

**NASUWT SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION
TO THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' REVIEW BODY
17 JANUARY 2025**

NASUWT – The Teachers' Union.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 NASUWT is a strong supporter of the Independent Pay Review Body process as the mechanism for deliberating on and bringing recommendations on teachers' pay.
- 1.2 We believe it is in the interests of all statutory consultees for the evidence-based process and the machinery of the Pay Review Body to be fully respected.
- 1.3 We note with concern the Department for Education's (DfE's) decision to publish its written evidence outwith the normal School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) process in an attempt to provide schools with advance notice in order to prepare for the implementation of a 2025/26 pay award of 2.8%, to be funded from schools' existing budgets. We are concerned that this attempt to circumvent the Pay Review Body machinery should not be permitted to influence the STRB's work or recommendations. The Review Body must continue to demonstrate its independence at this time.
- 1.4 NASUWT has warned the Government of the potential industrial relations consequences arising from its actions, and that pre-empting the report and recommendations of the Review Body is prejudicial and detrimental to the Pay Review process and to the jobs and working conditions of teachers.
- 1.6 In presenting this supplementary evidence, NASUWT invites the Pay Review Body to take fully into account the impact of historic pay awards and the ongoing impact of high inflation on the real-terms pay of teachers and headteachers.
- 1.7 The Review Body's primary focus must be on the fundamental requirement to ensure the future supply and retention of teachers. The arbitrary affordability constraints proposed by HM Treasury and the DfE has led to significant real-terms pay deterioration for the teaching profession, particularly when measured against comparable professional occupations. Indeed, we note the

Review Body's acceptance of this fact in its previous report. The resultant and current poor state of teacher recruitment and retention should be a key concern, which should inform the Review Body's recommendations.

- 1.8 The case for substantially increased pay for teachers and sector-wide funding is undeniable from the evidence. NASUWT welcomes the evidence from the majority of stakeholders, which demonstrates a clear consensus that the pay award for 2025/26 needs to be fully funded. Nevertheless, we remind the STRB that funding of schools is a political choice for the Government, which should not inhibit the recommendations of the Review Body.

2. The cost-of-living crisis and teacher pay

- 2.1 The Autumn Budget 2024 confirmed that income tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) thresholds will continue to be frozen through to April 2028. Due to inflation falling slower than expected, the impact of these freezes to tax thresholds will push personal tax contributions higher. There are also headwinds in 2024/25 – from declining support for energy bills, personal tax rises and higher mortgage payments (with household disposable income falling sharply).
- 2.2 NASUWT's pay survey for 2024/25 of almost 9,000 members has identified clear evidence of teachers experiencing serious financial difficulties and unable to afford the costs of food, heating and housing.
- 2.3 Ninety-three per cent of respondents to NASUWT's survey said they were somewhat or very worried about their financial situation.
- 2.4 The number of teachers reporting having to take a second job has increased to 12.1%.

The Government's submission

- 2.5 The Government's *Economic Evidence to the Pay Review Bodies: 2025/26 Pay Round* rightly points out that as the private sector is an alternative source

of employment for public sector workers (and vice versa), comparisons between public and private sector remuneration are important for understanding recruitment and retention trends across public sector workforces.¹ It goes on to note that the November 2024 Comparison of Independent Forecasts points to an average independent forecast for wage growth of 3.7% in 2025.

- 2.6 The Government's view, in its written evidence, is that a 2.8% award across all school teachers and leaders in 2025/26 is appropriate, based on the economic context. However, this will deepen the teacher recruitment and retention crisis by widening the pay gap between teachers and other professions, further worsening the real-terms pay depression that teachers have experienced over the last 15 years.
- 2.7 NASUWT remains deeply concerned that the Government's evidence to the Review Body underestimates the profound nature of the teacher recruitment and retention crisis that blighted the profession under the previous administration. NASUWT asserts that a one-year pay award will be insufficient to redress the long-term impacts of pay depression of teachers since 2010. It is incumbent on the Review Body to highlight the importance of securing a multi-year framework to restore teacher pay and pay competitiveness.
- 2.8 Inflation, as measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI), is expected to increase to 3.5% on average in 2025, as forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).² If the OBR inflation forecast is correct, the Government's pay recommendation would represent a further substantial real-terms pay cut for hardworking teachers and headteachers.
- 2.9 The Government assesses that schools have the headroom in their budgets and the scope to make budget cuts/efficiencies that would equate to the recommended 2.8% pay award for 2025/26, without additional funding.

