



Supplementary Submission to the School Teachers' Review Body

**National Education Union
February 2020**

Introduction

1. The NEU evidence of January 2020 summarised our proposals on the issues in the STRB's remit, based on our analysis of the current position on teacher pay, recruitment and retention and related issues.
2. The NEU, ASCL, NAHT and Voice joint evidence and joint supplementary evidence underline the consensus in the teaching profession on the key issues. The evidence submitted to the STRB from other consultees extends that consensus and underlines the isolation of the Government on those issues.
3. This supplementary NEU submission sets out our detailed response to the points made in the evidence from other consultees presented to the STRB in January 2020. In particular, we respond to key points made in the Government's evidence.
4. The NEU submission of January 2020 noted that we would send the findings of the latest NEU pay and progression survey to the STRB when they became available. This supplementary submission includes the findings of our latest survey which, with just over 25,000 responses, provides significant evidence. We refer to some key findings of the survey at various points below.
5. The OME has informed consultees that the STRB would particularly value comments about the principles underpinning the Government proposals for the classroom teacher pay structure. We are happy to respond to the Government's proposals but wish to be clear that those proposals should not wholly define the shape of the discussion on teacher pay. The Government is isolated on pay issues and we have serious concerns about the evidence for the three possible proposals it puts forward on teacher pay.
6. The OME also said that the STRB would welcome views on the options for the Main Pay Range (MPR)/Upper Pay Range (UPR). Again, we set out our views on that issue below; but those views should be seen within the context of key overarching issues on teacher pay of direct relevance to the MPR/UPR issue and to other key pay issues.

Consultees other than Government: consensus on the key issues

Recruitment and retention

7. There is, unsurprisingly, a widespread consensus amongst consultees on the severity and extent of the teacher recruitment and retention problems. NEOST as the representative of employers notes that: *“Schools continue to experience difficulties with recruitment and retention of teachers across a range of disciplines, levels, types of schools and locations”* (NEOST, paragraph 4, bullet point 1).
8. Consultees agree with us that urgent action is needed on retention as well as recruitment. NAHT notes the worsening of wastage rates *“right across the supply pipeline”* (NAHT, paragraph 10). ASCL highlights the urgency of effectively addressing retention issues (ASCL, paragraph 27). NEOST notes the likely increase in retention problems including issues created by the Government’s proposals (NEOST, paragraph 4).

Teacher pay levels

9. In the context of our call for a 7 per cent increase in September 2020, with a timetable for further above-inflation increases beyond 2020, we note the wide consensus amongst consultees on the need for above-inflation pay increases for all teachers and the problems caused by the real-terms pay cuts since 2010.
10. The impact of the cuts in teacher pay levels can be seen in the responses to the latest NEU pay and progression survey. A clear majority of respondents said that they were underpaid given their job weight, role and responsibilities.
11. All of the teacher unions noted in their January evidence the importance of reversing the real terms pay cuts. NEOST notes the important contribution of pay issues to recruitment and retention problems (NEOST, paragraph 15). The National Governors’ Association (NGA) says that teacher pay is *“too low in relation to the graduate labour market and the wider economy”* (NGA, paragraph 4.2).
12. It is important to remember that, under the current pay system, a significant number of teachers do not get any cost-of-living award or get less than the general STPCD uplift. In addition, the lack of an entitlement to an annual pay increase means that each year an increasing number are unable to say whether they have received such an increase. Only 49 per cent of respondents to our latest survey were able to say definitively that they had received a 2.75 per cent increase for September 2019. The other half of respondents either did not know if they had received a cost-of-living increase (39 per cent) or said they had definitely not received one (10 per cent).

13. As was the case with previous surveys, teachers who were female, non-white-British or disabled were less likely to have received the cost-of-living increase. This underlines our concerns at equalities issues raised by the current pay system.
14. It is also important to note the significant proportion of teachers denied pay progression, often due to matters outside their control and unrelated to their performance such as the school's funding position. Many teachers denied progression were given no reason for the decision. The great majority of those denied progression felt that the decision was unfair.
15. Of those denied progression, the vast majority were once again given no indication during the year that they were failing to meet the required standards – despite clear DfE guidance on the “no surprises” principle. Where advance warning was given, teachers reported that there was generally no support provided.
16. A clear majority of respondents to the NEU survey said that poor pay levels and the unfair pay progression system had caused them to question their future in teaching, underlining the link between teacher pay and teacher supply.
17. The recruitment and retention problems are so severe and widespread that a clear whole market signal on pay is essential. Differentiated awards create further recruitment and retention problems and we urge the STRB to reject the Government's proposed direction of travel on this issue.

Restoration of pay points

18. Our January 2020 evidence set out the case for the restoration of a national and mandatory teacher pay structure. The case for this is supported by the clear evidence of widespread teacher supply problems. Again, this view is widely shared amongst consultees including the teacher unions. We therefore ask the STRB to endorse this consensus and recommend the restoration of pay scale points, on a mandatory statutory basis and not merely on an advisory basis as the Government evidence suggests.
19. NEOST reports that most of its stakeholders support the reintroduction of national pay points (NEOST, paragraph 4 bullet point 8). However, at paragraph 49 it states that if this is implemented there should be “flexible arrangements” to ease the transition. The NEU rejects this proposal. Assimilation costs will generally only arise in cases where schools are paying teachers less than the recommended amount, having decided not to increase their pay points in line with the general pay increases of recent years. Those schools have already benefited financially from cutting the value of their teachers' pay. There is no case for allowing them to benefit further from this inappropriate conduct by continuing to pay teachers less than the appropriate amount during some form of “transition period.”

