NASUWT
The Teachers' Union

EVIDENCE SUBMISSION

NASUWT SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION TO THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' REVIEW BODY

20 NOVEMBER 2025

NASUWT – The Teachers' Union.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The NASUWT is calling for the School Teachers' Review Body to demonstrate its independence by making a pay recommendation, in line with NASUWT's written submission, for a restorative, above-inflation and fully funded pay award. The Review Body's focus must be on what is needed and what is right for the future supply and retention of teachers. Moreover, arbitrary affordability constraints put forward by the Department for Education, which have led to pay deterioration and the current poor state of teacher recruitment and retention, should not be a driver for the Review Body's recommendations.

1.2 We believe it is in the interests of all statutory consultees for the evidence-based process and the machinery of the Independent Pay Review Body to be fully respected.

1.3 We note with concern that the Department for Education's (DfE's) written evidence was, yet again, was not submitted on or before the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) deadline. This undermines the independent review process in that missed deadlines lead to unnecessary delays in sharing responses between statutory consultees - which has the potential to undermine collegiality and fragment good working relations.

1.4 In presenting this supplementary evidence, NASUWT invites the Review Body to take fully into account the impact of historic pay awards and the ongoing detrimental impact of below – Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation pay awards on the real-terms pay of teachers and headteachers.

1.5 The case for substantially increased pay for teachers and sector-wide funding is undeniable from the evidence. NASUWT welcomes the evidence from the majority of stakeholders, which demonstrates a clear consensus that all future pay awards must be fully funded.

1.6 NASUWT is extremely concerned that the Government has not fully funded the pay award for 2025/26 and has set out clearly in its remit that *'no* *additional funding will be made available for pay awards, in any year of the multi-year Spending Review period.'*

2. The cost-of-living crisis and teacher pay

2.1 The Autumn Budget 2025 is due one week after the supplementary evidence deadline. We are therefore unable to include any up-to-date forecasts from the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) about its future inflation and growth predictions. Since the original written evidence deadline of 20 October, inflation figures for September have been published and we now know that the RPI was 4.5%. Therefore, the 4% cost-of-living pay award recommended by the Review Body in its 35th report for 2025/26 has delivered **yet another real-terms pay cut for teachers**, adding further to the erosion of their pay.

2.2 The most recent OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (March 2025)[1] forecasts RPI inflation to be 3.1% for 2026-27, 3.0% for 2027-28 and 2.8% for 2028-29 – which is a total of 8.9% over the 3 year period.

2.3 The Department for Education (DfE), in its written evidence, believes a total of 6.5% in pay awards (over three years) is a sufficient cost-of-living increase for teachers and leaders in the coming three-year period. It is unacceptable to NASUWT that **the Government are planning into their evidence further real-term pay cuts for teachers over the next three years.** This shows a total lack of respect and disdain for the work that teachers do, undermines the profession, and risk a further increase the recruitment and retention crisis that has plagued the profession since 2010.

2.4 NASUWT repeats our strong concerns about a multi-year recommendation, especially in view of uncertainty over inflation. If a multi-year award is to be considered, it must be clearly above expected inflation; it should be front-loaded. Our position on the reopener as set out in our written evidence remains unchanged.

[1] https://obr.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/OBR_Economic_and_fiscal_outlook_March_2025.pdf

3 Recruitment and retention

3.1 While NASUWT recognises the DfE's stated commitment to addressing the current teacher supply crisis, its evidence fails to recognise that recruitment and retention problems are the most significant pressures facing schools in England currently. The Union is clear that the Government's current strategic response remains insufficiently focused on addressing the causes of this crisis.

3.2 The Review Body has previously noted the Government's pledge to recruit an additional 6,500 teachers for schools and further education institutions by the end of the current Parliament. However, a recent independent analysis has concluded that 'even if [the Government] met its initial pledge it is unclear whether this would in fact meet demand.'[2] Moreover, it confirms that the DfE lacks a clear baseline for this commitment, has yet to publish any milestones, and has provided no transparent breakdown of how any additional teachers would be allocated by sector or subject.

