

**NASUWT SUBMISSION TO THE INDEPENDENT WELSH PAY REVIEW BODY**

**5 DECEMBER 2025**

NASUWT – The Teachers' Union

If you require further information about this submission, please contact:

Matt Wrack

General Secretary

NASUWT

Hillscourt Education Centre

Rose Hill

Rednal

Birmingham

B45 8RS

0121 453 6150

[nasuwt.org.uk](http://nasuwt.org.uk)

[nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk](mailto:nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body in connection with its 7th remit. In this submission, the IWPRB will be referred to as the Review Body.

1.2 NASUWT welcomed the Strategic Review of the Review Body, which we believe made positive recommendations to deal with the growing concerns over the health and wellbeing of the teaching profession in Wales. However, NASUWT remains deeply disappointed by the slow progress on the recommendations of the Strategic Review.

1.3 The failure to take forward the Strategic Review has deepened the crisis in education in Wales and the NASUWT is concerned that it has just been used as a vehicle to marginalise improvements in non-pay conditions for teachers in Wales. The 7<sup>th</sup> remit is on pay alone. NASUWT wants to see a return to non-pay recommendations being in the remit to the Review Body given the lack of progress on the Strategic Review.

1.4 NASUWT believes that there remains a teacher recruitment and retention crisis in Wales and that any recommended pay uplift needs to focus on the need to attract good quality graduates to the profession and to retain them in the face of better opportunities elsewhere. Graduate professions are now offering work flexibilities post Covid that now seriously threaten recruitment and retention. Schools, in their present form, simply cannot offer these work flexibilities and, indeed, are extremely restrictive in their working practices.

1.5 On 14 October the annual Education Workforce Council (EWC) Stats event took place. The standout figure from the data released was that over 40% of teachers who joined the profession in 2015 have left. 22% have left over the past 5 years.

1.6 The recruitment and retention crisis is having a detrimental effect on teachers in Wales. More and more Secondary teacher are being required to teach outside of

their subjects. Not only does this weaken the quality of educational provision, it detrimentally impacts upon the teacher who is required to attain mastery over a subject that they are unfamiliar with. The increased stress levels of this and other workload factors such as aggressive monitoring and accountability measures in schools are leading to increased absenteeism. This then impacts on other teachers in an increasing vicious cycle.

1.7 Teacher absenteeism also impact on costs and an unacceptable amount of public money being spent on private agencies. The failure of the Welsh Government's plan to introduce a national Supply Pool was a blow for the education service in Wales and leaves schools still vulnerable to the exorbitant costs of the over 40 teaching agencies that work in Wales.

## 2. THE POSITION ON TEACHERS' PAY

### The impact of inflation

2.1 It is imperative that the Review Body considers teachers' pay in the context of the significant real-terms reduction in pay that teachers have suffered since 2010.

2.2 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes inflation statistics using a range of indices. Given this, it is the responsibility of Review Bodies to determine which measure of inflation is most appropriate for their specific workforce. NASUWT strongly recommends that the Review Body prioritise the use of the Retail Prices Index (RPI) when assessing the impact of inflation on teachers' pay, as it most accurately reflects the cost pressures faced by teachers.

2.3 The Westminster Government routinely switches between different inflation indices for different purposes. For example, the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) measure is the UK Government's preferred inflation measure for the purposes administering both public and state pension increases. However, rail fares, for example, increase every year by an RPI inflation measure and the ONS also publishes inflation data using the Consumer Prices Index, including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) index, which was designated as the lead measure of inflation used by the ONS from 21 March 2017.

2.4 On 17 January 2019, the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee Inquiry published a report into the use of RPI.<sup>1</sup> The Committee raised concerns that over recent years, the UK Government has intentionally side-lined RPI in favour of methods that show lower headline inflation. The Committee cited concerns with rail fares and student loan interest rates increasing by RPI, whilst public expenditure is uprated by the lower CPI rate. For teachers early in their careers, student loan repayments are a significant item of expenditure and interest on these increases by RPI, not CPI.

2.5 Incomes Data Research (IDR) indicates that more than half (51%) of employers use the RPI inflation index when calculating pay awards for their workforces. Acknowledging that the majority of employers reference CPI when setting wages, IDR note: 'The prominence of the CPI may be due to major media

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<sup>1</sup> House of Lords, Economic Affairs Committee, *Measuring Inflation*, 2019.  
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldconaf/246/24602.htm>

insistence on presenting it as 'inflation', despite the CPIH being the ONS' headline measure. This is because the CPI is the target for the Bank of England's macroeconomic management function. But it excludes housing costs and as such is less representative of the average household's experience of inflation'.<sup>2</sup>

2.6 The range of prices, which are included in the index, makes RPI a much more reliable indicator of the increases in prices which impact workers. This also makes the RPI index the inflation measure which is most directly relevant to teachers in a wage-setting context.