PRP and the teacher pay structure

20. There is a growing consensus among consultees other than the Government on this issue, which shows how the latter is again increasingly isolated on this issue. This year, for the first time, the school leader associations ASCL and NAHT have both joined NEU in stating their opposition to the performance-based pay progression system and calling for its removal. NAHT argues, as it has in previous years, that removal of certainty in pay progression is having a *“profoundly negative impact”* and that the PRP system is having *“significant negative consequences”* for the profession. ASCL reviews the case against PRP and says that it has now concluded *that “the performance related element of the pay system needs to be removed ... at the earliest opportunity”*.
21. NEOST unfortunately appears not to have asked its constituents for views or comments on this issue. It does say that they continue to believe that a cost of living award should exist separate from any performance related increase.
22. NGA again argued that teachers should be entitled to a cost of living increase as a minimum, separately from PRP (NGA, paragraph 4.1). NGA also noted that it agrees with the teacher organisations on the value of a fair and transparent pay structure (NGA, paragraph 4.5).
23. There is, however, growing evidence of a general move away from PRP by academy employers, who are not statutorily obliged to follow the requirements of the STPCD, including major multi academy trusts (MATs). This confirms the growing attitude among school leaders reflected in the views of ASCL and NAHT. MATs which have already confirmed that they are moving away from PRP include EACT, the Northern Education Trust, the Focus Academy Trust and the Education Alliance. A significant number of other MATs are actively considering moving away from PRP.
24. In contrast to the consensus amongst other consultees on the restoration of a national pay structure, the need for a cost of living pay increase and the growing rejection of PRP, the Government reaffirms its support for PRP and the current fragmented structure and also states that it is likely to ask the STRB to look at further forms of pay differentiation. The STRB should follow the consensus in the teaching profession and reject the position adopted by the Government.

Funding

25. Funding is another key issue on which the Government is isolated. Other consultees support our call for a fully funded pay increase and draw attention to the need for additional funding. NEOST calls for the 2020 pay award to be fully funded by the Government with new money (NEOST, paragraph 4, bullet point 3). Improving teacher pay must involve ensuring sufficient sustained investment in core school funding, without the need for additional funding streams.

The Government's evidence and proposals

Summary of the NEU's response

26. On the issues set out above, the Government's evidence to the STRB is at odds with that of other consultees. We set out in detail below our serious concerns about key aspects of the Government's evidence. Our view is that proceeding on the Government's proposed basis would not address the major and widely felt concerns about teacher pay and supply but would instead create significant new problems.
27. The Government's evidence concedes that recruitment and retention has been "*a challenge*" but does not engage with the deep-rooted, severe and widespread nature of the recruitment and retention problems. These have been set out in detail in the NEU evidence as well as in evidence from other consultees.
28. There is no basis for the statement in the Government's submission (paragraph 5) that "*the evidence sets out that a pay award leading to a 3 per cent increase in the total pay bill per teacher is appropriate*". The Government's claim seeks to bolster its policy on funding rather than addressing the view held widely amongst consultees, and previously expressed by the STRB, that a significant improvement in the real and comparative position of teacher pay is required.
29. The Government claims (paragraph 6) that all three of the possible approaches it outlines would see "*significant above inflation increases*" for teachers and leaders.
30. We do not believe that it can be credibly claimed that a 2.25, 2.5 or even 2.75 per cent increase would be significantly above inflation. The STRB is aware of our view that RPI is the appropriate measure for pay increases. The latest Treasury forecast available at the time of writing shows RPI at 2.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020, so that a 2.5 per cent increase is unlikely to be above inflation. Even if the eventual increase turns out to be marginally above inflation, increases at the levels proposed would not represent the significant step to restoring the real terms cuts called for by other consultees. This is in addition, of course, to the significant adverse impact on morale and retention of a differential award.
31. With regard to increases in earnings elsewhere, the Office for Budgetary Responsibility estimates that average earnings will rise by 3 per cent this year. The Government's proposals would not only fail to create any significant recovery against inflation; they would prevent the general level of pay in teaching from recovering in the competitive graduate labour market as well.
32. The NEU called in our initial submission for an overall uniform increase in pay for all teachers and we were supported in this by other teacher union consultees. The NEU rejects the differentiated approach proposed by Government and continues to call for a uniform increase for September 2020.

Recruitment & retention (paragraphs 9-39)

33. The Government evidence states at various places that its *“analysis suggests”* recruitment of extra teachers (see paragraphs 62, 65, 68, 74 and 81). We are not confident in the robustness of this analysis. For example, it is not clear that the approach to assessing the impact of the pay reforms on pay progression (see Annex B, B3 (b)) are based on robust statistical evidence. Additionally, the model is underpinned by target starting pay levels (B5) that have not been arrived at with reference to robust evidence. The assumptions are based on current rates of pay progression (B22), with no examination of the contribution of restrictions on pay progression to teacher supply problems. The models set out in the Government evidence may have internal consistency, but they do not engage with factors that are clearly relevant to an objective assessment of teacher pay and supply such as pay losses across the teacher career journey.
34. It is notable that, despite the statements in the main body of the Government’s evidence, Annex B states that: *“We do not therefore attempt to estimate the magnitude of any recruitment gains”* (B52).
35. We note that Annex B of the Government evidence refers to work on analysing the School Workforce Census to establish information on pay progression (paragraph B23 et seq). We call on the DfE to publish this information and, if it has not done so by the time of the STRB Report, for the STRB to recommend its publication. As we have noted consistently, the absence of such evidence – which the DfE is in a position to collect – represents a crucial gap in evidence on the impact of the pay reforms as a whole.
36. The Government evidence notes that the STRB has drawn attention to the poor position of teacher starting pay (ibid, paragraph 20). These are concerns that we have also expressed consistently and this belated recognition by the Government of the problems caused by poor starting pay is welcome.
37. The STRB, the NEU and other consultees have also, however, expressed concern about the ability of teacher pay to support retention. In its 29th Report the STRB noted its *“significant concerns”* at the deterioration in retention rates for experienced teachers. The STRB went on to state that it had been *“struck by how negatively many school leaders and senior staff viewed the Government’s targeted approach to uplifts last year. If the most experienced teachers believe they are being repeatedly disadvantaged in order to direct resources towards the newest recruits, this will not create a good environment for the retention of teachers at any stage of their careers.”* (STRB, page xi.) This statement is as valid and important now as it was last year, but the Government has not engaged with it.