3.3 It is important to note the concerning trends in respect of teacher recruitment and retention. In particular, the DfE has persistently missed its targets for entrants to postgraduate initial teacher training (ITT) for secondary schools across many years and, more broadly, teacher numbers have not kept pace with rising pupil numbers.[3] Even though more teachers were recruited than lost to the profession in recent years, increasing pupil numbers while teacher numbers continue to fall will worsen the pupil-teacher ratio.[4]

3.4 While recruitment problems remain acute, levels of teacher retention are in an even more parlous position. Early career exit from the profession continues to give rise to serious grounds for concern. As the DfE's own evidence notes,

[2] Dellar, A. (2025). *Institute for Government Performance Tracker 2025: Schools*. Available at: (https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/performance-tracker-2025/schools), accessed on 12.11.25.
[3] National Audit Office (2025). *Teacher workforce: secondary and further education*. Session 24-25, HC854. Available at: (https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/teacher-workforce-secondary-and-further-education.pdf), accessed on 13.11.25.
[4] *Ibid.*

many teachers continue to leave teaching within a few years of qualifying, while retention rates for more experienced teachers are at historically high levels. Unfilled vacancy rates are now six times higher than they were before the Covid-19 pandemic.[5]

3.5 Research indicates that the proportion of teachers who expect to still be teaching in three years has fallen from around 75% before the pandemic to approximately 60% more recently.[6] This research identifies key factors driving retention problems, including high workload, limited flexibility in working arrangements, pay that has lost relative value, rising accountability burdens, challenging pupil behaviour, and special educational needs (SEN) -related pressures.

3.6 Independent research notes that although the Government has signalled recruitment and retention as priorities, its overarching strategy remains underdeveloped.[7] The research further finds that there is still no coherent 'whole-system' plan to bring together recruitment and retention initiatives, subject, phase, and region targeting, and workforce forecasting. It further notes that financial constraints and budget pressures on schools are tightening and thereby reducing their capacity to recruit and retain staff.

3.7 The Review Body will note with concern the serious implications of the ongoing crisis in teacher supply for the education system in England. In particular, staffing instability can undermine the ability of schools to continue to secure and sustain the high-quality educational provision that ministers rightly expect. Schools with high levels of staff churn face significant barriers in building stable teaching teams and retaining expertise.

3.8 As has been noted in previous submissions to the Review Body, a consequence of the teacher supply crisis will continue to be the reliance of schools on teachers to teach content outside of their areas of expertise. The

[5] McClean, D. and Worth, J. (2025). *NFER Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2025.* Available at: (https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2025/), accessed on 14.11.25.

[6] Allen, B; Hannay, T.; and McInerney, L. (2025). *Teacher Recruitment and Retention in 2025: Social disadvantage and teacher labour market dynamics*. Available at: (https://www.gatsby.org.uk/app/uploads/sites/2/2025/07/released-teacher-recruitment-and-retention-in-2025-002-1.pdf), accessed on 12.11.25.

[7] Dellar (2025). *op.cit.*

Institute for Government observes that balancing the multiple pressures on the system, including teacher supply, retention, funding, changing pupil numbers and meeting pupils' special and additional needs, will be 'extremely difficult' within the budget the Government has set for the coming Parliament.[8]

4. Workload and improving wellbeing

4.1 The Department rightly highlights the point that of those teachers and leaders leaving the profession between spring 2022 and 2023, 84% cited high workload and 75% recorded poor wellbeing as their reason.

4.2 The Department's evidence goes on to indicate that more needs to be done to reduce teacher workload and improve staff wellbeing. Regrettably, the failure to commit to fully fund any pay award will exacerbate the crisis in school, which will result in cuts and job losses and will worsen the workload crisis. Such an approach would be entirely unacceptable to NASUWT.

4.3 The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, launched by the Department in November 2021, now has 4,100 of the 22,500 schools signed up. The sign-up rate is currently a paltry 2.5 schools per day, so it will be another 20 years before the remaining schools sign up!

4.4 If the Department is serious about addressing these two key factors that are driving teachers out of the profession at a rate of over 40,000 leavers a year since 2020, then they must make the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter[9] a statutory requirement for all state-funded schools.

4.5 NASUWT welcomes the Department's action on giving schools the opportunity to choose to remove performance-related pay progression (PRPP). The Union wants the Review Body to go further and recommend the complete and compulsory abolition of PRPP in all state-funded schools. This will drive down workload and improve the wellbeing of both teachers and school leaders.

