



***Supplementary Submission to the  
School Teachers' Review Body***

***National Education Union  
February 2019***

## **Introduction**

- 1 The NEU submission of January 2019 set out our views on the remit given to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) by the Secretary of State. The joint union statement of January 2019 from ASCL, NAHT, NEU and Voice highlighted the consensus in the profession on the key issues in the STRB remit.
- 2 The supplementary joint statement from ASCL, NAHT, NEU and Voice notes the consensus amongst STRB consultees on the key issues and the failure of the Government to engage with those issues.
- 3 This supplementary NEU submission responds in detail to the evidence presented to the STRB by other consultees and in particular to issues raised by the Government's evidence to the STRB of January 2019.

## **Teacher recruitment and retention is in crisis**

- 4 The Government's evidence seeks to downplay the extent of the recruitment and retention problems. The Government says that teacher recruitment is "a challenge in some subjects" (paragraph 5). In recent years, however, secondary recruitment targets have only been met consistently in PE and History. This has left a legacy of under-recruitment across the curriculum.
- 5 The Government focuses on an increase in teacher numbers since 2010 (paragraph 49), without noting in the same context the increase in pupil numbers which must also be considered to contextualise any increase in teacher numbers. The NEU's January 2019 evidence explained teacher number increases in the context of the significant increase in pupil numbers (NEU January 2019, paragraphs 116-121).
- 6 The Government highlights data on vacancy rates (paragraph 49) but does not mention that the DfE itself has acknowledged the problems with the data. However, even this measure points to growing teacher supply problems: vacancy rates have trebled since 2010 and the rate of temporarily-filled positions has almost doubled.
- 7 The Government states that teacher retention rates have been "broadly similar over recent years (paragraph 56) – but retention rates have declined across the teacher career journey, as shown in the NEU's January 2019 evidence (NEU January 2019, paragraphs 136-41).
- 8 It is disappointing that the Government evidence contains lengthy sections on school-based ITT but nothing on the HE route, which still provides more than half of all postgraduate trainees and much more than any other individual route into teaching.

- 9 The figures in the Government evidence on wastage rates (ibid, Table 8) show significantly higher levels of wastage in both Inner and Outer London. This underlines the concerns we have expressed about the operation of the London pay area arrangements (see the NEU January 2019 submission, paragraph 49).
- 10 The emphasis in the Government’s evidence on targeting of the pay award in response to recruitment and retention problems misses the key point that there is a need for a whole-market positive signal on pay. There is a clear consensus among other STRB consultees on the need for such a signal.
- 11 The statement in the Government’s evidence that the increased pay flexibility “helps schools to attract and retain the best teachers” is completely at odds with the real picture, which as shown in the evidence submitted by NEU and other consultees is one of serious and widespread recruitment and retention problems.
- 12 The NEU pay and progression survey appended to our January evidence shows how pay flexibility is being used to attack teacher pay, making the recruitment and retention problems worse. The Government’s evidence itself shows how the greater pay flexibility in academies has resulted in lower pay for teachers in academies compared to those in maintained schools (see for example the Government evidence, paragraph B9). We will return to these issues in more detail when we respond to the forthcoming STRB remit on the teacher pay framework.
- 13 Our January evidence called on the STRB to resist the Government’s attempts to steer it towards sticking-plaster solutions. We note in this context that the recruitment and retention incentives discussed in the Government’s evidence (ibid, paragraphs 68-69) are no substitute for the effective and urgent action needed to address teacher pay and supply issues.
- 14 The NEOST evidence registers serious concerns about teacher supply and notes the widespread nature of these problems: “Schools continue to experience difficulties with recruitment and retention of teachers across a range of disciplines, levels, types of schools and locations” (paragraph 5). The NEOST survey of local authorities showed that the “overwhelming majority” of respondents reported that schools were experiencing difficulties with recruitment and retention (paragraph 11).
- 15 The Government’s evidence refers to the DfE strategy to increase recruitment and retention, working with teaching unions and professional bodies. We believe that the fully-funded 5 per cent pay increase we have called for must be an essential component of any effective strategy to tackle recruitment and retention.

- 16 Our January 2019 evidence called on the STRB to seek a remit on workload as a matter of urgency (NEU, paragraph 153). We are clear that such a review is required; the Government cannot simply assume that increased flexibility in working arrangements will automatically happen or will in itself solve the workload problems, or the teacher supply problems to which workload and pay issues contribute.