38. The Government evidence states that: *“Economic theory would also suggest that potential teachers are likely to place extra weight on the salary that applies to them in the short-run, as opposed to longer-term pay, when assessing the financial offer”* (ibid, paragraph 21; see also B33-B41). The STRB must not place too much weight on this statement. The Government’s evidence itself acknowledged the *“significant uncertainty”* and range of views on elasticity (ibid, B37-B47).
39. The Government itself notes that final year undergraduates consider teaching to be a *“badly paid”* career option (para 22). This is unlikely to be an attitude formed solely by noting the starting pay available (which those undergraduates actually under-estimated considerably, as noted in para 23). It will be formed by expectations of pay progression, prospects of promotion and most of all the expected relationship between pay and working time and workload.
40. Even more importantly, it is essential to remember that those recruited will be more likely to leave the profession if pay levels further on in their career remain uncompetitive and sustain the real terms cuts imposed since 2010. The Government’s proposals are based on the premise that it is possible to fool undergraduates into a move into teaching via an increase in the initial starting pay, and that consequently there is no reason to increase the pay levels to which those recruits will progress after as little as four years. The result will be that new recruits, experiencing the widespread problems of workload which currently prompt so many of them to leave teaching, will not even have the same level of annual pay increase to console them and influence their decision whether or not to leave. There is no discussion of the relative importance of the absolute pay level and the annual increase in pay in determining decisions to leave or stay in teaching. The latter could easily, in our view, be as important as the former.
41. The Government’s evidence discusses the issue of attracting teachers working in or considering working in other professions (ibid, B49). As we have set out to the STRB, this requires powerful and clear signals, not just on recruitment but also on retention. The Government’s evidence goes on to state that: *“It is not clear how potential teachers would view the changes to the structure as a whole.”* Our view is that the dismantling of the national pay structure that has already taken place significantly reduces transparency and fairness, reducing the ability of the profession to make a clear offer to serving and potential teachers on the key issue of pay progression. Any further pay differentiation would compound this damage.
42. The discussion in the Government’s evidence on starting pay (paragraphs 19 et seq) notes evidence that teacher starting pay compares poorly with other graduate professions. The research we commissioned from Incomes Data Research (IDR) and submitted to the STRB as part of our January evidence includes further evidence of how far teacher starting pay falls behind that of graduates in the wider economy.

43. We agree that a significant uplift to teacher starting pay, strongly signalled, is required to improve retention – but the Government needs to accept that such action is also required for all levels of the teacher pay structure. There is no logical reason why this principle of a strong pay signal would work for recruitment but should not also be used for retention. Indeed, the Government evidence goes on to state that: *“A range of international studies have highlighted the positive impact of pay on retention”* (paragraph 28).
44. The Government’s evidence notes that retention problems are *“particularly pronounced for new teachers”* (paragraph 27) but does not engage with the clear evidence that retention is worsening across the teacher career journey. The Government’s use of one study with limited variations in the response of turnover to pay increases (paragraph 28) is not an appropriate response to this key issue and certainly not sufficient to rebut our case that a 7 per cent increase for all teachers is needed.
45. The Government sets out data from the OECD (paragraphs 35-39), conceding that starting pay is *“comparatively low”* compared to other OECD countries but going on to say that pay after 15 years of experience compares *“more favourably”*.
46. The Government evidence does not note that the OECD also found that teacher pay is below the international average at all comparable levels of education. The OECD also noted increases in UK class sizes rise since 2005. Andreas Schleicher, OECD director for education and skills, said: *“There have been clear cuts and when you make cuts you have to make choices. You cut your teacher salaries; you increase your class sizes.”*¹
47. It also needs to be noted that, in England, the imposition of PRP and the removal of incremental progression to reflect teachers’ acquisition of skills and experience means that significantly more teachers will take longer to reach the maximum of the UPR or may not reach it at all.

Progression and advisory pay points (paragraphs 40-51)

48. The Government argues (paragraph 41) that its pay reforms have *“been successful in moving away from a system of automatic pay progression and establishing the link between pay and performance appraisal”*. This statement is of course incorrect: under the previous system, teachers did not progress on an automatic basis as progression was subject to satisfactory performance on the then Main Pay Scale and PRP had already been implemented for the threshold and the then Upper Pay Scale.

¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/oecd-study-uk-teachers-britain-youngest-pay-salaries-countries-a9099216.html>

49. The Government does not engage with the key point made by the NEU and other consultees, that the pay reforms have caused significant damage to teacher pay levels and teacher supply. We have noted previously the need for full evidence-based assessment of the reforms including an equality impact assessment, but the Government's evidence does not include proper consideration of these points.
50. The Government concedes (paragraph 42) that schools "*overwhelmingly continue to follow the previous spine point system*" – but does not seek to consider why this is the case and what implications this should have for its other proposals. It simply does not engage with the key point made by the NEU and other consultees, that teacher pay and supply must be supported by a return to a mandatory national pay structure.
51. The discussion at paragraph 43 of the Government's evidence highlights its failure to engage with the fundamental issues. It notes that a third of teachers leave the profession within the first five years, but instead of even raising the question as to whether this is influenced by pay levels simply argues that this is a reason for reducing the percentage increases between the points on the MPR.
52. The Government does "*not expect to see a change in the time typically taken by a classroom teacher*" to make pay progression from the bottom of the pay ranges to the top (paragraph 45). It is regrettable that the Government does not address the key issue of the major contribution that could be made to teacher supply of faster progression for all teachers, fully funded by the Government alongside the removal of the unjustified obstacles to progression faced by many teachers.
53. We simply do not accept the claim at paragraph 49 that the Government has presented "*a strong case*" for its approach to reform. The Government's evidence ignores key issues of direct relevance to the discussion on the teacher pay structure: the impact of PRP; the arguments for restoration of a national pay structure; and the contribution made to teacher supply by faster pay progression. The Government evidence refers to "*optimal pay structures*" (paragraph 50) – but the optimal pay structure for teachers would be characterised by recognition of the acquisition of professional expertise, fairness, transparency and the availability of competitive pay levels at all points of the pay structure.