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[8] *ibid.*

[9] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter

4.6 We also welcome the reintroduction into the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) of the list of illustrative examples of administrative tasks that teachers and leaders should not routinely be asked to carry out. Currently, the Department remains silent on what happens in any state-funded schools where teachers and leaders are routinely required to undertake administrative tasks. We call on the Review Body to issue guidance on how the Department will monitor this and what action and sanctions it will take when teachers and leaders are routinely asked to carry out administrative tasks that they should not be doing.

4.7 The salary progression for graduates outside of teaching demonstrates notable growth over three years. In 2025, graduates started with a salary of £32,000 (median), which increased to £50,000 (median) after three years, a 56% rise.[10]

4.8 For teachers', the starting salary is £32,916 rising to £39,556 after three years, only a 20% rise. It is therefore essential, in order to recruit and retain teachers, to shorten the current pay scale. This will allow for more rapid progression to higher salaries that are present in the wider graduate labour market, helping to ensure the profession remains a competitive career choice.

How does teacher pay in England compare to that of other UK nations and Crown Dependencies?

4.9 It is clear from the tables below that the Review Body has presided over a situation that has resulted in teachers in **England now having the lowest starting salary of all four UK nations and Crown Dependencies** and this remains the case after every year of teaching, assuming annual pay progression.

10 https://ise.org.uk/knowledge/insights/423/what_are_average_graduate_salaries_over_a_3year_programme/

1st September 2024	Starting salary	Second year	Third year	Fourth year	Fifth year	Sixth year
Jersey	£47,440	£50,515	£53,591	£55,161	£56,740	£58,321
Isle of Man	£42,718	£45,286	£48,712	£50,869	£52,694	£54,589
Guernsey	£39,564	£42,487	£45,629	£49,013	£52,645	£56,550
Wales	£33,731	£36,441	£39,249	£42,339	£46,595	£48,304
Scotland	£33,594	£40,305	£42,591	£45,063	£47,922	£50,589
Northern Ireland	£31,650	£33,831	£36,354	£39,134	£42,144	£45,567
England	£31,650	£33,483	£35,674	£38,034	£40,439	£43,607

Difference with England	Starting salary	Second year	Third year	Fourth year	Fifth year	Sixth year
Jersey	£15,790	£17,032	£17,917	£17,127	£16,301	£14,714
Isle of Man	£11,068	£11,803	£13,038	£12,835	£12,255	£10,982
Guernsey	£7,914	£9,004	£9,955	£10,979	£12,206	£12,943
Wales	£2,081	£2,958	£3,575	£4,305	£6,156	£4,697
Scotland	£1,944	£6,822	£6,917	£7,029	£7,483	£6,982
Northern Ireland	£0	£348	£680	£1,100	£1,705	£1,960

4.10 The Welsh Government is currently consulting on three models of a shorter pay scale for classroom teachers. It currently specifies an eight-point pay scale, having already accepted the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body recommendations to remove threshold applications and all linked aspects to post-threshold requirements, as set out in the STCP(W)D.

4.11 Guernsey is currently working with the recognised trade unions to move from its current pay scales, which mirror those in England, to a six-point pay scale for classroom teachers from 1st September 2026. There is h no threshold application required, and annual pay progression on the new nine-point pay scale, unless subject to a formal capability process.

4.12 The National Employer's Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) written evidence to the 36th remit, clearly shows the employers position on the threshold process.[11] It states:

'*The number one issue that respondents flagged to us was the need for greater clarity and consensus on equitable progression criteria from the Main Pay Range (MPR) into and through the Upper Pay Range (UPR), which we know does become a local headache (both at a school/academy level and the labour market level in terms of recruitment and retention) and causes debate which many employers feel is unnecessary and could better be resolved with national clarity.'*[12]

4.13 It goes on to state that:

'The second most commonly selected item was an issue NEOST has raised many times with the STRB, which is to create the ability for a teacher to voluntarily move from UPR back to MPR. NEOST underlines that we propose this as a way to support career flexibility in different stages of life. Our schools tell us they are often dealing with requests where teachers may want to step back from the additional pressures of UPR requirement for a variety of reasons (including wanting to see out their careers with less responsibility).'

