



Teachers' Pay and Progression for September 2018

Survey Report by the National Education Union
January 2019

TEACHERS' PAY AND PROGRESSION FOR SEPTEMBER 2018

"I don't know of any other profession where 11 years of experience in a graduate profession means that take home salary only just covers rent, bills and food."

"It's jumping through hoops, isn't it? It would demean any professional to have to do this, not just teachers. It exemplifies a lack of professional trust."

"I would not advise any graduate to become a teacher now because of the likely lack of pay progression. I feel privileged to be a teacher, so what a shame it is to say this."

This annual National Education Union survey is the largest survey on teachers' pay increases and pay progression each year.

This year's survey demonstrates once more that recent changes to the school teachers' pay system mean that teachers cannot now rely on an annual cost-of-living pay increase, even where funding is provided by Government for the purpose, and that pay progression remains at best uncertain, with certain groups being particularly likely to face unfair treatment and even unlawful discrimination.

KEY FINDINGS

Teachers' feelings about their pay

Among all respondents:

- over two-thirds of teachers (70%) have considered quitting the profession because of low pay or concerns about unfairness in pay progression; and
- almost four-fifths (79%) of teachers feel that they are underpaid compared to their contemporaries in other graduate professions.

Annual pay increases

Among all respondents:

- almost one in five teachers (18%) said that they were not receiving an annual cost-of-living pay increase for 2018, despite DfE funding for this; and
- only around half of teachers had received a cost-of-living increase in line with the DfE's general uplift in pay scales.

Pay progression

Among those who had been eligible to be considered for pay progression (46% of the total response):

- 17% still did not know the outcome of their pay progression decision when completing the survey in December 2018;
- 11% of teachers who did know the outcome had been turned down;
- teachers who had been pregnant or on maternity leave were almost twice as likely to have been denied progression (19 per cent), with half of these being explicitly told this was why they had been denied progression;
- teachers working in academies, teachers working part-time, disabled teachers and teachers from a Black or Asian background were also more likely to be denied progression than teachers generally; and
- 19% of those denied progression said they had been explicitly told that the decision was due to funding or budgetary constraints rather than performance.

Among those turned down for progression:

- 92% had been given no indication during the year that they were failing to meet the required standards; and
- 90% felt that the decision was unfair but almost four-fifths (79%) had chosen not to appeal the decision, often saying that it would be a waste of time or have undesirable consequences.

THE SURVEY RESPONSE

The survey was sent by email to NEU members in December 2018. The questionnaire asked them about the application of annual cost-of-living pay increases in September 2018, as well as their own pay progression in September 2018 if eligible; their views on both their own pay and progression and the 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.

In the absence of a national exercise by the DfE to collect meaningful disaggregated data on pay increases and pay progression for individual teachers, this survey provides the largest dataset on these issues.

This year's survey almost 34,000 responses, almost treble last year's figure of 12,375. This hugely increased response, due to a new system for distribution and follow-up, has greatly increased the weight and value of the survey. The key findings for this significantly larger response show some differences from previous years, confirming our notes of caution that previous years' responses might have been overweight in terms of those turned down for progression (as individuals with a grievance are more likely to take the time to tell their story). This year's far larger dataset may have gone a long way towards addressing that issue. As in previous years, however, there is no reason to assume that the respondents turned down for progression are not typical in respect of their characteristics or the reasons given for denial of progression, and on many of those matters the results remain, unfortunately, unchanged.

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON PAY LEVELS & PAY PROGRESSION

Overwhelmingly, teachers told us that they are unhappy with their current rates of pay, and that low pay and the unfair progression system had caused them to question their future in teaching.

This year, we asked respondents to consider two statements: “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”. Over two-thirds (70%) of all respondents identified with one or both of these statements. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents on the main pay range identified with one or both statements, and even on the leadership scale more than half (56%) of respondents had considered a career change due to low pay, unfair progression or both.

