3. Does it require the skills and knowledge of a qualified teacher to carry out?
66. As a result, schools can specify who is responsible for carrying out the tasks, making effective use of their workforce, and, where necessary, amending contracts and pay to reflect and recognise the additional responsibilities.
67. And we repeat our evidence from previous submissions, schools that have already implemented an approach to increase PPA to 20%, such as Noel-Baker Academy in Derby, show the benefits that can be achieved. Although the potential cost implications for such a move could be significant⁶³, they found that the corresponding increase in teacher wellbeing drastically reduced staff absence and associated supply teacher costs. Former Headteacher Ann Donaghy commented: *“Permanent staff [are] much cheaper and better for the children in terms of stability and quality of provision.”* And in turn, this leads to *“improved pupil outcomes, bettering our teaching staff recruitment and retention, and giving us time to invest in really well-thought-out extracurricular provisions”*.⁶⁴

The Right to Disconnect

68. Finally, as we highlighted in our oral evidence last year, the right to disconnect is essential and it is something which is becoming increasingly important for protecting the wellbeing of teachers and school leaders outside of school time.
69. The right to disconnect was signed into law in France in 2017. Whilst we appreciate that the IWPRB does not have such authority, we do believe that it is time to reflect on the working hours of teachers and leaders.
70. The School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document ‘limits’ teachers to 1,265 hours over 195 days, plus *“such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher’s professional duties,”*⁶⁵ but there are no such defined protections for school leaders.
71. Even with these ‘limits’ in place, just less than half of teachers feel satisfied with their job, with the proportion who enjoyed teaching most or all of the time falling from 84% in 2022 to 78% in just two years.

⁶³ The 5.5% pay award for teachers in England for 2024 cost an additional £56m. The 2024 pay award for both teachers and support staff in Wales cost an additional £1.1m therefore it is reasonable to assume that to increase PPA time to 20%, an increase of 10%, could cost around £2m if other savings were not realised.

⁶⁴ 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>

⁶⁵ *Welsh Government*, “School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document” (2025). Section 50.

72. School leaders and all teachers must be able to complete their work – the system needs to allow reasonable time to complete this. For some, this could include working outside of normal working hours as a choice, but “*reasonable limits with professional discretion*” need to be established.
73. Leadership roles should normally not normally exceed 48 working hours per week on average across a term. In exceptional circumstances, temporary increases in workload may be necessary, but these should be time-limited and followed by appropriate compensatory measures such as time off in lieu wherever appropriate.
74. Just as many office workers send emails and respond outside of ‘normal working hours’ teachers and leaders should be able to work flexibly, especially in regards to PPA time, however it would be a mistake to assume that everybody wants to work from home all of the time, so we recommend that no one is compelled to.
75. We also note that leaders must be able to respond to emergencies, and to address this, we suggest adding a clear exception clause within the STPC(W)D to ensure leaders (and governing bodies) have the freedom to adapt during genuine emergencies, significant school events such as staffing crises, and accountability events and deadlines, such as from Estyn.
76. The right to disconnect was signed into law in France just ten years ago, but it is not the only country to have such arrangements. For example, Luxemburg allows workers to disconnect during “holidays” and contracts in Italy include designated start and finish times to guarantee times of disconnection.
77. Australia does it a bit differently. Communications outside of working time can be attempted, but employees have the right to refuse to monitor, read or respond to texts, emails and calls. This style of working practice would not even require any change to legislation and could be established through guidance.
78. Teachers are already restricted from working directed time at weekends or at lunchtimes. A strengthening of this wording, and the inclusion of a right to disconnect at weekends and during school closure periods, would be greatly appreciated by the sector and would be a starting point for addressing the wider workload issues.

Summary

79. In a competitive and rapidly evolving graduate employment landscape, it is essential that teaching remains an attractive, sustainable and professionally rewarding career in order to secure high educational standards and meet future workforce requirements.
80. Across the UK, leading employers continue to increase starting salaries, with over a quarter now offering initial remuneration of £40,000 or above. By comparison, the starting salary for teachers in Wales, although rising to £33,731, risks becoming insufficiently competitive – particularly in the context of significant student debt and the long-term repayment burden faced by new graduates.
81. Recent economic conditions – including sustained high inflation, constrained public-sector budgets and rising living costs – have substantially eroded the real-terms value of teacher salaries. Between 2010-11 and 2023-24, teacher earnings declined by around 18.2% in real terms and the most recent 4% pay award for teachers has been effectively offset by inflation, leaving teacher pay growth behind that of the broader economy. Forecasts indicate that inflation will remain above 4% until at least 2027, meaning that any below-inflation award will constitute a further real-terms reduction. This undermines both recruitment and retention and widens the gap between teaching and other graduate professions.
82. Persistent shortages in subjects including Welsh, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages continue to mirror UK-wide patterns. Early-career teachers remain especially vulnerable to attrition, with one-third leaving the profession within five years. Current turnover levels mean that ten newly qualified teachers are required to replace every seven experienced teachers who exit the workforce, exposing the system to risks regarding continuity, capacity, and expertise.
83. Although pupil numbers are beginning to decline, this provides an opportunity to strengthen pupil-teacher ratios and alleviate workload pressures, rather than a justification for reduced investment.
84. Excessive workload is the principal driver of teacher attrition. Many teachers and leaders routinely work far beyond directed hours, with senior leaders averaging over 56 hours per week. Increased responsibilities linked to pupil mental health, reduced external support services, and rising levels of challenging behaviour have contributed to heightened stress, declining wellbeing and diminishing job satisfaction.
85. New provisions within the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document that clarify administrative tasks that should not fall to teachers are a positive development. However, Community believes further measures are required to ensure appropriate workforce deployment, protect and grow PPA time, and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens. Investment in external support services is also essential to address pupil needs that currently fall disproportionately on schools.
86. The introduction of a framework for establishing a practical “Right to Disconnect” would support teacher and leader wellbeing by setting clearer expectations around contact outside directed hours, while allowing professional flexibility where required.

And this would support leadership workload, too, with temporary exceptions during genuine emergencies or periods of exceptional operational demand.

87. Key Recommendations

- a fully funded pay settlement of 6% uplift to all teacher pay rates and allowances to begin restoring competitiveness and reversing real-terms declines;
- strengthened workload reduction measures, including enhanced PPA time and audits of non-teaching tasks; and
- development of a Right to Disconnect framework and clearer protections around working hours, particularly for school leaders.