Proposed approach to the pay award (paragraphs 52-84)

54. The NEU and other consultees have set out our views on the inadequacy of the Government's funding plans for schools and we refer the STRB to those views in relation to the discussion of this issue in the Government's evidence at paragraphs 52-53.

55. The Government argues that, based on its funding allocations, a 3 per cent increase in the total pay bill per teacher is appropriate. This is not, of course, the objective evidence-based approach that is required. Such an approach would identify the resources needed to address the serious teacher pay and supply issues, as well as to secure improved educational outcomes, rather than using an inadequate funding envelope to determine what will be necessarily limited options. We note in this context our call for the STRB to refuse to be constrained by the Government's politically motivated and misleading definition of affordability.
56. It is essential to recognise that this refusal to engage with the issue of the additional investment needed to restore the value of teacher pay and the ability of the profession to compete effectively in the graduate labour market is a fundamental flaw which undermines the approach and options set out by the Government evidence.
57. All of the three options set out by the Government involve a targeted approach to pay. Although the options do engage with the need for a significant increase in starting pay to respond to the major recruitment problems, they would mean the overwhelming majority of teachers seeing no significant restoration of the real terms cuts to pay since 2010. This is not a credible solution to the teacher supply crisis. Indeed, by creating widespread dismay amongst the large majority of teachers who would see pay increases of between 2.25 and 2.75 per cent, each of the Government's options would create new teacher supply problems.
58. The proposed approach on the London and Fringe pay areas (paragraphs 69-74) is based, despite the evidence of severe problems with recruitment in those areas, on lower increases to starting pay for teachers in London and the Fringe Area compared to teachers in the rest of England. This would have a significant impact in both the short and medium term. The Government argues that this is due to the "*more generous*" starting pay in those areas; but the Government does not provide any evidence for this change to differentials between London and the Fringe, and the rest of England.
59. The NEU evidence of January noted that a separate review of the current London pay system and the London labour market is required, based on a cost compensation approach and including consideration of the case for a London wide allowance. Such an evidence-based approach is of course required to this key issue in teacher pay.
60. The Government's evidence on the pay system in the longer term (paragraphs 78-84), like other key sections of its evidence, does not engage with major issues that are relevant. We remind the STRB in this context of the call in the NEU's January evidence for a long-term strategy on teacher pay, including monitoring pay levels and pay progression against other graduate professions. Such an evidence-based approach to the long-term issues is regrettably absent from the Government's evidence. Instead, the Government proposes a direction of travel only for the period to 2022-23 and bases its proposals on questionable claims.

Maintaining a supply of high-quality teachers and leaders (paragraphs 85-104)

61. We note the reference to workload at paragraph 87 and the Government's statement at paragraph 88 that its accountability approach *"can create unintended consequences that add unnecessary workload burdens and pressure."*
62. We are clear that the Government's assessment and accountability regimes, including the inspection regime, involve unnecessary additional workload and contribute to the teacher supply problem.
63. The Government must accept that its pay reforms have also created unnecessary additional workload and bureaucracy, as well as undermining appraisal and the teamwork approach essential in education.
64. Unsustainable workload is also a key driver of teacher supply problems and we refer the STRB in this context to the call in our January evidence for it to seek a remit to review workload issues – in particular, the STPCD provisions on working time and work/life balance and on professional obligations impacting on workload.
65. We have worked with the DfE on the issue of flexible working, which is rightly identified in the DfE's recruitment and retention strategy as a way to help teacher retention. Similarly, we are engaging positively with DfE on early career retention. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that financial incentives to stay in teaching (paragraphs 93-94) are no substitute for competitive pay levels and support for pay progression.
66. Improved pay levels for experienced teachers including school leaders are equally essential to securing long term commitment to teaching (paragraph 95) and to improving the supply line for leadership posts (paragraph 96).
67. In the context of the Government's comments on routes into teaching (paragraphs 99-104), we are clear that streamlining the number of routes into teaching is as important as streamlining the process of entering the profession.

NEU response to the Government proposals for the classroom teacher pay structure

68. We remain firm in our view that an immediate and fully funded pay increase of at least 7 per cent is required in September for all teachers, including experienced teachers as well as new entrants to the profession. This must be a uniform increase, undifferentiated in any way. We do not accept any of the proposed models as being an adequate response to the issues facing the system.
69. The NEU would welcome the restoration of national pay points. These should, however, be restored on a mandatory basis and should be based on the current recommended joint union values prior to any uplift recommended by the STRB.