At a time when teacher retention rates have fallen, recruitment targets have been missed for six consecutive years and pupil numbers continue to rise, the fact that more than two-thirds of teachers have considered quitting over pay or progression should be a cause for real concern. This new finding follows an [NEU workload survey](#) conducted in late 2017, in which 81% of respondents said they had considered leaving in the previous 12 months as a result of workload.

Teachers considering leaving the profession due to pay or progression, by pay range				
Statement	Main pay range	Upper pay range	Leadership pay range	All respondents
Poor levels of pay have sometimes made me think about switching to a different career	30%	24%	26%	27%
The unfairness of performance pay progression has sometimes made me think about leaving the profession	19%	22%	15%	18%
Both of the above reasons have led me to consider alternative professions	25%	25%	16%	24%
I do not identify with any of the above statements	25%	30%	44%	30%

Almost four-fifths (79%) of teachers also told us that they felt underpaid compared to contemporaries in other graduate professions. Exactly 50% of respondents said that their pay is less than they would expect, given their job weight, role and responsibilities. A further 28% said that their pay was *significantly* less than they would expect. Just a fifth (20%) of respondents felt their pay was what they would expect, and less than 2% felt they were overpaid.

As might be expected, dissatisfaction over pay was greatest among those at the lower end of the pay range. Some 81% of teachers on the main pay range felt underpaid, but even among respondents on the leadership pay range, 71% said they were paid less than they would expect.

How teachers feel about pay levels compared to contemporaries in other graduate professions				
Statement	Main pay range	Upper pay range	Leadership pay range	Overall
My current pay is significantly less than I would expect to be paid given my job weight, role and responsibilities.	29%	24%	27%	28%
My current pay is less than I would expect to be paid given my job weight, role and responsibilities.	52%	51%	44%	50%
My current pay is what I would expect to be paid given my job weight, duties and responsibilities.	18%	24%	27%	20%
My current pay is more than I would expect to be paid given my job weight, role and responsibilities.	1%	1%	1%	1%
My current pay is significantly more than I would expect to be paid given my job weight, role and responsibilities.	0%	0%	0%	0%

A selection of the thousands of comments teachers submitted in response to this question can be found at the end of this report.

ANNUAL COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR SEPTEMBER 2018

The survey asked about annual cost-of-living pay increases effective from September 2018, excluding any increase due to pay progression or promotion.

Despite the STRB's recommendation that all pay and allowance ranges for teachers and school leaders be uplifted by 3.5%, the Secretary of State chose instead to apply this increase only to those on the main and unqualified pay ranges. Lower increases of 2% and 1.5% were applied to the minima and maxima of the upper and leadership pay ranges respectively. Although grant funding was provided to schools to support the cost of pay increases, the Secretary of State again stopped short of directing all schools to provide these increases to individual teachers.

According to our survey, just under one in five teachers (18%) stated that they were not receiving a cost of living pay increase in September 2018. Although this is a small fall from a figure of 21% in last year's survey, a further 24% said that at the time of completing the survey they still did not know if they were going to receive an increase for September.

The DfE's decision to apply different uplifts to the different pay ranges and ignore the advice of the STRB for a uniform increase has clearly caused confusion among teachers and schools. Only around half of respondents have received annual cost-of-living increases in line with the DfE's general uplift to the minima and maxima of their scales, as anticipated by the DfE in providing its additional funding to schools, while only 22% of the whole sample of teachers in our survey told us that they had received the 3.5% figure originally recommended by the STRB for all teachers. While this is worrying, it is of far greater concern that so many teachers said that they have been told they will receive no cost-of-living pay increase at all.

Teachers receiving a cost of living increase from September 2018				
	Main pay range	Upper pay range	Leadership pay range	Overall
Pay increase outcome not yet known	24%	25%	18%	24%
No increase	18%	18%	18%	18%
1.5% cost of living increase	4%	9%	55%	10%
2% cost of living increase	7%	43%	4%	23%
3.5% cost of living increase	45%	3%	2%	22%
Another amount	3%	2%	2%	3%

Note: **bold** figures denote the Secretary of State's recommended uplift for that pay range

Teachers in local authority-maintained schools were more likely not to have received a cost-of-living increase (20%) than those in academies and free schools (16%). This difference is due in part to the fact that teachers in secondary schools, where academisation is more common, were less likely to have been denied a cost-of-living increase than those in primary schools. However, when looking at primary and secondary responses separately we see that teachers in LA-maintained schools were more likely to report that they had not received a cost-of-living increase in September.