2.7 Since 2010, there has been significant debate amongst statisticians and economists concerning the best method of measuring UK inflation. On balance, it is clear that the different measures of UK inflation were designed for different purposes:

- RPI is a true cost-of-living index, since it measures the change in minimum household expenditure needed to maintain a given standard of living. RPI better reflects the actual living costs faced by teachers. Unlike CPI, RPI includes housing costs such as mortgage interest payments, council tax, and other owner-occupier expenses. These are real, unavoidable costs for a significant proportion of teachers, especially given the high rate of home ownership among the profession. CPI and CPIH significantly understate these pressures.
- The Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) measure, renamed CPI in the UK since 2010, was designed as a macroeconomic tool to assist European Union (EU) countries to set interest rates. Eurostat, the creators of the HCIP state specifically that it is 'not suitable for wage bargaining purposes' since it includes no estimation of owner/occupier housing costs.<sup>3</sup>
- CPIH has significant deficiencies in estimating owner/occupier housing costs and is based upon the HICP/CPI to ensure that the same statistical principles and internationally comparative methodology were used in each country to set

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<sup>2</sup> Incomes Data Research (IDR), *Pay Climate*, Issue 42, September 2025. [www.incomesdataresearch.co.uk](http://www.incomesdataresearch.co.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat news release, 'Interim step towards harmonised measurement of consumer prices NEW WAY OF COMPARING EU INFLATION Required for the assessment of convergence for Economic and Monetary Union', 29 February 1996. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/5253882/2-29021996-AP-EN.PDF.pdf/2228be52-e560-48bd-9393-f16e39132b08>

interest rates. It is not designed to ensure the maintenance of a given standard of living. CPIH was significantly amended by the ONS from March 2024, to address known deficiencies in underestimating owner/occupier housing and rental equivalence costs. It was anticipated by ONS that on average, UK annual percentage change reported by the Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR) is 0.7 percentage points higher than the Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP), which PIPR replaced in March 2024.<sup>4</sup>

2.8 As stated by Dr Mark Courtney, the former Head of Economics in the Regulatory Impact Unit, Cabinet Office, in his seminal paper ‘Consumer Price Indices in the UK’.

*“Overall, taking account of both coverage and formula effect differences, the conclusion is that, within the limitations of how price data is collected within the UK, the RPI is as good a consumer price index as one can get for uprating purposes. The systemic differences between the RPI and the CPI are the result entirely of under-estimation by the CPI.”<sup>5</sup>*

2.9 The failure of CPI to include any estimation of housing costs makes it unsuitable in the context of determining pay awards. The experimental estimation of rental equivalence currently utilised within the Household Costs Indices (HCI), which inform the housing costs element of CPIH have traditionally make it an unreliable inflation measure that underestimated housing costs.<sup>6</sup>

2.10 The relatively recent improvements implemented by ONS from March 2024, have resulted in CPIH more closely resembling inflationary increases as measured by the RPI. In September 2025, RPI stood at 4.5% and CPIH at 4.1%, whereas the CPI measure that excludes housing costs was just 3.8%.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ONS, *Redevelopment of private rental prices statistics, impact analysis, UK*: December 2023. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/redevelopmentofprivaterentalpricesstatisticsimpactanalysisuk/december2023>

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Mark Courtney, ‘Consumer Price Indices in the UK’, 2016. <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Consumer-Price-indices-in-the-UK.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), ‘National Statistics status of Consumer Prices Index including Owner Occupiers’ Housing Costs (CPIH), 31 July 2017. <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CPIH-letter-from-Ed-Humpherson-to-John-Pullinger-final.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> ONS Consumer Price Inflation Tables, 22 October 2025. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflation>

## Increased Food Costs

2.11 Food inflation continues to strain household budgets, with rising costs of basic staples affecting consumers across the UK. According to the ONS, food prices in the UK have risen by 5.2% (RPI) and 4.9% (CPIH) over the past year (September 2025)<sup>8</sup>, with staples like bread, butter and spreads, milk, and meat seeing even steeper increases. This has significantly outpaced teachers' wage growth since 2010.

## Increased Energy Costs

2.12 Scheduled increases to energy bills from October 2025 added to the inflationary pressures already affecting UK households. The Review Body should take into account the scheduled increases in energy costs experienced by UK households and anticipate further planned increases to energy costs as a result of Energy Price Cap changes that control what most households pay for energy.

2.13 The UK energy price cap increased to £1,755 per year for a typical household from 1 October 1 to 31 December 2025, which is a 2.2% per year higher than the price cap set for the same period last year, from 1 October to 31 December 2024 (£1,717).<sup>9</sup>

2.14 Government research shows that 'Under the October to December 2024 direct debit price cap the average annual bill for typical gas and electricity consumption was £1,717. This is well below the peak level of £2,380 level under the Energy Price Guarantee from October 2022 to June 2023, but still 41% higher than in Winter 2021-22.'<sup>10</sup>

## Real-world economic conditions

2.15 Using CPI-based inflation measures in setting teacher pay awards has resulted in a real-terms erosion of salaries, even in years when the economy was

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<sup>8</sup> ONS, *RPI:Percentage change over 12 months - Food and catering*, 17 September 2025.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/czbi/mm23>

<sup>9</sup> Ofgem, *Changes to energy price cap between 1 October and 31 December 2025*, 27 August 2025.

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/news/changes-energy-price-cap-between-1-october-and-31-december-2025>

<sup>10</sup> House of Commons Library (HoCL), *Gas and electricity prices during the 'energy crisis' and beyond*, 22 November 2024. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9714/>

growing. This has directly contributed to the current teacher recruitment and retention crisis.

2.16 Given the specific spending patterns and financial responsibilities of teachers, RPI remains the most appropriate and fair measure of inflation for wage-setting purposes. The Review Body must recognise that the choice of inflation index is not a technicality, it has direct and lasting consequences for the living standards of teachers. Adopting RPI ensures that teacher pay awards are based on real-world economic conditions, not artificially suppressed indicators.

