



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
London

14 September 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

### **School Teachers' Pay: the STRB's 31st Report and the Government Response**

This letter sets out the separate NEU response to the consultation on the 31<sup>st</sup> STRB Report and the draft 2021 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).

A joint response to the STRB report from the NEU, ASCL, NAHT and Voice Community has also been sent to you and this separate NEU response should be read alongside the joint response.

#### Overarching issues

The joint response to the STRB report highlights the united position of the profession and the isolation of the Government. It also sets out the urgent need for the Government to change course on teacher pay – restoring the real terms pay losses, removing performance-related pay (PRP), securing competitive pay within a fair pay structure, and reducing workload.

The teacher pay freeze is unjustified and will cause yet greater damage to the ability of the profession to attract and retain the graduates it needs.

The STRB expresses significant concerns about the impact of pay freezes on the position of teacher in the wider graduate labour market and the risks for teacher supply. We believe that, had it not been for the Government's decision to restrict the STRB in its considerations, the STRB would have recommended an increase for September 2021.

The Government's case for a pay freeze was so weak that it refused to allow the STRB to test its pay freeze proposals against the evidence. Nor did the Government put forward any credible justification for such a devastating policy. Teachers in other parts of the UK and workers not covered by pay review bodies, including school support staff, are not subject to pay freezes. Removing the key issue of cost-of-living pay increases from the STRB remit fundamentally undermines the evidence-based process that should be the foundation for policy and the STRB must not be similarly restricted in future remits.

### Equalities issues and PRP

The imposition of PRP and the removal of incremental progression to recognise the acquisition of skills and experience has resulted in significant equalities issues. We have consistently raised this issue in our evidence to the STRB and our discussions with DfE officials. The issue features strongly in our Pay and Progression surveys.

The STRB has again expressed serious concern at the lack of information from the DfE on this key issue. As the STRB notes, the new longitudinal panel study planned by the DfE will take considerable time to deliver and information can be gathered using the School Workforce Census. We again urge the Government and DfE to work with us and the other unions on developing robust and comprehensive information on the equality issues associated with the pay structure.

The information provided must include the decisions taken on individual teachers' pay levels including previous cost of living increases and pay progression. The scope of this data should be discussed at a national level with the unions. The DfE must also conduct and publish a robust and comprehensive equality impact assessment of the changes made to the pay structure since the dismantling of the national structure and imposition of PRP.

### Pay issues and the 2021 STPCD

Alongside the need to restore the real value of teacher pay and secure competitive and fair pay levels going forward, we wish to highlight some specific pay issues reported to us consistently by NEU members. We will continue to support our members on these issues, which underline our call for holistic and fair reform of the pay structure.

The points below also highlight the need for England to follow the welcome removal of PRP and restoration of the national pay structure in Wales. We note the restoration of advisory points for unqualified teachers, following similar changes for the Main Pay Range (MPR) and Upper Pay Range (UPR) last year, but continue to call for mandatory pay scales for all teachers and leaders within a fair pay structure.

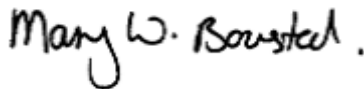
- Pay progression continues to be unjustifiably blocked for many teachers, as reported to us by members and reflected in the NEU Pay and Progression surveys. This reinforces our case on the unfairness of PRP and the call across the profession for its removal.
- NEU members report that in many cases classroom teachers are expected to undertake permanent additional responsibilities without payment of a TLR1 or TLR2. This is fundamentally contrary to the provisions of the STPCD Guidance, which states at paragraph 48 of the 2021 draft that teachers cannot “be expected to take on the responsibility of, and accountability for, a subject area or to manage other teachers without appropriate additional payment. Responsibilities of this nature should be part of a post that is in the leadership group or linked to a post which attracts a TLR1 or TLR2.”
- The new provision to allow consecutive TLR3s for the same responsibility, where the payment is for catch-up tutoring on learning lost during the pandemic, is no substitute for the pay increase all teachers and school leaders deserve following their huge contribution to the pandemic response.
- The STPCD provisions on SEN allowances for classroom teachers provide for payment in a range of circumstances, including mandatory payment for all teachers in special schools. We are not confident that these provisions are always reflected in school pay arrangements.

- NEU members on the UPR report that they face unreasonable additional demands simply because they are on the UPR. The UPR had its origins in a recognition of the need to properly reward classroom teaching without the imposition of additional responsibilities. Pay reform must reflect this important principle.
- The STPCD Guidance is clear that school pay policies must be in place, transparent and consulted on with teachers and union representatives. We are aware from member feedback that pay arrangements in many schools are not transparent and that appropriate negotiation on pay policies with staff and their union representatives does not take place. This lack of transparency contributes to problems such as equal pay issues, where openness and robust monitoring are essential.
- We again call for the resumption of discussions with the DfE on improvements to the DfE's non-statutory advice. We are aware of cases where the DfE's own clear advice on crucial issues, including the importance of adhering to equal pay legislation, is not followed.

#### Workload

Alongside urgent reform of the pay structure and restoration of pay levels, teacher workload must be urgently addressed with adequate protections for teachers against excessive workload. We repeat our call for the STRB to have included in its remit the problems caused by the open-ended requirement on teachers to work such additional hours as are necessary in addition to the 1265 hours of directed time.

Yours sincerely



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National Education Union



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