Teachers were more likely not to have received a cost-of-living increase if they were female, disabled, non-White-British or worked part-time. (White British, non-disabled male teachers on full-time contracts were denied a cost-of-living increase just 14% of the time.)

To break this down:

- 19% of women told us they had not received a cost-of-living increase, compared to 15% of men;
- 21% of those working part-time or other flexible working arrangements were denied a cost-of-living increase, compared to 18% of full-time teachers;
- 21% of those who described themselves as disabled received no cost-of-living increase, compared to 18% of those who did not;
- 18% of those who described themselves as heterosexual received no cost-of-living increase, compared to 17% describing themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientations;
- 28% of those who described themselves as transgender received no cost-of-living increase, compared to 18% of those who did not (the sample was only 25 respondents who reported as transgender);
- 17% of those reporting as White British were denied a cost-of-living increase, compared to 20% reporting other ethnic origins.

PAY PROGRESSION FOR SEPTEMBER 2018

Rates of progression

Just under half (46%) of respondents to this year's survey were eligible to be considered for pay progression. The remaining 54% of respondents comprised teachers at the maximum of the upper pay range or their leadership range or otherwise ineligible (40%); teachers who had chosen not to apply for progression (8%); and new entrants to teaching in 2018 (6%).

Compared to previous years, decisions seem to have been made more promptly, in line with long-standing DfE guidance. This year only 17% of those eligible for progression still did not know the outcome of their pay progression when completing the survey, compared to 25% last year. Part of this effect will be due to a slightly later survey date for this year (and also possibly the much larger sample). Nevertheless, quicker decisions, greater clarity on pay and fewer teachers left in limbo are to be welcomed.

Progression rates themselves have also increased significantly. Excluding those who still did not know the outcome of their pay progression application, some 11% of those eligible were turned down for progression in September 2018. This compares to rates of 19% in the 2017 survey and 21% in the 2016 survey.

We have noted earlier that the hugely increased response this year may have led to a more accurate result in terms of this particular matter (while not undermining the representative nature of other findings from previous years). If it is not simply a sampling effect, it is not clear exactly what else has driven this fall in the numbers being denied progression. It may be that teacher shortages and increased numbers of teachers leaving the profession mean schools are less likely to deny progression as a cost-saving measure. Retaining existing teachers is more cost effective than recruiting new staff, and it is possible that schools are deciding that the relatively low cost of increasing progression is better than the risk of greater expense due to losing staff.

Denial of progression

Of those who were denied progression, once again the vast majority (92%) were given no indication during the year that they were failing to meet the required standards. DfE guidance is that there should be "no surprises" and that any concerns should be raised and addressed during the appraisal cycle. However, in practice this guidance appears to have been respected in less than 10% of cases year after year.

Among teachers turned down for progression, the most common reason given was failure to meet objectives for pupil progress, cited by 32% of respondents. However, 19% respondents said that they were explicitly told that the decision was due to funding or budgetary constraints, up from 17% in last year's survey and 15% the year before. 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. Clearly, as we have identified before, many pay progression decisions are based not on actual performance standards but on affordability.

Despite proportionately fewer teachers being denied progression this year, a strong sense of dissatisfaction remains among those whose application was turned down. Some 90% of those who were denied progression felt that the decision was unfair, up from 88% twelve months before.

Despite the feeling of unfairness reported by the vast majority of those turned down for progression, some 79% of these teachers decided not to appeal against the decision, in line with last year's figure of 78%. Men were slightly more likely to appeal against a decision than women, but by a much smaller margin than in previous surveys.

Where teachers had submitted an appeal, most had not heard the outcome at the time of completing the survey. As in previous years, a large majority (72%) of those denied progression said they were not informed of their right to appeal by their appraiser or headteacher.