2.17 NASUWT strongly recommends that the Review Body use the RPI as the most appropriate inflation measure for determining teachers' pay awards, and factor in the Government's announced Energy Price Cap increases to account for rising household energy costs.

### **The real-terms cut in teachers' pay since 2010**

2.18 In Wales in September 2025, the pay of classroom teachers starting salaries was 15.5% less in real-terms than if it had increased to match RPI inflation in each year since 2010. Removing M1 and replacing it with M2 as the starting salary for classroom teachers has had a positive impact on reducing the real terms cut to starting salaries, but significant improvements need to be made to restore teachers starting salaries in real terms to 2010 levels.

2.19 By the same measure, the pay of classroom teachers on M2 to M5, was almost one-quarter (24.6%) less in real terms, and the pay of those on M6 was 22.2% less in real-terms. The pay of classroom teachers on the Upper Pay Range was over one-quarter (27.7%) less in real-terms, and the pay of teachers on the Lead Practitioner and Leadership Pay Ranges was over one-quarter (between 28.3% and 29.6%) less in real-terms than in 2010.

2.20 It is crucial for the future of the teaching profession that the Review Body work to restore teachers' pay to 2010 levels in real terms. This is essential to address the ongoing and unprecedented teacher recruitment and retention crisis in Wales, with recruitment having declined steadily since 2014 and experiencing a sharp drop over

the past two years. Furthermore, starting salaries for teachers continue to fall behind those of other graduate professions.

2.21 The IWPRB's 6<sup>th</sup> Report recommended that teachers' pay in Wales should increase by 4.8% for the 2025/26 academic year. However, the Welsh Government decided to implement a 4% pay uplift. Honouring the IWPRB's recommendation would have gone much further towards the pay restoration that is long overdue for teachers in Wales. It is unprecedented for the Welsh Government to implement a pay award below the recommendation of the IWPRB. This decision by the Welsh government can only undermine confidence in the pay review process in Wales.

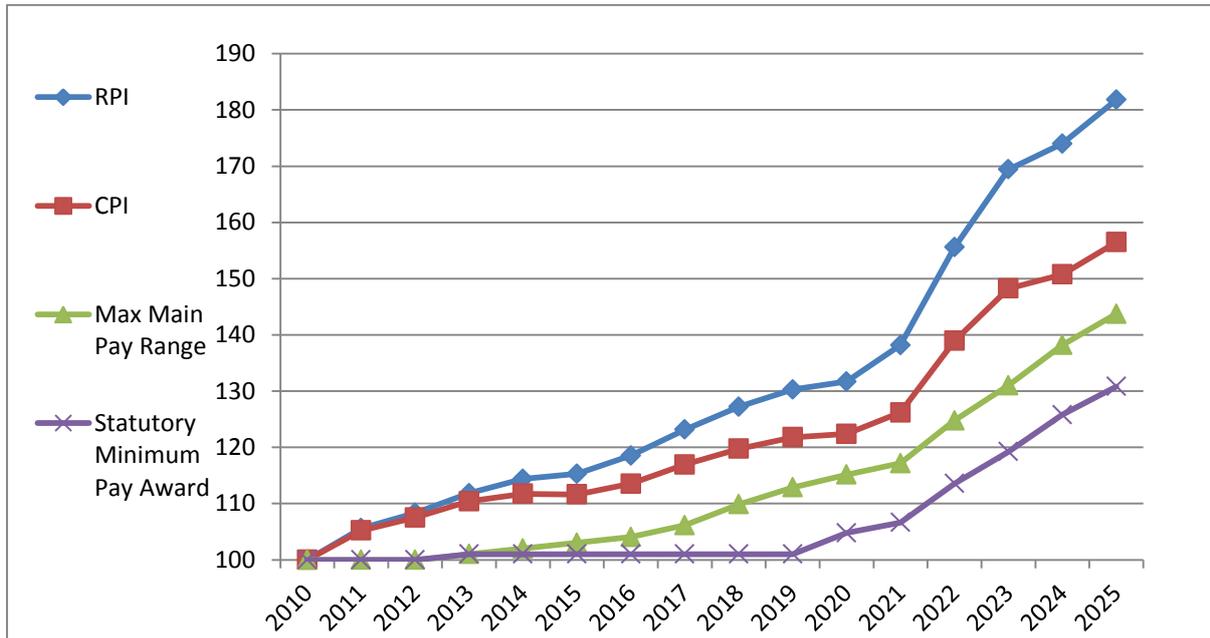
2.22 The ongoing cost-of-living crisis, coupled with soaring inflation and rising interest rates, continues to place significant financial strain on teachers. Teachers in Wales have faced over a decade of pay freezes and below-inflation pay increases. It is imperative that the Review Body takes immediate action to restore teachers' pay to 2010 levels in real terms.

### **Teacher salary increases compared to inflation increases 2010 to 2025**

2.23 The following chart shows the extent to which the pay of classroom teachers on the Main Pay Range (MPR) has fallen behind price increases, measured by both the Retail Prices Index (RPI) and Consumer Prices Index (CPI), since 2010. The chart illustrates pay increases in the best-case scenario where a teacher at the top of the MPR has received the maximum pay award each year since 2010 (Max Main Pay Range) and the worst-case scenario, where a teacher on the MPR received no cost-of-living award from 2014, until the statutory minimum pay award was applied by the Welsh Government from 2020.