4.14 The removal of the threshold application and progression criteria is clearly something that NEOST members would further welcome as it would remove the top two issues that it has been flagging to the Review Body, being a move that NASUWT fully supports also.

4.15 The reality is that in every jurisdiction of the UK, teachers are paid better than they are in England. England is the only one of the four nations to retain the

[11] https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/education-and-young-people/school-teachers/school-teachers-37
[12] Ibid

option for PRPP and has a threshold application process for teachers to access higher pay.

4.16 It is now time that the Review Body recommends the removal of the threshold process and all the associated requirements that accompany it.

5. Building a representative teaching workforce.

5.1 For many years, NASUWT has been providing evidence to the Review Body for the need to address the disparities in ITT recruitment. We welcome the Department’s trial of anonymised recruitment which removes names, dates of birth, ethnicity, sex and disability information.

5.2 NASUWT is also pleased to note that the Department will, at long last, be extending the data it collects through the School Workforce Census to include ethnicity and disability data, to enable wider pay gap reporting.

6. School budget context

6.1 At the time of writing, NASUWT does not have access to the School’s costs technical note, which is the DfE’s assessment of the drivers of cost increases, and their impact, in mainstream schools in England at the national level.

6.2 We do however, have the actual experience of cost pressures faced by schools from the employers in the NEOST written evidence.[13] In the absence of any assessment by the Department in its evidence, we will use the evidence to demonstrate the current situation with school budgets:

‘*forecasting for 1 Sept 2026 shows the majority of schools (41 per cent) are anticipating a pay award between two and 2.99 per cent, with a further 29 per cent forecasting the award will be between three and 3.99 per cent. However, the proportion of schools indicating an award of that size is affordable drops significantly (particularly the three per cent pay award option, which falls from 29 per cent in forecasting to just 8 per cent of respondents indicating that would be affordable. What is perhaps more concerning, is the growth of smaller awards (1.99 per cent or below) showing as unaffordable (total of 49*

[13] Ibid.

per cent). 18 per cent of respondents say they could not afford a pay award of one – 1.99 per cent, 16 per cent of respondents say they could not afford a pay award of less than one per cent, and 15 per cent tell us that zero per cent (no pay award) is affordable. This indicates a significant number of schools have no funds available to allocate to any future pay award, as they are likely to be in or predicting a budget in deficit from 2027. It is a similar picture for 2027 pay.'

6.2 It is abundantly clear that **all future pay awards MUST be fully funded**. Expecting schools to part-fund the pay award through so called 'efficiency savings' when their budgets are already stretched is nonsensical, unrealistic and useless towards reversing the funding crisis in education since 2010. If the Government is serious about creating a world-class education service, then its needs to fund it accordingly.

7. Funding the pay award

7.1 After 14 years of austerity under the previous government, schools have already identified all the savings they can make with the budgets they control.

7.2 NEOST, in its written evidence, also highlights the fact that funding increases are:

'not keeping up with rising costs, including inflation, demand pressures and the actual cost of pay awards, describing this as an unsustainable trajectory with the annual affordability gap compounding these pressures, necessitating even greater savings to be made.'

7.3 Much more needs to be done by the Department and Government on the systemic issues that are outside of the control of individual schools or employers. The employers' evidence shows where cuts will be made if any pay awards are not fully funded to balance their budgets:

- 69% would explore the reduction of non-teaching staff that are pupil-facing. In reality, this means teaching assistants. These reductions will then put pressure on the remaining teachers, and on the SEND support provided;

- 58% would reduce non-teaching staff who are non-pupil facing;
- 52% would look at restructuring leadership teams; and
- 40% would reduce teaching staff.

7.4 The Department's evidence mentions significant underutilisation of assets.

7.5 NASUWT understands that schools need to keep some of the revenue they receives in reserves, while for maintained schools, the annual accounts clearly show the amount of committed and uncommitted reserves. This level of clarity is currently not available for academies in how they report their reserves.

7.6 NASUWT would urge the Review Body to make this recommendation to the Government to allow for a more transparent approach and to identify more clearly how much of the £6 billion in reserves, as cited in the Department's evidence, is in committed and uncommitted reserves.

7.7 NASUWT fully supports the principle that schools should be spending their funding allocation on the pupils currently on roll and not seeking to store up large reserves.

