

Community Union for Education & Early Years | Oral Evidence to the STRB

Thursday 21 April 2022 - 12.30pm

Office of Manpower Economics | Windsor House | 50 Victoria Street | London SW1H 0TL

Questions

1. One of the advantages of a multi-year award is the greater certainty it provides to schools for budget planning. How do you see this fitting with some consultees' calls for a review mechanism?
2. How do you see a possible review mechanism working in practice?
3. Several consultees have reported concerns about the retention of more experienced teachers. What evidence, including data relating to early retirement, do you have on recent trends on this issue?
4. Workforce data suggests teacher supply challenges vary considerably, for example by seniority, region, and subject. Is it optimal to apply solutions which are the same irrespective of the context? What do you see as the most pressing areas?
5. DfE proposals include some 'tidying up' of the inconsistent differentials between points on the main pay range. Do you support this in principle?
6. You oppose DfE's proposals for London. Does London merit a different pay award to other parts of the country?
7. What evidence do you have on schools' use of the 2021/22 funding when there was no pay award for teachers?
8. The Review Body is asked in its remit letter to consider affordability alongside a range of other factors. You have a proposed significant pay award for all teachers. How do you see this in relation to other spending priorities?
9. You have identified the restoration of a national pay structure with mandatory pay points and increased PPA time as priorities for reform. Do you see other priorities?

How will this affect the children?

Introduction

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to meet. It is great to be here, in person to discuss with you, the issues affecting schools and what pay and conditions can do to transform the working lives of our members so that they can focus their attention on improving the lives of the children they work with.

This is the first time we have been able to meet in-person since the pandemic hit, but it is important to remember that our members have worked throughout – many of them in school, on the frontline, face-to-face and they feel let down by the system.

Schools are at breaking point.

Staff are on their knees.

The previous Secretary of State's declaration that "*Inspirational teachers change millions of lives*" seems to have been forgotten.

We know the impact of COVID-19 has been and will continue to be vast. But we must look forward as we emerge, and we need to have the resources to manage our recovery.

We need staff – both new and existing. We need their enthusiasm and their expertise, and we need their dedication and selflessness. Last year's pay freeze has done nothing to encourage new staff nor retain existing staff and workload is intolerable.

We are hearing from teachers and school leaders that they don't have the energy to carry on and will leave the profession as soon as they can. We need to address this, and we must do so now.

We are pleased to be in the position to work alongside union colleagues and the DfE on their recruitment and retention strategy and we will continue to do so for the benefit of our members. We fear, though, that all the strategies in the world will fail if they are inadequately funded and not supported from the top.

We trust that our evidence, national and international examples, together with the joint submission and those of our union colleagues will be considered appropriately - with the weight of the profession behind them.

Thank you.

Questions

1. **One of the advantages of a multi-year award is the greater certainty it provides to schools for budget planning.**

How do you see this fitting with some consultees' calls for a review mechanism?

Multi-Year award

- We remain committed to ongoing objective and evidence-based review of teacher and school leader pay levels and structural issues, incorporating all relevant factors. We call on the STRB to reflect in its recommendations the need for such an approach to teacher and school leader pay and conditions issues.
- A multi-year award could provide schools with some longer-term stability but they already provide three-year budgets anyway taking into account things such as the rate of inflation and forecast pay increases.
- The financial outlook for England is extremely volatile at the moment. Interest rates (CPI) have risen by 6.2% over the past 12 months. The fastest increase since 2009. *Bank of England (18 March 2022)* 8% is the highest rate of inflation for 30 years.
- A multi-year pay award would mean that the pay system is incapable of responding to the national financial picture. It becomes less efficient.
- National figures for unemployment show strong growth in private sector. A multi-year deal might not provide the funds to recruit sufficient teachers.

Review Mechanism

- The review mechanism is at risk of breaking due to the time delays and constraints being placed upon it.
- Batching with other review body's does not work when also working within the academic year framework.
- Schools and leaders need time to process any pay award and it is reasonable for them to have this time during their working time – it is wholly unreasonable to be processing this during school holidays because the SOS announcement has been made in late July - as has happened for the past few years.