2.24 The indexed price increases as measured by both RPI and CPI are measured against the indexed increases to teachers' pay on the main pay range in each year between 2010 and 2025, to illustrate the cumulative effect of successive below-inflation pay awards since 2010.

## Indexed price increases compared to teachers' main pay range increases 2010 to 2025



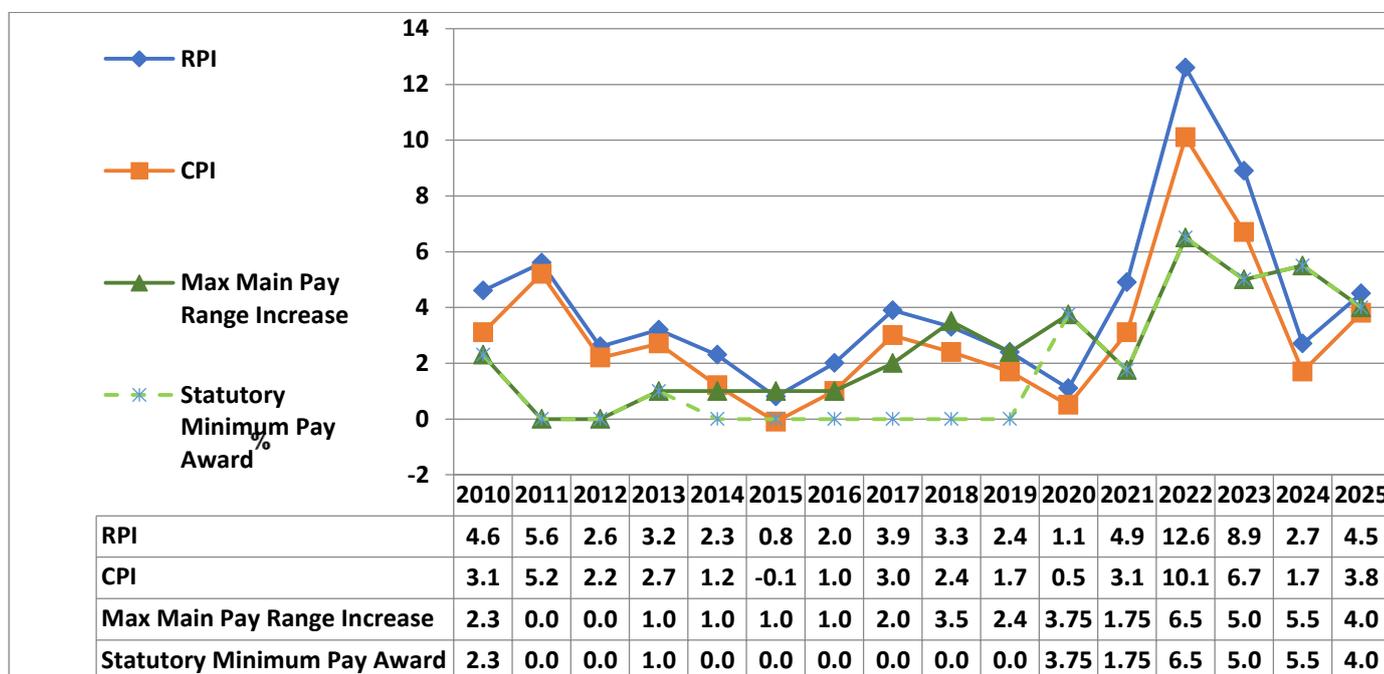
2.25 In both the best- and worst-case scenarios teachers' pay has failed to keep pace with price increases as measured by both the RPI and CPI inflation measures. Teachers in 2024 remain significantly poorer in real terms than they were in 2010. Since 2010, the cost of living has increased by 81.8% as measured by RPI and 56.5% as measured by CPI, whereas pay for teachers at the top of the main pay range has risen by just 43.7%. Teachers remain significantly poorer in real terms than they were in 2010 due to the cumulative impact of successive pay awards failing to match cost-of-living increases as measured by both the RPI and CPI inflation measures.

2.26 Over the past sixteen years, teachers have received only four pay increases above RPI inflation and one pay increase that matched RPI inflation. In eleven of the last fifteen years, teachers have experienced significant real-terms pay cuts. It is essential to remember that, during the coronavirus pandemic, teachers have sacrificed not only their health but, in some cases, their lives, in their commitment to ensuring the continuation of education under the most challenging circumstances.

2.27 The following chart illustrates the annual percentage increase in teachers' pay in both the best and worst-case pay scenarios in each year since 2010, as set out

above, together with the twelve-month percentage change in inflation for both RPI and CPI in September of each year.

### Teacher salary increases compared to inflation increases 2010 to 2025



2.28 Any marginal real-terms gains made in 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2024 have had limited positive impact on teachers’ real-terms earnings, which have plummeted since 2010. The 1.75% pay award in 2021, followed in 2022 by the largest real-terms pay cut suffered by teachers since 1977,<sup>11</sup> when taken in context of crippling cost-of-living increases, has plunged many teachers into serious financial hardship.

