



Media release from the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and the National Education Union (NEU)

Tuesday 24 July 2018

Joint union response on teachers' pay

Three education unions today welcomed the announcement of a 3.5% pay increase for classroom teachers on the main pay range and the Department for Education's commitment to funding part of this pay award. This shows that the penny may have dropped in terms of the government recognising the scale of the teacher recruitment and retention crisis.

However they expressed a number of concerns:

- The pay award is not fully funded. The Department for Education is still expecting schools to fund 1% of the cost from severely strained budgets, and is only funding the additional expenditure above 1%. The independent Institute for Fiscal Studies recently published analysis which shows that funding per pupil in England fell by about 8% in real terms, and about 5% in Wales, between 2009-10 and 2017-18.
- It is unacceptable that pay awards for leaders and for teachers on the upper pay range will only be funded at a lower rate, and this decision flies in the face of the recommendation made by the independent School Teachers' Review Body for an across-the-board increase on pay and allowances at the same rate. The pay award is supposed to reflect the cost-of-living and therefore paying it at different rates is unfair and demoralising – especially at a time when recruiting leaders to schools is so challenging.
- We are disappointed the Treasury has refused to fund the pay award and left it to the DfE to find the necessary funding by cutting other areas of the education budget which are also important. Our education unions believe that the Treasury has a responsibility to fund pay awards for public servants as recommended by the independent pay body.
- While the pay award is an improvement on previous years it doesn't redress the years of pay freezes and pay caps which have eroded the value of teachers' pay in real terms and contributed to the teacher and leader recruitment and retention crisis. Our three unions had called for a 5% across the board increase for all teachers and leaders and we will continue to press for an improved deal in future years.
- Today's announcement has come far too late to give schools sufficient time to prepare budgets for a pay award which is supposed to be operative from September, particularly

as school summer holidays have already begun. The government must announce its decision on the annual pay award much earlier in future years.

Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said:

“The DfE and the Secretary of State deserve credit for an improved pay award and a commitment to providing extra funding. However, it is deeply unfair that the pay award for leaders and for teachers on the upper pay range will be funded at a lower rate and they will regard this decision as a kick in the teeth for their hard work. It is also regrettable that the pay award is only partially funded and that the DfE has had to find that money from down the back of the departmental sofa as this will impact on other education services. This is clearly a short-term political solution driven by the refusal of the Treasury to fund the pay award and we need longer-term strategic thinking from the government as a whole.”

Paul Whiteman, General Secretary of school leaders’ union NAHT, said:

“School leaders will have mixed views about this announcement. They desperately want to reward and retain their valued staff, and they will be relieved that the DfE will make an additional contribution to the pay award, as school budgets are already at breaking point. However, by ignoring the STRB’s advice that all teachers and school leaders need the same pay rise, they have failed to recognise and reward the critical role performed by leadership teams. This will do little to retain valued and experienced senior teachers and leaders. Our members will feel let down by the government.

“All teachers and leaders deserve a decent pay rise after a decade of real terms cuts. The DfE appear to have finally grasped the scale of the twin crises in school funding and teacher retention. But it is disappointing that the Treasury has not listened. By abdicating responsibility for funding these awards, the Treasury has forced the Department for Education to scramble for money within their own department. We will have to wait to see what cuts have to be made elsewhere to find this money but it seems like a false economy by the government.”

Dr Mary Bousted, Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union, said:

“We welcome a 3.5% rise in main scale teachers’ pay. This has been achieved because the DfE has been forced to recognise the strength of our evidence that growing teacher shortages are harming education standards. Our successful campaign on school funding, working with parental groups and other unions, has forced the DfE to find funding for this pay award – but schools and parents will be dismayed that schools will have to find more than £250m from their already stretched budgets. We are concerned, too, that the DfE will be forced by the Treasury to make unacceptable cuts to other parts of its education budget and we will monitor this carefully. We regret that the DfE has not accepted the STRB’s recommendation of 3.5% for all teachers and school leaders, and we will continue to campaign for this and for improved funding for all schools, as the government moves into the comprehensive spending review.”

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