

Government Demonstrates Contempt for the Teaching Profession in its 2022/23 Pay Award

On 19 July 2022, the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) published its 32nd Report, making recommendations on the teachers' pay award in 2022/23 and 2023/24. In December 2021, the Secretary of State for Education asked the STRB to make recommendations on a two-year pay award.

In its evidence to the STRB, the NASUWT set out a clear case for a pay award for teachers of:

- 12% in September 2022;
- 10% in September 2023;
- 8% in September 2024.

The NASUWT outlined that this would be the minimum to achieve a restorative pay award, given that, at the time that the NASUWT submitted its evidence in early Spring this year, teachers' pay had fallen in real terms by an average of 20% since 2010. The pay of experienced teachers had actually fallen by more than this because of the detrimental impact of differential pay increases.

At the point at which the NASUWT submitted its evidence to the STRB, and met to present its oral evidence, inflation was starting to rise very sharply. The NASUWT asked the STRB to seek a further remit for a pay award for 2023/24, to respond to unpredictable and high levels of inflation in 2022/23, which were unknown at the point at which the Union presented its evidence.

The STRB has now made the following pay recommendations in its 32nd Report:

- For September 2022, a 5% increase to all pay and allowance ranges and advisory points, with higher increases to some parts of the Main Pay Range as a step towards achieving a minimum starting salary of £30,000 by September 2023.
- For September 2023, a 3% increase to all pay and allowance ranges and advisory points, with higher increases to some parts of the Main Pay Range to deliver a minimum starting salary of £30,000, and a limited-scope, timely review mechanism to ensure that the recommended 2023 pay levels remain appropriate.

This is an improvement on the Department for Education's (DfE's) recommended pay award for teachers in 2022/23 and 2023/24 and the STRB has stated: 'Our view is that it is necessary and appropriate to exceed the Government's proposed general pay increases for experienced teachers (of 3% in 2022 and 2% in 2023) in order to address the risks to teacher supply.'

The NASUWT welcomes the STRB's acceptance of the Union's evidence that teachers' salaries had become profoundly uncompetitive across all pay levels. The NASUWT also welcomes the STRB's rejection of the Government's policy of giving lower pay increases to London teachers.

The Secretary of State for Education has accepted the STRB's recommendation for the September 2022 pay award and rejected the recommendation for the September 2023 pay award. The Secretary of State has therefore rejected the STRB's recommendation for 'a *timely review mechanism to ensure that*

the recommended 2023 pay levels remain appropriate', for which the NASUWT had been calling, in order to deliver an additional pay award to respond to inflation during 2022/23. This recommendation was particularly vital because Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation has now reached 11.8%.

Dr Patrick Roach, NASUWT General Secretary, has responded to the Government's 2022 pay award announcement:

'Ministers have today delivered yet another pay cut for teachers.

'After 12 years of pay freezes, pay pauses and below-inflation pay awards amounting to a 20% real-terms cut, teachers will be dismayed to hear that the Government expects them to stomach the largest real-terms cut to their pay.

'Experienced teachers and headteachers will be especially aggrieved about how they are being treated by the Government. They are already leaving in their droves because the Government is failing to value and support them properly. Today's announcement will do little to stop that.

'If the Government hopes that teachers' anger will dissipate over the course of the summer break, they are wrong.'

Funding the pay award

The STRB has identified the funding pressures which schools are currently under and the NASUWT has demanded that Ministers address the funding shortfall in schools. This is particularly the case because the assumptions of school cost pressures on which last autumn's Comprehensive Spending Review were predicated have been surpassed by soaring inflation, most particularly in fuel costs. The NASUWT has made it clear to the Government that the national teachers' pay award must not be contingent on local decisions or variation, which relate to school funding.

Performance-related Pay

The NASUWT presented detailed evidence about the detrimental and discriminatory impact of performance-related pay progression (PRPP) to the STRB. In response, the STRB has stated that: *'Pay progression, including the appropriate use of performance or capability-related pay'* is a priority for further STRB review.

The STRB also picked up on the concerns which the NASUWT identified in its commentary on the DfE's data analysis of pay progression, which indicated the extent of the differential treatment of teachers with protected characteristics. The STRB has noted, in particular, *'differences in pay progression and progression to the Upper Pay Range for teachers with protected characteristics and part-time workers, and a pay gap between male and female teachers once leadership grades were included.'*

The STRB has accordingly concluded:

'Given the current form of PRPP has now been in operation for some eight years, best practice suggests that a review should take place. This might start by identifying where improvements are most needed.

'This should include reviewing current practice, including understanding equalities concerns, and understanding what works well. Further work would consider whether alternative approaches might be more effective in supporting performance, recruitment and retention.'

Career paths and pay structures and for teachers and school leaders

The STRB has indicated a concern that the teachers' pay framework has become ineffective to reward and retain teachers in the profession, and has picked up on the NASUWT's evidence in this regard; for example, of the erosion of the differential between M6 and UPS1 pay levels. The STRB has asked the Secretary of State for a wide-ranging remit which covers the teachers' and school leaders' pay framework.

If this request is accepted, it will present the NASUWT with an opportunity to argue the case for radical reform of the teachers' pay framework, with a new focus on the role and development of the classroom teacher.

Flexible working

The STRB has asked for a future remit from the Secretary of State which includes *'flexible working to support wellbeing.'* The STRB has stated that it:

'believes there is scope to complement the existing work to further support wellbeing and teacher supply. An important emphasis would be on seeking practical forms of employer support, including the option of changing, over time, the remuneration of teachers to better support positive trends in working arrangements in schools and to enhance the ability to recruit and retain teachers.'

Next steps

The DfE has published a draft 2022 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), with consultation on this closing on 23 September 2022. STRB consultees are also invited to respond to the STRB's 32nd Report. The NASUWT will be responding to both consultations and will update Negotiating Secretaries on the content of the Union's response.

The final version of the 2022 STPCD will not be published until after 23 September 2022 and the NASUWT will issue further guidance to Negotiating Secretaries after publication of the final Document.

As an urgent priority, the NASUWT is pressing for Ministerial-level negotiations to address members' concerns about the pay award and operation of the pay system, which the STRB has identified as a result of the NASUWT's evidence. As a key element of these negotiations, the NASUWT expects the Government to agree a programme of pay restoration that will deliver a Better Deal for Teachers. In the event that such agreement is not reached, the NASUWT remains committed to balloting members this autumn.



E-mail: advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
Website: www.nasuwt.org.uk