

Government's Spending Review 2020 – a 'slap in the face' to the teaching profession

On 25 November 2020, the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020, outlining the Government's spending plans for 2021/22.

In the Spending Review, the Chancellor announced that teachers and most other public sector workers who earn £24,000 or more will have their pay rise for 2021/22 'paused'. Effectively, this includes all qualified teachers and many unqualified teachers. Unqualified teachers earning less than £24,000 can only expect a pay increase of £250 in 2021/22.

As a priority, the NASUWT will explore the implications for the Government's previous commitments on teachers' pay for 2022/23, but the Union has left the Government in no doubt about the unacceptability of the Government's decision on teachers' pay for 2021/22.

Dr Patrick Roach, the NASUWT General Secretary, has stated: *'The short-sighted decision to freeze teachers' pay is out of step with public opinion and is a slap in the face to the teaching profession, particularly at a time when teachers have been serving on the frontline, risking their own health to maintain education and support for children and young people. The Chancellor's claim that a public sector pay freeze is necessary as private sector wages fell by nearly 1% in the six months to September is no justification for imposing further real-terms cuts to the pay of teachers.'*

The NASUWT will work with the TUC and affiliates to oppose the Government's policy and will also oppose any remit from the Secretary of State for Education to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) for the 2021/22 pay award, which only covers teachers earning less than £24,000.

The 2020/21 Pay Award

NASUWT Negotiating Secretaries should be aware that the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 does not have any impact on the 2020/21 teachers' pay award. Schools should continue to pay the September 2020 teachers' pay award in full to their teachers, and Negotiating Secretaries should make National Executive Members aware of any schools which threaten to use the Spending Review announcement as a pretext for refusing or ceasing to pay the 2020 pay award to one or more teachers. Information about the 2020 pay award is available at: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/pay-pensions/pay-award/england.html>.

School Funding

The Government has claimed that it has safeguarded the schools budget, ensuring that schools receive a per-pupil increase of 2% in their 2021/22 budgets. However, this has to be set against the decision of the Government not to provide any additional funding for schools during 2020/21 to meet the additional costs which schools have had to sustain in order to re-open fully from September 2020 onwards.

As Dr Roach has further stated: *'The Chancellor's commitments on school budgets have not addressed the ongoing additional financial pressures that all schools are facing and will continue to face into 2021 and beyond as a result of the pandemic.'*

The NASUWT is campaigning for additional funding for school coronavirus costs during 2020/21 and encourages NASUWT activists to engage with MPs and local authority elected members on this issue. NASUWT briefing and campaigning materials are available at: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/health-safety/coronavirus-guidance/full-reopening-of-schools/full-reopening-of-schools-england/school-funding-briefing-for-activists.html>.

