

Welsh Government's Two-year Pay Offer Makes Teachers Worse Off

On 21 July 2022, the Welsh Government published the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body's (IWPRB's) 4th Report, which made three recommendations on the teachers' pay award in 2022/23 and 2023/24, together with four other recommendations on teachers' terms and conditions. The Minister for Education and the Welsh Language has accepted all of the recommendations in principle.

In its evidence to the IWPRB, the NASUWT set out a clear case for a pay award for teachers of:

- 12% in September 2022;
- 10% in September 2023;
- 8% in September 2024.

The NASUWT outlined that this would be the minimum to achieve a restorative pay award, given that, at the time the NASUWT submitted its evidence, in early Spring this year, teachers' pay had fallen in real terms by an average of 20% since 2010. The pay of experienced teachers had actually fallen by more than this because of the detrimental impact of differential pay increases.

At the point at which the NASUWT submitted its evidence to the IWPRB, and met to present its oral evidence, inflation was starting to rise very sharply and the NASUWT asked the IWPRB to seek a further remit for a pay award for 2023/24, to respond to unpredictable and high levels of inflation in 2022/23, which were unknown at the point at which the Union presented its evidence.

The IWPRB has now made the following annual pay award recommendations in its 4th Report:

- '1. That all statutory scale points on all pay scales, and all allowances, are increased by 5% for 2022-2023;*
- 2. That all statutory scale points on all pay scales, and all allowances, are increased by 3.5% for 2023-2024. This figure should be kept under review and revisited if there is a significant change in economic conditions compared with the current forecasts;*
- 3. That the minimum of the MPR (M2) pay point is increased to £30,000 for 2023-2024.'*

The NASUWT is quite clear that these pay recommendations fail to address the worst cost of living crisis for a generation, and in turn they will affect the recruitment and retention of teaching professionals. The Report was clear that any *'positive recruitment factors during the COVID-19 period were largely temporary...'* and they *'received evidence that higher proportions of experienced teachers and leaders were leaving the profession as a result of the stress and workload created by the COVID-19 crisis, and concerns were expressed about the ability of schools to replace them, especially in the existing shortage areas. We also note that demand for graduates in the general economy has increased during 2021 and 2022, and that graduate salaries have risen as a consequence.'*

The NASUWT maintains that the Welsh Government has to improve on the recommended pay offer if they have any genuine ambitions to reverse this trend, let alone support teachers in this crisis. If the IWPRB's recommended 5% increase to pay scales in Wales for this September is implemented, most teachers' pay will still be worth 22% less in real terms in 2022-23 than it was in 2010.

Dr Patrick Roach, NASUWT General Secretary, responded to the Welsh Government's 2022/23 and 2023/24 pay award announcement:

'The Welsh Government has waited until schools close for the summer to deliver another real-terms pay cut for teachers.'

'Against a backdrop of soaring inflation and a real-terms pay loss of more than 20% over the last 12 years, teachers across Wales are set to be worse off as a result of the proposals the Minister has announced today.'

'It is scandalous that many experienced teachers and school leaders are already leaving the profession and today's announcement will do little to stop that.'

'The timing of today's announcement during the school holidays will be questioned by teachers. If the Welsh Government believes that delaying this announcement until the start of the summer break will dissipate the anger of teachers, they are mistaken.'

Recommendations which are separate from the annual pay awards

In addition to its recommendations on the annual pay awards in 2022 and 2023, the IWPRB has made four other recommendations, as follows:

'4. That the Welsh Government, in partnership with the Pay Partnership Forum (PPF), updates and clarifies the wording in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document (STPC(W)D) to incorporate the changes made since the devolution of pay and conditions – specifically pay portability, progression on the UPR, and performance-related pay – to reflect accurately and consistently the previous recommendations made by the IWPRB. This task should be completed by September 2022.'

This is not unwelcome, as it is necessary that the STPC(W)D fully reflects previous beneficial IWPRB recommendations, but this recommendation does not address the immediate crisis facing teachers in Wales today.

'5. That the pro-rata principle substantially referred to in section 40.1 should be removed from the 2022-2023 STPC(W)D in respect of part-time teachers in receipt of TLR1s and TLR2s, and that the PPF should agree, and replace it with, appropriate wording to state that a decision on the additional responsibilities and commensurate level of award should be mutually agreed by the teacher and the employer.'

This recommendation has directly addressed concerns raised by the NASUWT about the discriminatory and unfair nature of current TLR provision for part-time teachers. The IWPRB has agreed with the NASUWT that *'the current pro-rata arrangements are potentially discriminatory against part-time teachers, and we are concerned at the impact of the pro-rata principle on recruitment of women in particular to leadership roles.'*

'6. We recommend to the Welsh Government that in the light of the statutory nature of the new ALNCo role, a task and finish group be established to review the non-contact allocation and remuneration. The group should report its findings by December 2023.'

The IWPRB has been unable to make recommendations about pay and conditions for the ALNCO role because of insufficient evidence, and the establishment of a task and finish group to review the role is the IWPRB's solution.

'7. We refer to the three recommendations made in our third report, i.e. monitoring and reporting of equalities legislation at school and local authority level; guidance to school governors on pay and conditions; and arrangements for future work on a model pay policy at a national level, and recommend that they are implemented as originally written.'

Again, it is not unwelcome that the IWPRB has recognised that the Welsh Government has failed to implement the recommendations in last year's report, but the NASUWT believes that teachers in Wales need prompt action to ensure that robust statutory guidance is published to provide them with protections against unreasonable and excessive workload. The NASUWT is disappointed that the IWPRB has not recommended the restoration of previous STPCD guidance which was removed by the Westminster Government in 2013.

Next steps

IWPRB consultees have eight weeks to respond to the Ministerial Statement on the IWPRB Report. The NASUWT will update Negotiating Secretaries on the content of the Union's response.

Following this, the final version of the 2022 STPC(W)D will be published and the NASUWT will issue further guidance to Negotiating Secretaries after publication of the final Document.

As an urgent priority, the NASUWT is pressing for Ministerial-level negotiations to address members' concerns about the pay award, which the IWPRB has identified as a result of the NASUWT's evidence. As a key element of these negotiations, the NASUWT expects the Welsh Government to agree a programme of pay restoration that will deliver a Better Deal for Teachers. In the event that such agreement is not reached, the NASUWT remains committed to balloting members this autumn.



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