BUT – mechanism still functions well when the timeframes are adhered to and not meddled with for political expediency.

2. How do you see a possible review mechanism working in practice?

- Now is a good time to look at the pay framework but the mechanism still works well.
- Pay mechanism needs to work for schools and teachers.
 - Needs to support and incentivise new staff and reward existing staff.
 - Should not assume staff wish to become managers as was reported to STRB last year.
 - Need to review the gap between scale points.
 - Need to review the way TLRs are awarded – especially for SNECOs and those working in SEND.
 - Worried about the workload placed on UPS teachers
- Pay mechanism needs input from all parties but needs to be independent in practise from the political cycles.
- Makes sense to use the academic year as this is the year that schools use for budget purposes. So could bring the process forward so that staff are not working through holiday periods.
- At the moment the SoS takes the decision on teacher pay but is little involved in the process. Perhaps it is time for the decision making to be more like that for MPs. The recommendations of Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority are usually implemented – despite this year the PM and Labour speaking against a rise.

3. **Several consultees have reported concerns about the retention of more experienced teachers.**

What evidence, including data relating to early retirement, do you have on recent trends on this issue?

- “In recent years, the share of exits due to reasons other than retirement has increased, with around 85% of exits in 2018 as compared with 60% in 2011. This is concerning as it means a much larger share of exits are now driven by teachers moving to other jobs rather than because they are retiring.”
- ONS report 73,000 jobs in the sector, the highest it has ever been. (*March 2022*)

Future of Education Report

- One Voice Community member highlighted that many staff are leaving “because the job itself is challenging enough but the way we have been treated throughout the pandemic has been shocking. Staff will either be off with stress or just want out”.
- International comparisons show that teachers in England work longer hours than many other high-performing countries – 2018’s TALIS report notes 50-53 hours worked each week with much of this work undertaken in the evenings and at weekends.
- They spend more time planning, preparing and resourcing, and delivering lessons than in many other jurisdictions.
- For comparison the OECD average is around 30 hours (including administration time).
- Teacher and head teacher members went on to state that it was workload, followed by pressures of the role, that were the key drivers causing staff to want to leave the sector.
- Teach First argue that delivering fewer lessons per week would give teachers more time to spend on planning and professional development that would ensure lessons had been properly outlined for their pupils.
- This will lead to improved teacher wellbeing and teacher retention which will lead to greater classroom stability as teachers are likely to be present more of the time and to remain in post for longer.
- Evidence from the school workforce census over the past decade shows that experienced and skilled teachers are leaving the profession in droves, and Voice Community data shows that 22.39% of our members plan to leave the education sector within the next three years. There were differences among roles, but across schools 1 in 5 are planning to leave:
 - 24% of classroom teachers intended to leave;
 - 14% of head teachers or senior leaders; and
 - 23% of supply teachers.
- And of those who were not planning on immediately leaving, 57% reported they would like to work fewer hours than they currently do.

Retention

- 85% of teachers who qualified in 2019 were still teaching one year after qualification. This retention rate has gradually declined since 2011.
- Just three in five teachers who qualified ten years ago are still teaching.
- Growth in average earnings, according to the Office for National Statistics data, was between 3.8% and 4.8% in the three months to January 2022.⁴ But this still resulted in a negative increase due to rising levels of inflation which, at the time of writing, is running at around 8%, its highest level in 30 years.
- New police constables start their career on £20,880, rising to over £40,000 within seven years. Whilst Early Career Teachers are recruited to an initially higher salary, many are stuck on £36,646 after seven years and that is for those who have remained in teaching for that long.
- There continues to be a reduction in the number of teachers leaving for reasons of retirement, but still age retirement accounts for almost 50% of leavers each year.
- Notable numbers of teachers leaving for other reasons.
- In 2020, 5% of qualified teachers increased their working hours and 6% decreased their working hours. Resulting in a decrease equivalent to approximately 2,300 FTE qualified teachers between 2019 and 2020.
- Evidence = Kreston International Report - schools face “difficulties in finding suitable staff, with shortages = higher salaries ... particularly for PPA and supply cover”
- The World Health Organization - long working hours are a significant contributor to deaths from heart disease and stroke. Between 2000 and 2016, the number of deaths from heart disease due to working long hours increased by 42%, and from stroke by 19%. And yet, the number of people working long hours is increasing.