Other than being unaware of the right to appeal, other common reasons teachers did not appeal progression outcomes included a feeling that there was no point; concern over the stress it would cause them; and fear of reprisals. Some 10% of those who gave reasons for choosing not to appeal told us that they had left either their school or the profession altogether or intended to do so.

Progression by pay range

Teachers on the main pay range were once again the least likely to be denied pay progression where eligible, while those on the upper scale were most likely to be refused. However, on each of the pay ranges the proportion of teachers denied progression is lower than in the last survey (or, to put it another way, progression rates are higher on each pay range).

Teachers who received pay progression effective 1 September 2018 (eligible & knew outcome)					
	Main pay range	Threshold	Upper pay range	Leadership pay range	Overall
Denied progression	6%	24%	24%	12%	11%
Received progression	94%	76%	76%	88%	89%

At the top of the main pay range, teachers can apply for progression through a 'threshold' onto the upper pay range scale. This year, around a quarter (24%) of teachers eligible for and applying for progression through the threshold were denied. In line with the general trend, this is a lower number than last year (28%) but still confirms the fact that significant numbers of teachers find themselves stuck at the top of the main pay range and receiving no progression payments. The proportion of respondents at the maximum of the main range who said they had considered quitting over unfair progression was markedly higher than teachers elsewhere on the main pay range (51% compared to 43%).

Teachers eligible for progression on the upper pay range were four times more likely to be denied progression than those eligible on the main pay range, in line with previous years' findings. Progression rates were higher among those eligible for progression on the leadership range.

Progression by school sector and phase

As in previous years, progression was more likely to be denied in academies and free schools (13% of cases) than in LA-maintained schools (10%). This differential was similar for both the primary and secondary phases when analysed separately.

Compared to respondents in the LA-maintained sector, teachers in academies and free schools were more likely to say their school has a pay progression policy, but also more likely to believe it is unfair. In addition, respondents in academies and free schools were more likely to feel PRP had created extra workload and had a negative impact on the usefulness of their appraisal. All of these trends were broadly unchanged from last year.

This year teachers in primary schools were slightly less likely to be denied progression on the main pay range than those in secondary schools, but more likely to be turned down for progression through the threshold and on the upper pay range. Secondary teachers on the leadership range were significantly less likely to progress than those in primary schools.

Characteristics of teachers denied progression

Once again, part-time teachers were significantly more likely to be denied progression this year than their full-time counterparts. Some 19% of part-time teachers were turned down, compared to 10% of those on full-time contracts. This trend was repeated at most points in the pay structure, with part-time teachers more likely to be denied progression on the main pay range, through the threshold and on the upper pay range. On the leadership range, however, part-time teachers were less likely to be turned down.

Overall, men and women were equally likely to be denied progression in this year's survey. In previous surveys women had generally been more likely to be rejected for progression. However, this year men were less likely to be rejected for threshold progression onto the upper pay range than women (18% compared to 26% of cases), suggesting that a gender-based glass ceiling may exist at the top of the main pay range.

White British teachers continue to benefit from better progression rates than colleagues reporting other ethnic origins, particularly through the threshold and on the upper pay range. Overall, White British teachers were denied progression 11% of the time, compared to 13% for Asian/Asian British respondents and 15% for Black/Black British teachers.

Teachers denied progression from September 2018 (eligible & knew outcome)				
Ethnic origin	Main pay range	Threshold	Upper pay range	All
All respondents	6%	24%	24%	11%
White British	5%	22%	22%	11%
All non-White British	5%	28%	27%	12%
Asian/Asian British	4%	34%	29%	13%
Black/Black British	7%	24%	38%	15%
White other	4%	19%	23%	11%

Looking at the upper pay range, Black/Black British teachers were denied progression in over a third of cases (38%), compared to 29% for Asian/Asian British teachers and just 22% for their White British counterparts. Over a third of eligible Asian/Asian British teachers (34%) were denied progression through the threshold from the main to the upper pay range. This compared to 24% of Black/Black British teachers and 22% of their White British colleagues.