2.29 The real-terms pay increase implemented by the Welsh Government in 2024, was significantly higher than the pay award recommended by the Review Body, and was only implemented as a result of the Welsh Government’s commitment to ensure ‘that following devolution of pay and conditions to Wales, teachers and school leaders in Wales will suffer “no detriment” in comparison to those in England’.<sup>12</sup>

2.30 In previous years, the Review Body has recommended pay awards that would have further exacerbated the already dire financial situation many teachers face, as

<sup>11</sup> In April 1977, teachers received a 5% pay award when RPI inflation was at 17.5%, resulting in a 12.5% real-terms pay cut. In September 2022, teachers received a 5% pay award when RPI inflation was 12.6%, resulting in a 7.6% real-terms pay cut.

<sup>12</sup> Welsh Government’s Evidence to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, March 2024 (para. 6.1, pg. 64).

mortgage rates, energy bills, and food costs continue to rise at a pace faster than their pay. It is therefore deeply disappointing that the Welsh Government implemented a 4% pay uplift, rather than the 4.8% pay increase recommended by the Review Body. The Review Body's recommendation would have provided an overdue above-RPI pay increase for teachers in Wales in 2025. It is irresponsible of the Welsh Government to implement a pay award below the recommendation of the Review Body, particularly in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis.

2.31 If the Review Body is committed to addressing the escalating teacher recruitment and retention crisis, the ultimate goal must be to restore teacher pay to 2010 levels in real terms, with meaningful progress made each year.

### **Cumulative shortfall in teachers' salaries since 2010**

2.32 The following table shows the extent to which teachers' salaries have eroded in real terms, as measured by RPI, since 2010. The values of teachers' pay on the Main Pay Range (MPR) are between £5,213 (15.5%) and £10,408 (24.6%) lower in 2025/26 than if teachers' salaries had increased in each year since 2010 to keep pace with RPI inflation. Teachers on M3, M4 and M5 are earning salaries that are one-quarter (24.6%) less in real terms, compared to 2010 pay levels.

2.33 Similarly, the salaries of teachers paid on the Upper Pay Range (UPR) are between £13,357 (27.7%) and £14,364 (27.7%) lower in 2025/26 than if teachers' salaries had increased to keep pace with RPI inflation since 2010. Leadership Pay Range (LPR) headteachers' salaries are between £16,852 (28.3%) and £43,276 (29.6%) lower by the same measure.

2.34 The Conservative Government's policy to freeze teachers' pay in 2011, 2012 and 2021; apply a 1% pay cap from 2013 to 2016, and impose successive below RPI inflation pay increases in ten out of fourteen years in government, has devastated teachers' salary levels and their finances.

2.35 The Review Body were complicit in implementing the punishing real-terms pay cuts of the Conservative Government in almost every year since it was established in March 2019. Whilst it is positive that the Review Body rejected the Westminster Government's pay freeze policy in 2021, and recommended an above

RPI inflation pay increase in 2025, the Review Body has failed to ensure any significant progress in restoring teachers' pay in real terms to 2010 levels.

2.36 The following table shows the cumulative impact on teachers' pay range values since 2010, as a result of successive and prolonged below RPI inflation pay awards. Teachers and School Leaders who have remained in the profession since 2010 are in effect between £46,087 and £336,501 worse off in real terms since 2010 due to the cumulative shortfall in pay.

### Teachers' Salary Shortfall in 2025-2026

Wales	Salary 2025/26	Shortfall in 2025/26 (£)	Shortfall in 2025/26 (%)	2010/11-2025/26 Cumulative shortfall (£)
<b>Main Pay Range</b>				
M2 (Minimum)	£33,731	-£5,213	15.5	-£46,087
M3	£36,441	-£8,961	24.6	-£70,122
M4	£39,249	-£9,645	24.6	-£75,487
M5	£42,339	-£10,408	24.6	-£81,454
Maximum	£46,595	-£10,323	22.2	-£81,002
<b>Upper Pay Range</b>				
UPS1	£48,304	-£13,357	27.7	-£103,426
UPS2	£50,095	-£13,849	27.6	-£107,244
UPS3	£51,942	-£14,364	27.7	-£111,224
<b>Leadership Pay Range</b>				
L6	£59,597	-£16,852	28.3	-£130,253
L8	£62,612	-£17,709	28.3	-£136,866
L11	£67,531	-£19,102	28.3	-£147,630
L28	£102,299	-£28,941	28.3	-£223,669
L43	£146,313	-£43,276	29.6	-£336,501

2.37 Despite the substantial evidence provided by the NASUWT and other stakeholders, which clearly illustrates the worsening crisis in teacher recruitment and retention, as well as the severe financial and social impact of ongoing real-terms pay cuts, the Review Body has failed to take the decisive action required to effectively address and resolve the situation.

2.38 NASUWT remains firm in its belief that a substantial above-RPI inflation salary increase, sustained over a period of years, is essential to restore teachers' pay to a level that reflects their skills and experience. If austerity is indeed over, and if the Welsh Government is genuinely committed to supporting the teaching profession in delivering a world-class education system, then rebuilding and investing in the teaching workforce must be a priority. Ensuring there are sufficient qualified teachers in schools is a fundamental responsibility of government.

### **Teacher Starting Salaries**

2.39 NASUWT welcomed the Westminster Government's commitment to increase classroom teachers' starting salaries to £30,000 nationally by September 2022, and the Welsh Government's commitment to ensure 'That following devolution of pay and conditions, teachers in Wales will not suffer any detriment in comparison to their counterparts elsewhere in the UK'. The delay in implementing a £30,000 starting salary until September 2023 was a retrograde step, and failed to restore teachers' salaries to 2010 levels in real terms. If teachers' starting salaries had increased in line with RPI inflation since 2010, they would have increased to £37,267 in September 2024, and £38,944 in September 2025.