NEU response to options for the Main and Upper Pay Ranges

70. The STRB has asked for views on the pros and cons of i) maintaining the status quo; ii) combining the MPR and UPR into a single classroom teacher pay ranges; and iii) maintaining a separate MPR and UPR but providing additional guidance to clarify the role of teachers on each pay range.
71. The NEU has long called for the removal of the threshold between the MPR and UPR and therefore continues to support the re-creation of a single scale as part of steps to remove PRP, restore prescribed pay points and promote faster and experience-based pay progression for teachers.
72. As always, the NEU remains very concerned at the often-deliberate misunderstanding of the responsibilities of UPR teachers by employers and managers who seek to require them to undertake additional responsibilities without payment when they should in fact be rewarded via an appropriate TLR.
73. There should be no question of clarifying the role of classroom teachers on each pay range. Their roles are the same. Their professional duties and working time obligations are the same. Where they undertake specific additional responsibilities in addition to their ordinary duties as classroom teachers, they are entitled to be considered for additional payment. They should not be expected to carry out extra work for free simply because they are more experienced and have progressed onto a pay range which was created to pay them more for teaching, not to impose new obligations upon them.
74. The NEOST evidence, for example, talks at para 51 about *“higher level responsibilities associated with the UPR”* and then about teachers *“relinquishing their UPR responsibilities”*. There are no such separate responsibilities. It is disappointing to see the national employers’ organisation suggest that there are. The STRB should not further exacerbate the problem by perpetuating this myth or by recommending the establishment of a difference which does not currently exist.
75. It is worth noting that the Government evidence says that the latest figures show the overall proportion of teachers in receipt of a TLR payment declining ((November 2018 compared to November 2017, *ibid*, C16). TLRs are much more likely to be paid in the secondary sector, with less than one in five nursery and primary classroom teachers being in receipt of TLRs. Much of this low proportion of teachers paid TLRs can be traced to the increasing tendency to require teachers on the UPR to undertake additional responsibilities without also paying the TLR payments which should be paid to them.

76. In summary, therefore, we do not as noted earlier accept the case for a pay increase focused only on the bottom of the pay structure; we believe that a similar level of increase is required throughout the pay structure, from its bottom to its top. We support the restoration of a single pay scales with prescribed scale points. We are also sympathetic to the creation of a shorter scale, better reflecting the period of time over which teachers acquire the range of skills necessary to merit the full “rate for the job.” If the STRB decided to support the DfE’s wish to increase starting pay but not the pay rates available further up the pay structure, it should certainly seriously consider the case for doing this by removing the lowest points of the MPR and shortening the structure. Creating a scale of no more than six points from the current MPR and UPR in that way would at least maintain the current value of each progression point, even though it would fail to institute the higher levels of pay needed at the top as well as the bottom of the structure.

NEU survey on teachers' pay and progression: the results

77. This annual National Education Union survey is the largest survey on teachers' pay increases and pay progression each year. This year's survey demonstrates that low pay and unfair progression continue to play a role in the current teacher retention crisis. Teachers cannot rely on an annual cost-of-living pay increase, despite Government guidance.

Key findings

78. The key findings are as follows:

Teachers' feelings about their pay

Among all respondents:

- almost two-thirds of teachers (63%) have considered quitting the profession because of low pay or concerns about unfairness in pay progression;
- well over half (58%) of teachers feel that they are underpaid compared to their contemporaries in other graduate professions.

Annual pay increases and pay scales

Among all respondents:

- just under half of respondents (49%) told us they had received a 2.75% cost-of-living increase for September 2019;
- some 10% of respondents said they had not been given a cost-of-living increase;
- over one third (39%) did not know whether they had received an increase.

Pay progression

Among those eligible to be considered for pay progression (49% of the total response):

- 10% still did not know the outcome of their pay progression decision when completing the survey in January/February 2020;
- 6% of respondents who did know the outcome had been denied progression, continuing a downward trend over several years;
- 15% of those teachers said that they had been explicitly told that the decision was due to funding or budgetary constraints rather than performance;

Among those turned down for progression:

- 93% had been given no indication during the year that they were failing to meet the required standards;
- 88% felt that the decision was unfair but the vast majority (89%) had chosen not to appeal the decision, often saying that they felt there was no point in doing so.

The survey response

79. The survey was sent by email to NEU teacher members in State funded schools and academies in January 2020. The questionnaire asked them about the annual cost-of-living pay increase in September 2019; their own pay progression in September 2019 if eligible; their views on their own pay and progression and on their school's pay policy, its application in cases of pay progression and its impact on appraisal; and their views on other matters in relation to teachers' pay.
80. In the absence of work by the DfE to collect meaningful data on pay increases and pay progression for individual teachers, this NEU survey provides the largest dataset on these issues. Just over 25,000 members gave information on their pay increase and pay progression arrangements, a significant sample.
81. Some of the findings of this year's survey have potentially been affected by the timing of pay decisions or indeed the timing of the survey. Whereas previous years' surveys were distributed in November or December, the delay in the announcement of the 2019 pay award and consequential decisions at school level led us to postpone this year's survey until after Christmas. This year, despite this delay (or possibly in part due to it), there is a significant increase in the numbers answering "don't know" on questions about their pay increase. Where relevant, we have therefore also provided an analysis for these questions with the "don't knows" removed.
82. This year's survey also shows a reduction compared to previous years in the proportion of respondents reporting that they were denied pay progression. In previous survey reports, we have recorded the caveat that the response may well have been overweight in terms of respondents denied progression due to a possible greater likelihood of such teachers responding to the survey. This year (and last year), we have put more emphasis on asking about the annual pay increase and we have also secured a far higher level of response. It may be, therefore, that this year we can omit that caveat regarding our survey findings. As we have said in previous years, however, there is certainly no reason to assume that respondents turned down for progression are not typical in respect of their characteristics or the reasons given for denial of progression.

The annual "cost-of-living" pay increase for September 2019

83. The survey asked about pay increases effective from September 2019, excluding any increase due to pay progression or promotion. Less than half of respondents (49%) told us they had received a 2.75% cost-of-living increase in line with the increase in the STPCD pay ranges.
84. A further 10% said they had not received any cost-of-living increase. While this is down from 18% last year, it is offset by a large rise in the number reporting that they did not know whether they had received an increase. This year, 39% of respondents told us that they did not know if they had received such an increase.