Some 20% of those describing themselves as disabled were denied progression, compared to 11% of those who did not. This differential was less pronounced on the main pay range, but disabled teachers were much more likely to be turned down for threshold progression (40% of those applying were rejected), as well as facing greater obstacles to progression through the upper and leadership pay ranges.

As with last year's survey, sexual orientation made little difference to progression rates, with 11% of heterosexual teachers being denied progression compared to 9% of those identifying as gay, lesbian or other sexual orientations. All of the respondents describing themselves as transgender who were eligible for pay progression received it, although this group comprised only 11 respondents.

Respondents who were absent from their school due to pregnancy, maternity, disability, sickness or treatment were more likely to be denied progression than other teachers. When PRP was extended across all pay ranges without an equality impact assessment, the NEU's predecessor unions warned the DfE that this would result in discriminatory outcomes. Sadly, this has indeed been the case.

Some 19% of respondents who told us they were absent due to pregnancy or maternity leave during the 2017-18 school year were denied progression. In exactly half of these cases (50%), the employer specifically cited their pregnancy or maternity absence as a reason for denying them progression, contravening DfE guidance.

Compared to an overall rate of 11% of eligible teachers being denied progression:

- 32% of respondents who told us they were absent for at least a month due to disability during the 2017-18 school year were denied progression;
- 26% of respondents who told us they were absent for at least a month due to sickness during the 2017-18 school year were denied progression; and
- 17% of respondents who told us they had been absent from work at least once a month to attend hospital or clinic for medical treatment during the 2017-18 school year were denied progression.

Impact of performance-related progression on appraisal

Respondents to our survey had generally felt that the PRP system caused extra workload while diminishing the usefulness of appraisals. Responses to survey questions over the impact of PRP on appraisals have been almost identical in each of the past three years, which suggests that confidence in the performance-related pay and appraisal system has not grown over three consecutive surveys.

On workload, some 47% of respondents said their PRP appraisal had caused them extra work, as opposed to 38% who said it did not. Among appraisers, 54% reported that appraising others had caused significant extra work, compared to 41% who said it did not.

Teachers were asked how the PRP system had affected the usefulness of their appraisal for professional development purposes. Some 39% told us that PRP had made their appraisal less useful for their own development, as opposed to 24% who said it had no impact and just 9% who said the effect was positive. Among appraisers, 44% said PRP had negatively impacted the usefulness of appraisals for professional development, while 25% said it had no impact and 14% said it had a positive effect.

OTHER ISSUES: PAY STRUCTURES AND POLICIES

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, with just 6% saying that their school had moved away from this approach. These figures are almost identical to those in each of the last three surveys, showing once again that the vast majority of schools do not want, and are not using, the flexibility to adopt different pay structures. Even within free schools, two thirds (66%) of respondents said their workplace had adopted an old-style pay structure.

Although schools have generally rejected flexible pay structures, the linking of pay progression to appraisal is now routine. Some 81% of teachers told us that pay progression was linked to appraisal in their school, compared to only 7% saying it was not. Meanwhile, 74% of respondents said that their own 2017-18 objectives were linked to pupil performance.

Just over half (51%) of respondents told us that their school had a written pay progression policy. Only 10% said they did not have a policy, but 39% of teachers did not know. Only just over a third (37%) of respondents thought that their school's pay progression policy was fair, a similar proportion to previous years. Almost a third (31%) thought it was unfair.

TEACHERS' COMMENTS

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

"We are absolutely overworked and significantly underpaid. When you consider all we do to educate, then we have to be social workers & life coaches... We should not have to live in debt bearing in mind the commitment and integrity we give to this work, it's not right."

"You get what you pay for. Pay poorly and you will ultimately get worse, not better, standards. Simple enough."

"I hate the PRP process and often feel like not signing the sheet. It happens at a time when you are working your socks off anyway and you want to say it is up to them to prove you haven't pulled your weight."

"It's a farcical system. I feel most sorry for the younger teachers who are often eating cereal by the end of the month because their pay does not cover basic living costs."