4. **Workforce data suggests teacher supply challenges vary considerably, for example by seniority, region, and subject.**

Is it optimal to apply solutions which are the same irrespective of the context?

What do you see as the most pressing areas?

- Paying teachers and school leaders properly is a matter of fundamental fairness, to recognise the crucial and demanding jobs they do. It is also, however, essential for parents, for young people and for our economic future that we repair the damage to teacher supply. It is therefore in the national interest that we secure fair and improved pay and workload for teachers and school leaders.
- We need to recruit, retain and support teachers and school leaders, not underpay and undermine them. Significant increases in public sector pay including for teachers and school leaders are in the country's economic interests, essential to economic prosperity and sustainable growth.
- New police constables start their career on £20,880, rising to over £40,000 within seven years. Whilst Early Career Teachers are recruited to an initially higher salary, many are stuck on £36,646 after seven years and that is for those who have remained in teaching for that long.
- Differentiated pay risks dividing and demoralising the sector. Already primary school staff are paid less than their secondary colleagues. They often fail to take their allocated PPA time and are rarely given TLRs simply due to the lack of available funding. This is not unique to primary schools but affects all small schools.
- Academies have the freedom to set their own pay. Rarely is this used to pay teachers extra to incentivise them to come to schools with difficult intakes, or where there are subject shortages simply because there is not the money in the system to allow them to.
- **ANY SOLUTION MUST BE FULLY FUNDED.**

5. **DfE proposals include some 'tidying up' of the inconsistent differentials between points on the main pay range.**

Do you support this in principle?

- There are some issues with the pay scale system that would benefit from a review.
- Not limited to MPS, but must include UPS and Leadership too otherwise disincentive those who need to be retained.
- We would be interested to look at research to identify and discuss 'optimal' differentials.
- Future percentage increases will likely have a similar impact on the consistency of differentials going forward. This should not be considered a problem as long as the increase has worth.
- This is why it is important to include the whole pay scale, not just MPS.

6. **You oppose DfE's proposals for London.**

Does London merit a different pay award to other parts of the country?

- Pay scales in London need to reflect the cost of living in London.
- Paying teachers and school leaders properly is a matter of fundamental fairness, to recognise the crucial and demanding jobs they do. It is also, however, essential for parents, for young people and for our economic future that we repair the damage to teacher supply. It is therefore in the national interest that we secure fair and improved pay and workload for teachers and school leaders.
- Research from Loughborough Univ. (April 2020) suggests the cost of living in London is up to 58% more expensive.
- A minimum budget in the capital costs between 15% and 58% more than in the rest of the UK depending on household composition
- Must be mindful that even staff who do not live in inner London live locally and must pay exorbitant travel costs including the London Congestion charge and ULEV where appropriate.