7.8 The Union welcomes the Department's new Energy for Schools service. However, there is much more that the Department and central government need to do to ensure every pound of public money is delivering maximum impact and value in the classroom. This must be priority, particularly through the funding of:

- supply agencies; and
- independent special school provision.

7.9 As stated in NASUWT's written evidence submission, numerous options remain available to the Westminster Government to raise sufficient revenues to fund a multi-year, above-RPI inflation pay award for teachers and other public sector workers. The case for any pay award to be fully funded by the central government is undeniable from the evidence.

8. Working conditions reform

Bonuses

8.1 The Department's view, in its evidence, is that 'allowing [bonuses] could *provide maintained schools with an additional option to use remuneration more flexibly, in line with the flexibilities already available to academies.'*

8.2 NEOST notes that the STPCD already allows for various additional payments and, as a consequence, registers, ***'confusion'***, amongst its members as to why it would be necessary.

8.3 The NEOST evidence goes on to state that when academy trust stakeholders have been asked, ***'have you moved away from the STPCD to introduce additional non-consolidated payments?',*** **89% have not.**

8.4 It is also clear from the trade unions evidence submission that there is no appetite to introduce bonus payments, but also every academy trust that has had the option to do so hasn't, for the reason that correlate to that of other stakeholders. For the Department to then want to equalise the state and academy sector and offer state schools parity to pay bonuses which aren't really used in practice is confusing - more so, given the removal of compulsory PRPP.

9 Salary safeguarding

9.1 The NEOST evidence again demonstrates that academy trusts that ,have the freedom to vary the salary safeguarding periods, have almost exclusively not done so - **96% have NOT moved away from the STPCD provisions on salary safeguarding.**

9.2 NASUWT is unaware of any employer who has not proceeded to make staffing changes because of the current safeguarding arrangements.

Furthermore, no evidence has been presented by the Department to support its case that the salary safeguarding arrangements lead to a *‘highly risk averse culture to making changes to staffing structures’*.

9.3 NASUWT does not accept that the current three-year safeguarding period should be changed. The Government’s own estimate of staff in receipt of salary safeguarding is around 2%.

9.4 NASUWT also rejects the suggestion by the Department to taper the salary safeguarding period to avoid the sudden drop in salary and, therefore, retention risk, at the end of the period.

10. Working hours

10.1 The Department’s evidence rightly mentions the unacceptable average working hours (51.2) of teachers and notes the unique contractual provisions that place no upper limits on working hours.

10.2 The Department’s evidence also notes that the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body is looking at introducing a maximum working week for leaders and, by extension, teachers.

10.3 It goes on to note that in Scotland there is a maximum 35 hours working week, with a maximum of 22.5 hours of class contact time. But the Department fails to mention that the Scottish Government have also committed to reducing class contact time by 1.5 hours to 21 hours.

10.4 The Department also fails to recognise that in the Isle of Man there is a maximum working week of 35 hours and that Guernsey is currently engaged with the recognised trade unions to mirror the Isle of Man’s 35-hour working week.

10.5 NEOST argues in its evidence that, *‘workload and wellbeing challenges are the core drivers for debate over working time, not the working time structure itself, which may have limited scope for review without significant additional investment into teaching resource.’*

10.6 NASUWT is very well aware from feedback that when our members engage in action short of strike action, in furtherance of a trade dispute(s) with individual employer(s), it is when they work to their contract, their work-life balance improves tremendously and their working hours become much more manageable. There is, therefore, much to be said for the NEOST argument from NEOST quoted above.

10.7 NASUWT has said for a number of years that we need an independent workforce commission to examine and make recommendations on appropriate staffing models and structures for the range of schools in England – one that is properly funded and resourced.

10.8 To be frank, the current open-ended contracts allow for the exploitation of teachers and leaders who not only undertake tasks that do not require their professional expertise for many hours a week, but are also working unpaid overtime of many hundreds of hours a year on job roles that *do* require their professional skills and expertise.

10.9 We have a broken system that either requires a maximum cap on working hours for all purposes (the NASUWT position is 35 hours a week, that retaining the 1,265 hours of directed time), or additional staffing that is fully funded to allow teachers to discharge all their professional duties within the 1,265 hours maximum directed time and remove the open-ended contractual provision from the STPCD.