85. This lack of clarity in teachers' minds about whether they have received this 2.75% increase may partly be down to the fact that the survey was conducted later than usual, meaning that any pay increases were less fresh in the minds of respondents. It is more likely, however, that it is one more manifestation of the growing confusion and lack of transparency over teachers' pay, with more and more teachers becoming uncertain about their right to an annual cost-of-living increase and increasing difficulty in disentangling the cost-of-living increase and pay progression which arrive together in September each year.
86. Among respondents who were certain of the details over their pay increase, some 80% said they had received a 2.75% increase. A further 3% reported that they had received a different amount as a cost-of-living increase; while many were not sure how much they had received, the most commonly quoted figure was an increase of 2%. The remaining 17% of respondents in this group said they had not received any cost of living increase.
87. Teachers in primary schools were more likely than those in secondary schools to have been denied a cost-of-living pay increase. Excluding those who did not know their cost-of-living pay outcome, 19% of primary teachers told us they had not received a cost-of-living increase, compared to 14% of secondary teachers. In this year's survey, teachers in local authority maintained schools were slightly more likely to have been denied a cost of living increase than teachers in academies (18% vs 15%).
88. As in previous years, teachers who were female, non-white-British or disabled were less likely to have received a cost-of-living pay increase, as were those working part-time or on non-permanent contracts. Excluding those who said they did not know their cost-of-living increase outcome:
- 17% of women told us they had not received a pay award, compared to 11% of men;
 - 19% of those working part-time or other flexible working arrangements had been denied a pay award, compared to 15% of full-time teachers;
 - 20% of those who describe themselves as disabled had received no increase, compared to 16% of those who do not;
 - 17% of those who describe themselves as heterosexual had received no award, compared to 10% describing themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientations;
 - 14% of those reporting as White British had been denied a pay award, compared to 22% of those reporting other ethnic origins.
 - 15% of those on permanent contracts had been denied a pay award, compared to a much higher figure of 27% of those on other types of contracts

Dissatisfaction with pay rates and pay progression

89. A clear majority of teachers told us that they are unhappy with their current rates of pay, and that low pay and the unfair progression system have caused them to question their future in teaching.
90. We gave respondents two statements to consider:
- “poor levels of pay have sometimes made me think about switching to a different career”; and
 - “the unfairness of performance pay progression has sometimes made me think about leaving the profession”.
91. Almost two-thirds (63%) of all respondents identified with one or both of these statements. Members on the classroom pay ranges were much more likely to have considered quitting over low pay and unfair progression than those on the leadership scales. However, even among leaders, half of respondents had considered quitting over pay, progression, or both.
92. The numbers considering leaving are slightly lower than those recorded last year, which may reflect a broader range of responses including from a group more likely to have received pay progression when due. It may also be influenced, however, by respondents from last year’s survey having followed through on their threat to leave the profession.
93. The fact that almost two-thirds of teachers have considered quitting due to concerns over pay or progression is alarming. Another NEU survey conducted in spring 2019 found that 40% of respondents predicted they will no longer be working in education by 2024, and almost a fifth of all respondents to that survey (18%) expected to be gone within two years.

Teachers considering leaving due to pay or progression, by pay range				
Statement	MPR	UPR	Leadership pay range	All
Poor levels of pay have sometimes made me think about switching to a different career	28%	14%	20%	24%
The unfairness of performance pay progression has sometimes made me think about leaving the profession	16%	38%	11%	15%
Both of the above reasons have led me to consider alternative professions	24%	22%	19%	24%
I do not identify with any of the above statements	33%	27%	50%	37%

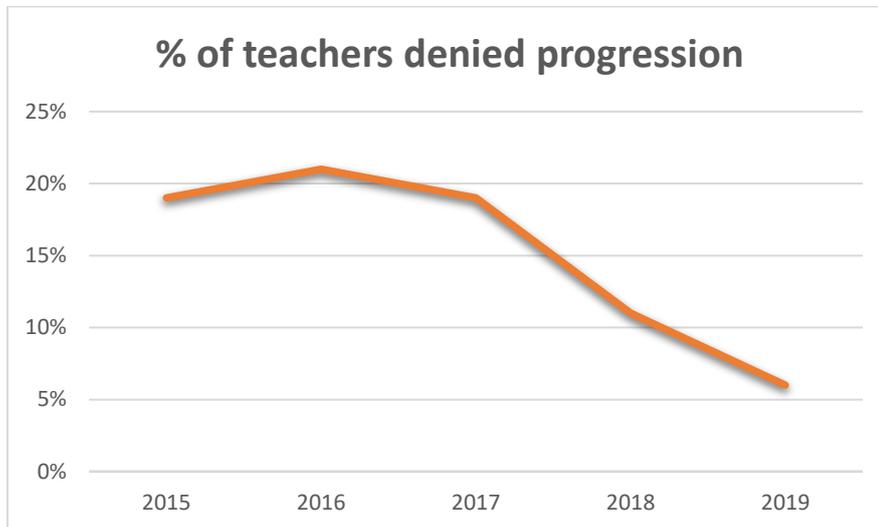
94. A clear majority of teachers feel they are underpaid given their job weight, role and responsibilities. Almost half (48%) felt they were paid less than they would expect, and another 10% felt they were paid significantly less than they would expect. Almost all the rest felt their pay was about what they would expect, with just 1% feeling they were paid more than they might expect.
95. The 40% saying their pay is about what they would expect is up significantly from last year's figure of 20%. This could reflect a greater satisfaction with pay levels, a slightly more optimistic view following the end of pay restraint, or simply a degrading of expectations as those who are most dissatisfied with pay and conditions in teaching leave the profession.