**Urgent, effective and Government-funded action on pay is critical**

- 17 In addition to concerns raised by the Government’s approach to teacher recruitment and retention, the Government’s evidence highlights its inappropriate approach to teacher pay issues and underlines its isolation from the consensus amongst other STRB consultees.
- 18 The NGA notes that all teachers need a cost of living increase and that there is a case for a higher-than-inflation pay award to restore real-terms pay losses (NGA, paragraphs 3.1-3.3). NEOST argues for an undifferentiated award, based on responses from the “vast majority” of local authorities and schools who did not support targeting of the pay award (NEOST, paragraph 5, page 2; and paragraph 25, page 5). NEOST stated that: “NEOST maintains its position that it would want to see a recommendation for a consistent pay increase to every salary and allowance” (NEOST paragraph 46, page 9).
- 19 The Government states that in 2018 public sector workers were given the “biggest pay rise in almost 10 years” (Government evidence, paragraph 8), but we know that most teachers’ pay yet again fell in real terms compared to RPI inflation. We do not believe that the Government’s evidence gives sufficient weight to this factor. Worse, the Government’s evidence appears to present the picture on real terms losses selectively and inappropriately.
- 20 The Government’s own evidence notes the fall in teacher pay in real terms (ibid, paragraph B16 and Figure 13, page 32) – though it presents the data selectively. The Government’s evidence compares teacher pay between 2002-03 and 2017-18, whereas in our view the decline in real terms pay since 2010 is more meaningful. That is when the Coalition Government came to power, and when austerity and the associated attack on public sector pay began. The STRB will note that, in the Government’s evidence, the graph at Figure 13 shows an increase in real teacher pay between 2002-03 and 2009-10. This was followed by a sharp fall in real teacher pay in the period since 2010.
- 21 The Government’s evidence (ibid) also seeks to compare teacher pay with private sector graduates. From the footnote provided in the Government’s evidence, it seems that the definition of graduates used includes graduates not working in graduate professions.

- 22 We wish to emphasise our view that the appropriate comparator is between teacher pay and pay in other graduate professions. Those are the professions with which teaching has to compete directly.
- 23 We note in this context the data set out in Annex B of the Government evidence to the STRB. Figure 12 of the Government’s evidence shows that mean pay for classroom teachers is lower than mean pay for private sector graduate professionals in every region of England.
- 24 The Government chooses to emphasise the findings on median pay (ibid, paragraph B11) – but it is generally recognised that for significant sample sizes the mean is a better indicator of the general picture. The Government evidence argues that the mean is affected by the existence of some graduate professionals being paid very highly, but we are not convinced that this justifies its emphasis on the median figures.
- 25 The NEU survey on teacher pay and progression set out significant concerns and evidence on these issues. We note this in relation to the assertions in the Government evidence on pay progression and cost-of-living awards (ibid, B17-B19).
- 26 In addition, the STRB should note that the Government evidence (ibid, Figures 14 and 15) conflates cost-of-living increases and increases resulting from pay progression.
- 27 The section of the Government’s evidence headed “Public Sector Pay and Pensions” (ibid, paragraphs 25-30) makes assertions about the competitiveness of public sector pay compared to the private sector. Differences in the nature and distribution of job roles between the two sectors mean that simplistic comparisons are not helpful and generally inaccurate. The Government’s own evidence (ibid, paragraph 28 and Figure 5) shows that for professions like teaching which are in the Upper and Upper Middle skill categories according to the ONS Standard Occupational Classification, the supposed difference when compared with the larger private sector firms against which teaching must compete is much reduced or even non-existent.
- 28 The latest ONS figures on this show the position in 2017. Improvements in private sector pay in 2018, including in pay for private sector graduate professionals relative to teachers, are not reflected in the latest ONS figures.
- 29 The Government states (ibid, paragraph 29) that Review Bodies should consider the total reward package when considering remuneration. As noted in the NEU’s evidence of January 2019 and in others’ evidence, there is a need for a clear pay signal and this must come in the shape of a 5 per cent pay increase. We reject the Government’s selective approach, which seeks to include pensions alongside pay; pensions represent deferred pay, but not current pay.

- 30 Improving current pay is the key issue in tackling recruitment and retention problems – it is the issue that those in the profession and those considering joining it will focus on in making career decisions.
- 31 The value of teacher pensions must not be overstated. Changes since 2010 mean, of course, that teachers are paying more into their pension for reduced pension benefits. Many younger teachers are deciding that they cannot afford to join the Teachers’ Pension Scheme.
- 32 We noted in our January evidence the downward pressure on Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payments. The Government evidence (ibid, Figure 17) gives data on the cash value of TLR payments which indicates that average TLR payments have fallen in real terms. The small increase between 2010 and 2017 of 2 percentage points in the proportion of teachers in receipt of a TLR (ibid, paragraph B25) needs to be seen in the context of the falling real value of TLR payments.
- 33 Instead of considering the pay issue and school funding shortages on their merits, the Government uses the existence of the funding problems its funding policy has created to set out a position on teacher pay that is completely inadequate. The Government’s statement that a 2 per cent increase in teacher pay is affordable nationally (ibid, page 3) is both a complete failure to engage with the key issues and an inappropriate attempt to constrain the STRB in its deliberations.
- 34 We do not accept the Government’s dogmatic description of the state of public finances. Public sector spending, including on education, is an investment in the country’s future. Developing the skills and the potential of our children and young people is essential to securing economic prosperity and social cohesion.
- 35 Austerity has made the nation’s economic problems worse, not better. At the end of the 2017-18 financial year, UK Government debt stood at over 85 per cent of GDP – up from some 70 per cent of GDP in 2009-10.<sup>1</sup>
- 36 NEOST and the NGA both argue that the pay award must be fully funded by the Government. Both also pointed to significant school funding problems. (NEOST and NGA, *passim*.)

**National Education Union**

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicspending/bulletin/ukgovernmentdebtanddeficitforeurostatmaast/september2018>