2.40 As outlined elsewhere in this evidence, the recruitment and retention of teachers continues to be a significant issue that has not been adequately addressed over the past sixteen years. A radical overhaul of the current pay structure is urgently required to make teaching a financially competitive and sustainable career choice for graduates.

2.41 NASUWT's pay recommendations aim to establish both a fair starting salary and a clear, meaningful pathway for pay progression over the course of a teacher's career. These proposals are designed not only to attract new graduates into teaching, but also to retain experienced professionals in the classroom.

2.42 The Union has repeatedly presented detailed evidence to the Review Body demonstrating how teachers' starting salaries and progression rates compare unfavourably to other graduate-level professions. According to The Graduate Market in 2025 report by High Fliers Research, the median starting salary for UK graduates

reached £35,000 in 2025, a 16.7% increase since 2021.<sup>13</sup> In comparison, the starting salary for teachers in September 2025 stood at just £ £33,731.

2.43 The Westminster Government previously promised that: ‘It is vital we ensure that the pay offer for teachers is positioned at the top of the graduate labour market – ensuring we recruit and retain a world class profession – and that is why we have announced plans to significantly raise starting pay to £30,000 nationally by September 2022.’ It is now clear that the delay in introducing a £30,000 starting salary for teachers has placed the teaching profession at a significant disadvantage in comparison with other graduate recruiters. The £32,433 starting salary represents a below average graduate-level pay award in 2024.

2.44 The Review Body can no longer afford to maintain an approach that artificially depresses teachers’ wages compared to other graduate professions, hoping the recruitment and retention crisis will resolve itself. A clear, competitive starting salary that is aligned with or above the graduate median is essential if teaching is to be positioned as a career of choice for the country’s brightest graduates.

2.45 If teachers’ starting salaries had increased in line with RPI inflation since 2010, and were to continue to rise in line with RPI inflation of 3.2% in 2026, as forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR)<sup>14</sup>, then teachers’ starting salaries would increase to £40,190 in September 2026. To restore teachers’ starting salaries to the same level as 2010 in real terms by September 2026, a 19.1% increase to starting salaries would be necessary in September 2026.

2.46 When making recommendations on starting pay for teachers, the Review Body should give serious consideration to the updated RPI forecasts due to be published by the OBR alongside the Chancellor’s Autumn Budget on 26 November 2025.

2.47 NASUWT continues to call for significant above-RPI inflation increases to all salary points and allowances to address the cumulative shortfall in teachers’ salaries since 2010, as detailed throughout this evidence.

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<sup>13</sup> High Fliers Research, *The Graduate Market in 2025*, <https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>

<sup>14</sup> OBR, *Economic and fiscal outlook – March 2025*, Table A.1: *Economy forecast*, pg. 158. <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2025/>

## The disparity between public and private sector earnings growth since 2010

2.48 The latest data on growth in earnings for employees published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 11 November 2025, shows that 'Average total earnings growth was 4.2% for the private sector in July to September 2025, and 6.6% for the public sector.'<sup>15</sup>

2.49 When we consider annual growth in employees' average total earnings (including bonuses) since 2010, it is clear from the ONS data that public sector workers earnings, including that of teachers, has failed to increase in line with private sector workers generally. In September 2010, private sector employees' average total earnings (including bonuses) were £440 per week (£22,879 annually). This had increased to £736 per week (£38,284 annually) by September 2025, which represents a 67% increase since September 2010.

2.50 By contrast, in September 2010, public sector employees' average total earnings (including bonuses) were £468 per week (£24,318 annually). This had increased to just £724 per week (£37,626 annually) by September 2024, which represents a 55% increase since September 2010. Public sector workers, including teachers, cannot afford another year of damaging pay austerity.

2.51 The following chart shows the extent to which the pay of classroom teachers earning the maximum amount on the Main Pay Range (Max Main Pay Range) has fallen behind price increases, measured by both the Retail Prices Index (RPI) and Consumer Prices Index (CPI), since 2010. It also incorporates the ONS data to measure annual total pay growth in September each year since 2010 for both private sector and public sector employees.

2.52 The chart on the following page illustrates that since 2010:

- the cost of living has increased by 81.8% as measured by RPI and 56.5% as measured by CPI;
- average total earnings in the private sector has risen by 67.3%;
- average total earnings in the public sector has risen by 54.6%; and