How teachers feel about pay levels compared to contemporaries in other graduate professions				
Statement	MPR	UPR	Leadership pay range	Overall
My current pay is significantly less than I would expect to be paid given my job weight, role and responsibilities.	12%	8%	7%	10%
My current pay is less than I would expect to be paid given my job weight, role and responsibilities.	52%	45%	38%	48%
My current pay is what I would expect to be paid given my job weight, duties and responsibilities.	35%	45%	52%	40%
My current pay is more than I would expect to be paid given my job weight, role and responsibilities.	1%	1%	3%	1%
My current pay is significantly more than I would expect to be paid given my job weight, role and responsibilities.	0%	0%	1%	0%

Pay progression for September 2019: Rates of progression

96. Just under half (49%) of respondents told us they had been eligible for pay progression in September 2019, a similar figure to previous years. Of the rest, 37% were ineligible because they were already at their scale maximum; 7% were new entrants to teaching; and a further 7% were eligible but chose not to apply.
97. In contrast to the widespread uncertainty over the annual pay increase, only 10% of those who said they were eligible for progression also said that they did not know the outcome.

98. Excluding those who did not yet know the outcome of their application, only 6% of respondents reported that they had been denied progression. This is down from 11% in September 2018, and 19% the year before.



Pay progression for September 2019: Denial of progression

99. Looking at those who were denied progression, the vast majority (93%) were once again given no indication during the year that they were failing to meet the required standards. For many years the NEU and its predecessor unions have highlighted DfE guidance that there should be "no surprises" in progression outcomes and that any concerns over performance should be raised and addressed during the appraisal cycle. However, this guidance has been followed in less than 10% of cases in every year we have conducted this survey.
100. Even where teachers were given advance warning that they were not meeting required standards, they were not generally given sufficient support to address any issues. Just over a third (34%) had received no support despite being told they were not meeting standards, while most of the rest either said support came too late (18%) or was of limited value (32%). Just 16% of respondents who received warning that they were not meeting standards had received support with which they were satisfied.
101. Where reasons were given for teachers' failure to progress, 25% of teachers said they were told they had failed to meet objectives for pupil progress. Among other reasons given, 17% were told they had not shown sufficient wider contribution to the school, and 16% were told they had failed to meet other objectives.

102. Some 15% of teachers given a reason for their failure to progress said that they were explicitly told that the decision was due to funding or budgetary constraints, a proportion broadly in line with previous years. Given the national funding squeeze, it is likely that in many other cases funding concerns were a factor in the decision but not specifically mentioned. The NEU has argued for many years that pay progression decisions are often based not on actual performance standards but on affordability. This year's survey continues to demonstrate the truth of that.
103. Around nine in ten (88%) teachers who were denied progression felt the decision was unfair. This figure has stayed broadly consistent around the 90% mark for many years without showing any improvement.
104. Despite the continuing clear feeling among respondents that the decisions to deny them progression are almost always unfair, their inclination to appeal continues to be far lower than might be expected. Just 11% of those who were denied progression had appealed against the decision. This was in part because many respondents continue to be unaware that this was an option – over three-quarters (77%) of those turned down for progression had not been informed of their right to appeal, up from last year's figure of 72%. A greater influence, however, continues to be the widespread feeling that there is no real point to appealing despite the right to do so.
105. Of those who did appeal against a denial of progression, only 13% told us their appeal had been successful. By contrast, 30% had already seen their appeal rejected, while 57% did not yet know the outcome.

Pay progression for September 2019: Progression by pay range and role

106. Teachers on the upper pay range were most likely to have been denied progression, being three times more likely to miss out than those on the main range. This is comparable to the picture of previous years. Of those on the upper pay range who were eligible and who knew the outcome of their pay progression decision, 12% told us they had been turned down for progression. This compares to 4% of teachers on the main pay range and 6% of teachers on the leadership range whose applications had been rejected.

Teachers who received pay progression effective 1 September 2019 (eligible & knew outcome)				
	MPR	UPR	Leadership pay range	Overall
Denied progression	4%	12%	6%	6%
Received progression	96%	88%	94%	94%

107. As noted earlier, these are significantly lower figures than in previous years and we will be examining them further. It may be that progression rates have changed significantly; or the survey sample has changed; or that other factors are at work of which we are not yet aware.

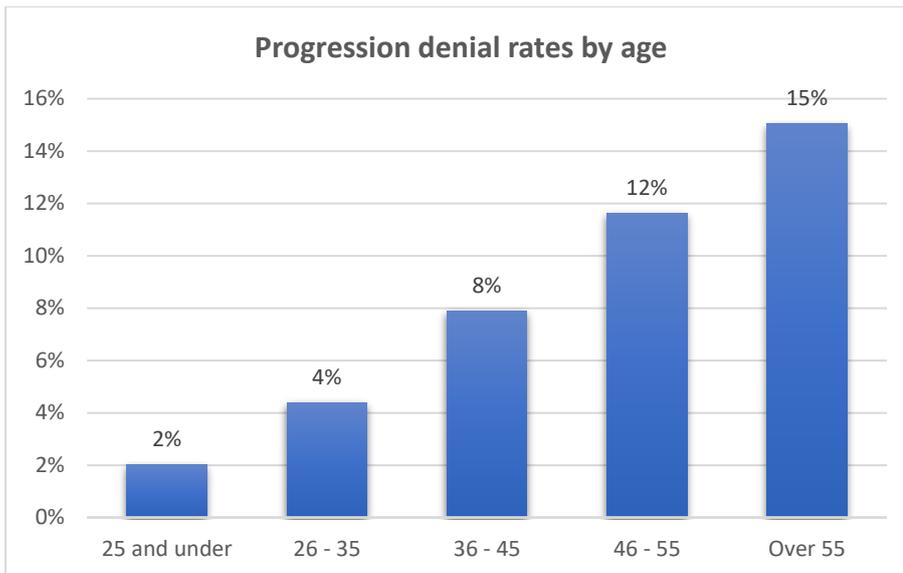
Pay progression for September 2019: Progression by school sector and phase

108. Progression rates in September 2019 showed no significant variation between academies and local authority-maintained schools. This is a departure from previous years' iterations of this survey, in which teachers in academies were more likely to be denied progression. This change may well reflect the fact of the ongoing debate in the academies sector on discontinuing PRP, potentially making progression less likely to be denied in that sector than in previous years.