"In a profession where I already feel undervalued, overworked, undertrained and underpaid, it is a kick in the teeth to have to go through this ridiculous annual process."

"I can't get a mortgage for a 1 bed flat within a 20-minute drive of the school I teach at! Surely something is wrong."

"Teachers work unpaid overtime to a huge degree and the pay progression system is a slap in the face for hard working individuals. [Studies show] that all children do not learn in the same way, yet we still use pupil progress as a way to validate the effectiveness of a teacher."

"My biggest criticism would be how easy it is to get a pay rise by moving schools. I could very easily negotiate higher pay for less experience. I could stay at my school for 5 years and be paid less than if I moved. It doesn't incentivise commitment. It does the exact opposite."

"PRP doesn't feel like a performance tool, more of a method to save schools money."

"As a teacher my first priority should be to ensuring outstanding learning for my class. Asking me to justify my pay by gathering evidence is not something that was mentioned in my training."

"I cannot survive on my pay - I have 2 children, a mortgage and feel like I survive on the bread line."

"I was not alerted to any underperformance during the year and my mid-year review said I was on track to pass. The decision to deny me pay progression came out of the blue."

"I was on maternity leave this year. For the previous year I had worked very hard and I was not given any indication that anyone was unhappy with my progress."

"Completion of appraisal documents is very time consuming, the increase depends on the school and pupils rather than performance, and schools can justify not paying someone just by saying they haven't met a target with no way to measure it."

"I can't afford to rent or buy. I have to live with relatives. This is absolutely demoralising and doesn't make me feel like the government values teachers at all."

"It makes you feel like you are "playing the game" to ensure all students have made expected progress."

"Older, experienced teachers on higher salary scales are targeted to be managed out. Lack of pay portability means that the school can pick and choose what to pay."

"I dropped from UPR to MPR when I moved to this school two years ago - they explained they couldn't afford to pay me more despite recognising I deserved more... It is so uncomfortable to start a new job feeling that your experience is not being fairly valued and your ability to earn more is constrained by the school's finances."

"I love my job and am not ready to leave the school system yet - but it is incredibly easy to compare myself to young professional friends in different industries who have jumped pay scales much more quickly than I have and are now on higher wages."

"I love teaching but am losing the motivation to ride out this storm much longer."

"I don't know of any other profession where 11 years of experience in a graduate profession means that take home salary only just covers rent, bills and food."

"I cannot emphasise enough the impact that PRP has on teaching - it demotivates me significantly as I do not have control over all aspects of the students' academic journey."

"I was not given any information on appeals or timescale. But then I was told the deadline had passed."

“It is incredibly disheartening to be judged on the outcome of children when they are human beings and not robots that do exactly what you ask them to.”

“By not recognising UPS status when you move jobs, years of experience are counted for nothing. This does not encourage mobility between schools.”

“PRP has made appraisal a paper exercise about form filling and evidence gathering rather than a conversation about the teacher. It makes students a means to the teacher's end.”

“This is killing teaching, a ridiculous waste of time and effort.”

“Pay builds up nicely based on experience but it starts too low and stops too fast.”

“I've given up on the thought of UPS - for the little pay increase, the workload increases massively. With a young family I can't afford to do more work at home.”

“The simple fact is that to get a pay rise it's easier and more lucrative for you to change jobs rather than stay in the school you are at.”

“The problem is workload as well as pay. If we got paid for every hour we spent doing school related work, the pay would be amazing.”

“This pay progression system encourages teachers to set target grades lower than they are, or grade students above their actual capabilities. The real motivation and commitment to teaching becomes clouded.”

“PRP is flawed - targets are unrealistic, and if everything is related to performance then why should we bother with the extra stuff that teaching should be about.”

“I don't actually know what you have to do to get pay progression any more.”

“I would not advise any graduate to become a teacher now because of the likely lack of pay progression. I feel privileged to be a teacher, so what a shame it is to say this.”

“I cannot make any polite comments, so I will refrain from making any.”