NASUWT THE TEACHERS' UNION

PAY & CONDITIONS BULLETIN

England Pay Award

The Secretary of State has accepted the independent School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) recommendation of a 3.5% pay award to uplift the pay and allowances for teachers in England from 1 September 2026.

A process of statutory consultation has commenced that takes in the following:

- Statutory stakeholder consultation ended on 23 September.
- Estimates from the Department for Education (DfE) were that the final School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) 2026/27 and the Statutory Instrument (SI) would be published on 25 September 2026.
- The formal 21-day discussion period would then run until approximately 16 October 2026.

Schools and employers will be able to consult on updating pay policies from 16 October 2026. This means teachers should receive the 3.5% uplift in their pay in their November or December pay.
This will be backdated to 1 September.

It is important to note that on 22 July 2025, in the 36th Remit letter to the STRB, the Secretary of State for Education said: 'no additional funding will be made available for pay awards, in any year of the multi-year Spending Review period.'

In her Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament, on 1 July 2026, the Secretary of State also accepted the following STRB recommendations:

- from September 2026, teachers and leaders will receive a pay award of 3.5%;
- from September 2027, there will be a further 3% increase; and
- from September 2026, there will be an uplift to the bottom of the unqualified teacher pay range in the rest of England by 5%.

Academy Trust Handbook update 2026/27 – new limits to executive pay

The Secretary of State also announced that, from 1 October 2026, the following changes would take effect following updates to the Academy Trust Handbook, which will affect any new post paid more than £174,000.

- DfE approval must be secured before posts are advertised where remuneration exceeds £174,000 or the 'pro rata equivalent for part-time staff'.
- The same rules apply for roles where performance-related pay is above £25,000.
- Trusts must also secure the go-ahead from officials if they believe 'there is a justification' to increase executive pay at a faster rate than that of their teachers.

Other public sector pay awards for 2026/27

- School support staff and all other local government workers – 3.3%
- Civil servants – 3.5%
- Nurses, midwives, porters – 3.3%
- Doctors and certain dentists – 3.5%
- Fire service – 3.8%
- Armed forces – 3.6%
- Senior officers – 3.75%
- Police – 3.5%

Funding the school staff pay award

Is the pay award fully funded? No.
The table below (from the DfE) shows how the 3.5% pay award for teachers is to be funded, 1% of which again is to come from within existing school budgets.

Illustration of how staff pay increases will be funded in 5-16 schools in 2026-27

Teacher pay awards 3.5% teacher pay award in 2026-27	**Support staff pay increases** 3.3% local government support staff pay offer	
Remaining 1.7% teacher pay increase	**Remaining 1.5% increase in support staff pay**	Additional funding for schools announced alongside the 2026 teacher pay announcement
0.8% teacher pay increase	0.8% support staff pay increase	Funding in schools' existing budgets, provided at the 2025 Spending Review, as per our affordability assessment (Schools' Costs Technical Note 26)
First c.1% of teacher pay	First c.1% of support staff pay	Maximising value in schools' budgets to cover the first 1% of pay costs in 2026-27

*Chart is for illustrative purposes only

There are three elements to how the Government has identified funding for the school staff pay awards.

1. Partial funding of 1.7% for teachers' pay awards and 1.5% for support staff will be delivered via a £700 million Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG) for the financial year 2026/27, and a further £1.15 billion for 2027/28, before being rolled into the National Funding Formula (NFF) for future years. The total £1.85 billion is not new funding from the Treasury and will come from as yet unidentified cuts in other budgets within the DfE.
2. The Schools' Costs Technical Note (SCTN), produced annually by the DfE, was published on 18 March 2026. The SCTN aims to provide an understanding of the drivers of cost increases in mainstream schools in England at the national level, based on the funding allocated. The analysis is split into two parts: the current financial year 2025/26 and a look ahead to 2026/27. The SCTN focuses on funding and costs of five- to 16-year-old education, therefore excluding early years and post-16 provision from the analysis.