109. There was also no difference in the rates of progression between primary and secondary schools in this year's survey. In each phase, 6% of teachers who were eligible for progression and knew their outcome had been denied progression.

Pay progression for September 2019: Progression by teacher characteristics

110. Older teachers were much more likely to be denied progression than younger counterparts. Some 15% of teachers over the age of 55 who were eligible to progress and knew the outcome of their decision had been denied pay progression. At the other end of the scale, just 2% of teachers aged 25 and under had been refused progression. Although some of this is linked to older teachers being more likely to be on the upper pay range, similar patterns of progression denial by age are visible within each of the main, upper and leadership scales when analysed separately.



111. Men and women were equally likely to progress, with no significant difference in progression rates by gender apparent either overall or within any of the separate teacher pay scales. This follows a similar lack of gender differential in last year's survey, following a number of years when female teachers were more likely to be denied progression. There were also no significant differences in progression rate by sexual orientation.
112. Members on maternity leave were once again denied progression more often than other counterparts. Progression was denied to eligible members on maternity leave in 9% of cases where the outcome was known, compared to 6% of members not on maternity leave. In almost a third of cases (30%) where a member on maternity leave had been denied progression, their absence due to pregnancy or maternity had been specifically mentioned as a reason for denial of progression, contravening DfE guidance.
113. Progression rates varied less by ethnic origin than in some previous surveys. The only exception was that teachers who described themselves as black or black British were slightly more likely to be denied progression. Some 8% of respondents in this group who were eligible to progress and had been told the outcome were turned down, compared to 6% of respondents reporting other ethnic origins.
114. Teachers who identified themselves as disabled were twice as likely to have been denied pay progression as respondents who did not. Disabled teachers had been turned down for progression in 13% of cases where the outcome was known, compared to 6% of teachers without a disability. This finding is consistent with previous surveys.

115. As in previous years, teachers on part-time contracts, working as a job share or with other flexible arrangements were refused pay progression more often than those working full-time. Full-time teachers who were eligible and knew the outcome of their progression decision had been turned down in 5% of cases, compared to 10% of those on part-time or other flexible arrangements.
116. Similarly, respondents who were on fixed or other non-permanent contracts had been denied progression in 10% of cases, compared to 6% of those on permanent contracts.

Pay progression for September 2019: Impact on appraisal

117. Three-quarters of teachers (75%) told us that at least some of their appraisal objectives were linked to pupil performance outcomes. The figure was slightly higher in primary schools (78%) than in secondaries.
118. Meanwhile, almost three-quarters of respondents (71%) said that they had had to produce evidence for their appraisal in order to show that they had met their objectives. This requirement was more common in secondary schools (76%) than in primaries (68%).
119. Respondents had a more mixed response when asked about how the PRP system had affected the usefulness of their appraisal for professional development purposes. Excluding those who offered no opinion, 27% said it had had a negative impact, while 52% said it had made no change to the usefulness of appraisal and just 22% said it had had a positive impact. It is likely that this ambiguity is in part because fewer teachers now remember an appraisal system before performance-related pay formed part of it.

Other issues: Pay structures and policies

120. Just under half (49%) of respondents told us that their school had a written pay progression policy. Some 7% said they had no written policy, but 44% of teachers did not know. When asked whether their school's progression policy was fair, the presence of a written policy was clearly important. Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents whose school had a written progression policy thought the policy was fair. By contrast, where the policy was not in a written form, just 20% of respondents thought it was fair.
121. Four-fifths (79%) of teachers said their school used the traditional structure of a six-point main pay range and a three-point upper pay range, unchanged from the figure in last year's survey and almost identical to figures over the past four years. Just 5% of respondents said that their school had moved away from this approach, showing once again that the vast majority of schools do not want, and are not using, the flexibility to adopt different pay structures.

Teachers' comments

122. Below are just a few of the thousands of teachers' comments we received on pay and progression:

"Pay needs to reflect the amount of hours teachers work, including out of school. As a teacher of 14 years, I have struggled to raise the money to buy my house & only just make ends meet each month. This should not be how a qualified, highly experienced & hardworking professional should be living."

"I am struggling to afford a one bed house, food and transport etc on a teacher's salary"

"I feel burned out and the prospect of continuing until I am 67 is impossible to face."

"[Performance-related pay] does not motivate me. It just makes me anxious, worried and stressed."

"I've been considering changing schools for about 4 years (since joining an academy) but have been unable to due to having to take a pay cut if I want to work in schools in my local area. I'm on the upper pay scale but know that I'd be expected to move down to the main pay scale in most schools"

"To link pay progression of teachers to the performance on the day of another (let alone a child) is the most unfair system that anyone could ever have dreamed up!"

"[PRP has] been an appalling attack on the professionalism of teachers and it will take us years to recover from the recruitment and retention crisis caused by this ridiculous policy."

"The failure of teachers' pay to keep up with inflation has been grossly unfair. It feels like another step at devaluing the progression... Clearly the fact that most teachers love their job is being exploited."

"As schools have no money left in their budgets, if you move to the next pay scale a TA could lose their job and make your job significantly more difficult."

"[PRP is] a broken and discredited system which provides leeway for unreasonable targets to be set ... and for unfair decisions to be made which impact not just on teachers' - especially young teachers - standards of living but also on their pension further down the line ... With schools being underfunded - and many in with deficit budgets - it is all too common to see headteachers making arbitrary decisions on pay based on budgetary calculations."