7. What evidence do you have on schools' use of the 2021/22 funding when there was no pay award for teachers?

- According to The Daily Mail, funding in education for schools is “not generous” and the school budget settlement is “as tight as it was last year” despite DfE claims of record funding.
- We note the 6.8% increase to core funding but how much further must that core funding now stretch?
- Costs are rising across the board.
 - School buildings and the rising costs of maintaining them is almost double the previous estimate, according to key findings from a DfE data collection.
 - Energy costs have skyrocketed by over 50%, which will also increase school buildings costs.
 - Increases to TPS and National Insurance contributions.
- The percentage of English local authority secondary schools in deficit has more than trebled since 2014, rising to over 30% in 2018.
- The numbers of primary, nursery and special schools in deficit also continue to rise, meaning that 12%, or one in eight LA schools are in deficit.²⁰
- Support services are no longer effective nor functioning at a time when there has never been a greater need.
- The disadvantage gap is growing because these services are unable to bridge the gap and support children's physical and emotional needs. Any withdrawal or diversion of existing funding from schools would jeopardise further the support that vulnerable children and young people are receiving.
- Over the past year schools have worked hard to manage their finances. There has been some additional funding from central government to meet certain specific spending demands caused by the pandemic such as testing and education recovery initiatives. Schools may also have benefitted from the cancellation of exams and other reduced costs caused through school buildings not being fully open during lockdown, but this is not consistent across the sector. The 10th Annual Kreston Academies Benchmark recently reported that “that the average in-year financial surplus for a multi-academy trust (MAT) doubled to more than £460k in 2021 up from £221k in 2020.” However, the report does acknowledge that primary academies have fared less well due to them incurring additional costs through being open to more pupils for a longer period of time during the pandemic.
- Therefore, the picture of high levels of reserves and expert fiscal prudence belies a reality of increased costs through energy increases, improvements to technology infrastructure to facilitate remote learning and from poor quality estates which have contributed to ventilation issues.
- Finally, affordability should not come at the expense of pupil learning, nor of a dedicated and committed workforce. If DfE can find £26 million additional funding for Ofsted, then funding for pay - which would be spent on staffing, and circumvent the need for schools to raid their own budgets to fund a pay rise - will allow the already reported budget increases to be spent on improving learning and outcomes for children so desperately affected by COVID-19 over the past 24 months.

8. The Review Body is asked in its remit letter to consider affordability alongside a range of other factors. You have a proposed significant pay award for all teachers. How do you see this in relation to other spending priorities?

- It should not be the place of the unions to reflect on the affordability of plans – this is the role of government evidence, specifically from the Treasury
- We acknowledge that the Review Body have been tasked to consider affordability.
- Costs are rising across the board.
 - School buildings and the rising costs of maintaining them is almost double the previous estimate, according to key findings from a DfE data collection.
 - Energy costs have skyrocketed by over 50%, which will also increase school buildings costs.
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- ONS figures show an increase in total pay across the economy of 5.9% in the three months to September 2021 and growth in average earnings has been sustained, at 4.2% in the three months to November 2021. Therefore failure to initiate a meaningful uplift to teacher pay will have serious repercussions throughout the sector.
- Bottom line – schools are places of learning. Every child deserves an excellent teacher – but excellence costs money. We have to be prepared to pay if we expect excellence.

9. **You have identified the restoration of a national pay structure with mandatory pay points and increased PPA time as priorities for reform. Do you see other priorities?**

- Workload and wellbeing are significant contributors to staff happiness. That's why increased PPA is necessary.
- Currently, there is a requirement for staff to receive a minimum 10% PPA time. Some schools see this as a target, and others fail to achieve the minimum on a regular basis.
- More graduates are seeking improved working conditions, and this can be achieved through additional time to complete duties. IE increase PPA to 20% for all teaching staff and those who are directed to lead classroom learning.
- We also said in our original submission – and this has been highlighted in reports in the education press from other unions that we need to be able to disconnect from work.
- ie not being expected to answer emails and phone calls out of hours, to support mental health and wellbeing.
- This would be in line with the aims of the Staff Wellbeing Charter.
- Not very impressed with the expansion of the role of the teacher to include aspects of social care, child psychology, and mental health practitioners. Yes schools should have understanding and training in these areas to support learning – but schools are about learning and that is what teachers are trained to do.
- Social Care and the NHS need to be properly resourced to cover these areas to release schools from one expectation too many.

- Voice Community believes that a real-terms pay increase is necessary, one which restores the value of teacher pay in the face of inflation, increased living costs and rising energy prices.
- So, we are calling for a government-funded increase of 10% across all pay points. Without this, the Government's proposals simply do not support their statement to "support teachers to join and stay in the profession"