3. Productivity gains and smarter spending. Schools will have to self-fund 1% of the pay award by making savings to expenditure for a second year in a row. The SCTN has estimated that the average headroom, or unallocated funding from 2025/26, means that the average school is therefore deemed to have funding of 0.8% already provided to support pay rises in 2026/27. Funding is allocated to schools via the NFF. This is a per-pupil amount. Therefore, schools which are not operating at, or close to, their published admission number (PAN) will be facing additional budgetary pressures.

On 16 September, the Government advised that as a result of the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) revaluation process, which concluded in December 2025, any reduction in employer pension contributions (for the LGPS only – not for the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS)) could be used to fund the pay award.

This does not mean that additional funding is going into school budgets, and the picture is complicated at individual school level. The Government has confirmed that this is not additional funding. NASUWT has called for the equivalent saving made by the reduction in employer contributions in the TPS to be kept within schools. TPS savings from reduced employer contributions would provide an estimated additional £3.3 billion. This would make a far bigger contribution to improving school budgets and to avoiding cuts than the savings from the LGPS. We have also produced an updated *Where Has All the Money Gone?* for 2026. This report identifies further savings that the DfE can make and details the systematic misuse and abuse of public money, while calling on the Government to do more to curb such excesses and ensure that every pound of public money is spent efficiently on pupils.

If you have any examples of schools or academies misusing or abusing public money, then please email us at salaries@mail.nasuwt.org.uk, confidentially, with the details.

- 2025/26 – 4%
- 2024/25 – 5.5%
- 2023/24 – 6.5% (7.1% for M1)
- 2022/23 – 5.0%
- 2021/22 – 0.0%
- 2020/21 – 2.75% (5.5% for M1)

NASUWT's evidence to the STRB and the STRB's 36th Report are available here.

Non-pay changes to the STPCD

INSET Day Flexibility

Schools will have more flexibility with INSET days. NASUWT has called on the Government to define the number of hours for the equivalent of five working days, including the number of hours for a half day. Pro-rating for part-time teachers alone does not prevent detriment. A part-time teacher should not be required to attend outside the teacher's normal working pattern without individual agreement and appropriate payment. Equivalent periods of INSET must not create more attendance days, disproportionate travel or unpaid childcare costs.

Protections on leaders' working time

Any weekend working must now be by exception and limited to urgent and unforeseen circumstances. NASUWT's position is that schools should be required to provide leaders with specified consecutive periods of uninterrupted and non-contactable leave during school holidays. They should maintain an equitable published holiday cover rota, subject to governor oversight, with formal delegation and adequate staffing.

Non-consolidated payments/bonuses

From September 2026, schools will be able to make 'modest non-consolidated awards to teachers to recognise exceptional contributions and achievements'. NASUWT's position is that schools should reject these payments and not include them in their pay policies for the following reasons:

- Schools will have to consult on and negotiate clear criteria for what is an 'additional contribution', something that is exceptional and not part of the teacher's core role.
- Schools will have to consult and negotiate on what is a 'modest cap'.
- Transparency, in order to give confidence on consistent application of the payments and to celebrate examples of exceptional performance, will require schools to publicise the information.
- Governing bodies will require oversight to ensure senior accountability and that all matters related to equalities are adhered to.

What hasn't changed?

Salary Safeguard

The salary safeguarding period will remain at three years.

1,265 hours

The maximum number of directed hours for a full-time teacher remains at 1,265. NASUWT's position is that every school should be required to publish an itemised directed time calendar and budget before the school year, after meaningful consultation with staff and recognised unions. It should cover pupil sessions, meetings, parents' consultations, training, duties outside sessions and contingency time.

Upper Pay Range progression

Schools have the option to decide on whether pay progression on the Upper Pay Range should be annually or every two years. NASUWT's position is that all teachers and leaders who are eligible for pay progression should progress annually, unless subject to formal capability procedures.

Performance-related pay progression (PRPP)

Since 1 September 2024, schools are no longer required to use PRPP. NASUWT's position is that all schools should remove PRPP, as there is no evidence it improves performance of staff and it therefore adds unnecessary additional workload burdens for teachers and leaders that can be removed.