

Date: 10 January 2025

Our Ref: 250110/Phillipson B/PR/LB



Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State
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General Secretary
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Dear Bridget,

Dispute: Teachers' Jobs and Working Conditions

Further to the publication of your Department's evidence submission to the STRB and my letter to you dated 11 December 2024. I regret that no response has been provided by you to the important concerns raised by the NASUWT.

I attach for ease of reference a copy of my previous correspondence to you.

You have previously stated that you want to allow schools as much time as possible to prepare for the implementation of the 2025-26 pay award and you have proposed a 2.8% pay award to be funded from schools' existing budgets.

The NASUWT has no desire to pre-empt the report and recommendations of the pay review body, but we are concerned that your decision to publish your Department's submission to the STRB has served to undermine the integrity and evidence-based nature of the pay review body process and risks detriment to our members:

- where employers seek to institute changes prematurely based upon your pay award proposals and;
- where schools are expected to fund the full cost of the 2025-26 pay award from their existing budgets.

Feedback from our members suggests that your failure to take appropriate steps to ensure that employers do not seek to pre-empt the outcomes of the pay review body process is already having a prejudicial and detrimental impact on teachers' jobs and working conditions.

The NASUWT is further concerned by your Department's failure to meet with us to consider opportunities for improving system-wide efficiencies without detriment to front-line service delivery, jobs and working conditions.

The NASUWT has previously raised with you our calls for the establishment of a national commission on teachers' pay to examine and report on the future of the pay review body machinery and on the need for a programme of real terms pay restoration to secure the recruitment and retention of teachers. We have also highlighted the very serious workload challenges affecting teachers, as extensively documented in your Department's report on the Working Lives of Teachers and

School Leaders. We remain deeply concerned that, in the absence of appropriate measures, the conditions affecting our members continue to deteriorate.

In view of the ongoing negative impact and uncertainty caused to our members, the ongoing detriment experienced by our members and your failure to meet with us to discuss the matters of concern to our members, the NASUWT has been left with no other option than to lodge a dispute with you over your failure to act to protect the jobs and working conditions of our members.

You will be aware that Section 244(2) of the Trade Union Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 provides that a dispute between a Minister of the Crown and any workers shall, notwithstanding that the Minister is not the employer of the workers concerned, be treated as a dispute between those workers and their employer if the dispute relates to matters which cannot be settled without the Minister exercising a power conferred on them by or under enactment.

For the avoidance of doubt, the NASUWT has no wish to see further escalation of an industrial dispute with the Government. However, we reserve the right to do so in the interests of our members.

I trust that you will now confirm what steps you intend to take to:

- engage in meaningful talks with the NASUWT;
- uphold the integrity of the current STRB process;
- prevent premature and detrimental actions being taken by employers in relation to teachers' jobs and working conditions in anticipation of the yet to be determined outcome of the STRB's current deliberations.

We trust that you will now take the opportunity to engage with the NASUWT in respect of these matters and in the interests of ensuring good industrial relations within the sector.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary

Att: Copy of letter dated 11 December 2024