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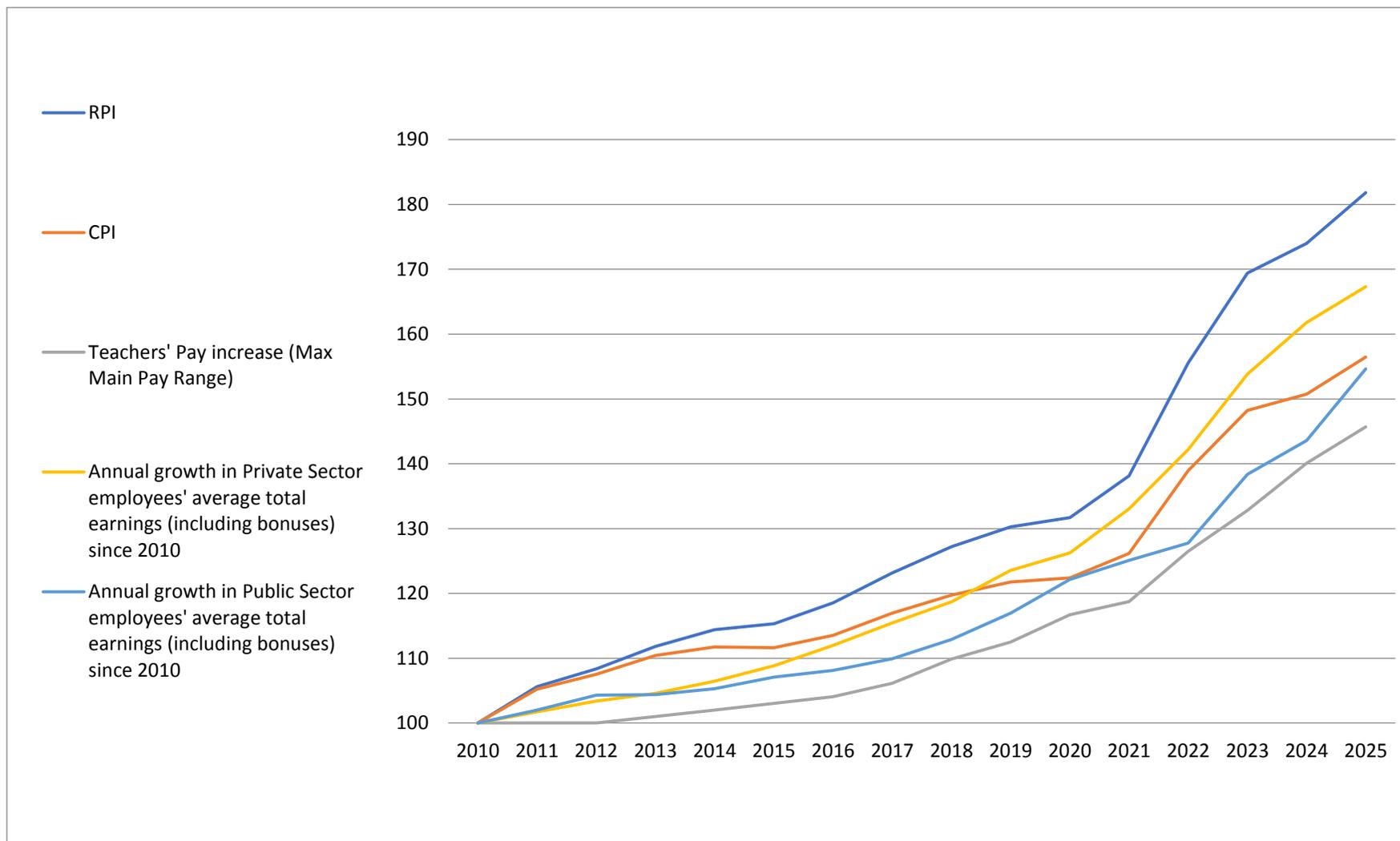
<sup>15</sup> ONS, Average weekly earnings in Great Britain: November 2025.  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsingreatbritain/february2025>

- pay for teachers in Wales at the top of the main pay range has risen by just 45.7%.

2.53 Classroom teachers in Wales are significantly poorer in real terms than they were in 2010 due to the cumulative impact of pay awards failing to match cost-of-living increases as measured by both the RPI and CPI inflation measures. Pay increases for classroom teachers in Wales has also failed to keep pace with pay increases more generally in both the public and private sectors since 2010. Whereas private sector earnings have risen faster than price increases as measured by CPI since 2010, the earnings of public sector workers more generally have failed to do so.

2.54 The extent to which the growth in teachers' earnings in Wales has fallen behind their counterparts in both the public and private sectors is truly shocking. The ONS data demonstrates the urgent need for a significant above RPI inflation pay award for the teaching profession, to put an end to the cycle of ever-deteriorating real-terms pay for teachers when compared the pay of other workers in an increasingly competitive graduate market.

## Indexed price increases compared to teachers' main pay range increases, private sector and public sector average total pay increases 2010 to 2025



## The Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gaps for Teachers

2.55 An analysis of the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) for Wales 2024,<sup>16</sup> reveals that average salaries are higher for male teachers than for female teachers both overall, and specifically at headteacher and 'other leadership' grades.

2.56 The average salary for all teachers, including those in leadership roles in 2024/25 was £48,930. For male teachers the average salary was £50,665, whereas the average salary for female teachers was £48,336. The pay premium for male teachers' in 2024/25 was £2,329, which represents a gender pay gap of 4.6% in the teaching profession in Wales across all grades of teacher in 2024/25.

2.57 For male classroom teachers, the average salary in 2024/25 was £45,048 compared to £45,434 for female classroom teachers. The marginal 0.9% average (mean) full-time equivalent (FTE) salary pay advantage for female classroom teachers' in Wales in 2024/25 is reflective of the fact that three-quarters (75.6%) of qualified classroom teachers are female.

2.58 In 2024/25, the average salary for men in school leadership' roles, excluding headteachers' (Other Leadership), was £68,101, compared to 64,675 for women in similar leadership positions. The pay premium for men in this category in 2024/25 was £3,426, which represents a gender pay gap of 5% in 2024/25.

2.59 For headteachers the gender pay gap is at its most extreme. In 2024/25, the average salary for men was £83,208 compared to £76,525 for women. The pay premium for male headteachers' is £6,683, which represents a gender pay gap of 8% in 2024/25.

2.60 The extent of gender and ethnicity based pay inequality within the teaching profession remains a significant concern for NASUWT. The Welsh Government's own SWAC data clearly demonstrates that a significant gender pay gap persists in schools in Wales in 2024/25. The gender pay gap for teachers in Wales becomes more pronounced in leadership and head teacher positions, and has grown since last year.

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<sup>16</sup> Welsh Government, School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) for Wales 2024, 16 July 2025. <https://www.gov.wales/school-workforce-census-results-november-2024>

2.61 Systemic discrimination is denying progress towards a more diverse teaching profession. Research undertaken by Warwick University on behalf of NASUWT revealed that Black teachers are paid less than their White colleagues, are more likely to be employed in temporary posts, less likely to be promoted and are more likely to be disciplined or dismissed from their jobs.<sup>17</sup>

2.62 The findings of research undertaken recently by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) should be a reminder to both the Review Body and the Government that greater action is needed to tackle the causes and effects of racial discrimination in the teaching profession. Black teachers still face barriers to pay and career progression, as well as covert and overt racial discrimination throughout their careers.

2.63 In England, there are currently no government targets, programmes or funding to improve ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce, in contrast to both Wales and Scotland.<sup>18</sup> The Welsh Government's *Initial teacher education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic recruitment plan*<sup>19</sup> looks at what can be done to increase recruitment onto initial teacher education (ITE) programmes, and the *Ethnic Minority Initial Teacher Education Incentive Scheme* provides a £5,000 grant to students on an accredited postgraduate ITE programme that leads to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) where they meet the eligibility criteria, including ethnicity criteria. Progress is being made, but more needs to be done to remove the barriers to pay and career progression that Black teachers still face.

2.64 The NASUWT continues to call on the Review Body and the Welsh Government to undertake a thorough review of both gender and ethnicity pay gaps within the teaching profession and to consult with NASUWT and the teaching profession on the formulation of an action plan to explain what actions will be taken to address any gender and ethnicity pay gaps. As a first step, the Review Body

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<sup>17</sup> Institute for Employment Research (IER) at the University of Warwick, *Teachers' Pay and Equality*, 2016. <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/pay-pensions/teachers-pay-research.html>

<sup>18</sup> National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), *Ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce: evidence review*, 2024. <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/ethnic-diversity-in-the-teaching-workforce-evidence-review/>

<sup>19</sup> Welsh Government, *Initial teacher education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic recruitment plan*, 2023. <https://www.gov.wales/initial-teacher-education-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-recruitment-plan-html>

should strongly recommend that school and college employers should publish ethnicity pay gap data together with gender pay gap data on an annual basis.

### Unqualified teachers' pay

2.65 NASUWT notes that since the National Living Wage (NLW) was introduced nine years ago, it has increased by over 70%. Over the same period, the pay scales for unqualified teachers have failed to keep pace. At present, workers on U1 on the Unqualified Teacher Pay Scale (UTPS) in Wales would have to work 36.5 hours a week to avoid falling foul of the NLW provisions.

2.66 NASUWT is calling for a higher pay award increase for the Unqualified Teachers Pay Scale (UTPS) in subsequent years to pre-empt a situation in which U1 falls below the NLW. Furthermore, the STPC(W)D should include guidance to ensure that U1 unqualified teachers should not be required to work more than 35 hours per week.

2.67 There are diverse groups of staff paid as unqualified teachers, from school leavers embarking on a four-year degree apprenticeship to those overseas trained teachers (OTTs) who are working towards QTS. NASUWT believes that employers will be vulnerable to equal pay claims by using the current UTPS for such a wide range of staff with significantly different qualifications and experience of teaching.

2.68 NASUWT is calling for the Review Body and the Welsh Government to undertake a review of the UTPS, including in terms of the many groups that have a large breadth of experience and qualifications. The UTPS must be uplifted above any cost-of-living pay award that is applied to the teacher and leader pay scales in this remit, to ensure it stays ahead of the NLW values.

### **3 Matters for Recommendation**

**What adjustments 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?**

3.1 NASUWT would be pleased to discuss with the Review Body additional matters relating to teachers' pay, rewards and working conditions.

**NASUWT is asking for:**

(i) a substantial above RPI pay award to making significant progress to restoring teachers' pay to 2010 levels;

(ii) NASUWT has significant concerns about a multi-year pay awards. If one is introduced it must include a reopener clause if the September RPI figure exceeds the pay award in any year covered by the award. The difference between the cost-of-living pay award and the September RPI figure should be automatically applied as a minimum additional cost-of-living pay award to ensure that there is no further real-term erosion of teachers' pay during the period of the multi-year pay award

(iii) additional funding from the Welsh Government to enable all schools to ensure full resourcing of the pay award ;

(iv) the introduction of a maximum 35-hour working week for all school teachers and school leaders;

(v) removal of unlimited work hours;

(vi) annual pay gap reporting with associated action plans to be published by employers for gender and race; and

(vii) restoration of supply pools across Wales on a not-for-profit basis

(viii) a higher pay uplift for the Unqualified Teachers Pay Scale (UTPS).