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675877b18a1ef8f66413b9ce/2025-26_Economic_Evidence_Final2.pdf

² OBR, *Economic and fiscal outlook – October 2024*. <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-october-2024/>

- 2.10 The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) recently identified in its detailed *Annual report on education spending in England: 2024-25* that in 2023/24 total public spending on education in the UK was £116 billion, an 11% fall since 2010/11.
- 2.11 Education spending as a share of national income has also decreased from 5.6% in 2010/11 to 4.1% in 2023/24. This equals historic lows seen in the late 1990s, late 1980s and mid-1960s. There has been no long-run increase in the share of national income devoted to public spending on education spending, despite large rises in education participation in the longer term.³
- 2.12 The IFS estimates that mainstream school funding per pupil will grow by 2.8% in cash terms in 2025/26. The IFS also estimates that school costs will grow by 3.6% in 2025/26 if the Pay Review Body follows the Government's recommendation of a 2.8% pay award for 2025. NASUWT has made the case to the Government on the need for greater investment, together with a drive for systemic economies and efficiencies, while stressing that it cannot be left to schools to deliver the level of savings needed to deliver an appropriate pay award next year.
- 2.13 As stated in NASUWT's written evidence submission, numerous options remain available to the Westminster Government to raise sufficient revenues to fund a multi-year, above-RPI-inflation pay award for teachers and other public sector workers. The case for any pay award to be fully funded by the central government is undeniable from the evidence.

³ Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), *Annual report on education spending in England: 2024-25*, accessed on 8 January 2025. <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

3. The wider state of the Labour Market and economy

- 3.1 NASUWT commissioned Incomes Data Research (IDR) to undertake a comparison of earnings for teachers with those for other graduate professions.⁴
- 3.2 Using data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) survey, IDR's review identified that earnings for teachers in England show significant gaps between the earnings of teachers and the earnings of those in comparable graduate professions.
- 3.3 IDR looked at the period from 2008 to present. It found that despite the comparatively greater pay increases in the latter part of the period, for the period as a whole, teachers' pay rises trailed those found in the wider economy. As a result, teachers' pay has not recovered in real terms to pre-2009 levels, as evidenced by the STRB, when it estimated that teachers' median gross earnings in 2022/23 were 17.9% below their level in 2010/11 in real terms.
- 3.4 When IDR ranked the median gross weekly earnings levels of graduate professions in England in 2008, 2015 and 2024 against secondary and primary education teachers, they found the following results:

| Group | 2008 rank | 2015 rank | 2024 rank |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Secondary education teachers | 9 out of 12 | 9 out of 12 | 9 out of 13 |
| Primary education teachers | 11 out of 12 | 11 out of 12 | 12 out of 13 |

- 3.5 The IDR research shows that teaching annual earnings figures trail those of the other professional groups. In many of these cases, the differentials are large. For instance, half of the differentials are greater than 20% and nearly three-quarters are over 10% greater. In aggregate, the average of all the average gross annual earnings figures for the non-teaching groups was

⁴ <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/static/63dac553-8d84-4e48-86158359034f75d8/IDR-Research-The-Pay-of-Teachers-and-Comparable-Graduate-Professions-England.pdf>

24.8% greater than the corresponding secondary teacher amount and 34.7% higher than the equivalent primary school figure.

- 3.6 IDR has found that out of 36 professional occupations, primary teachers in England were placed 30th while secondary teachers were positioned 26th.
- 3.7 IDR also examined pay on completion of graduate training programmes and found that graduate training schemes typically last for two years. This suggests that a comparison with the salary for teachers on M3 of the Main Pay Range (MPR) is appropriate. The results from its survey indicate that on immediate completion of training, graduates' pay is ahead of the equivalent pay point for teachers. The median graduate salary on completion of training at organisations is £36,000 – some £2,186 above the teachers' pay point M3 of £33,814.
- 3.8 The IDR research is clear: other professions continue to have better starting pay and higher earnings after a few years of graduate training. The IDR research makes a clear and compelling case for a significant above-inflation pay award for multiple years to close the gap between teaching and other comparable professions in order to address the recruitment and retention crisis.

4. Teacher supply

- 4.1 NASUWT remains clear that the teacher supply position in England remains critical and requires effective action to place it on a more sustainable path.
- 4.2 As the DfE notes in its evidence, postgraduate initial teacher training (PGITT) recruitment levels continue to give rise to serious cause for concern across the vast majority of subject areas. Despite the provision of substantial financial incentives, such as bursaries and other equivalent programmes, the DfE's evidence notes correctly that recruitment into mathematics, science and computing initial teacher training (ITT) programmes remains substantially under target. These disappointing outcomes serve to lend further weight to concerns we and others have expressed about: the efficacy of such programmes in their current form to address teacher supply issues; and the disproportionate emphasis placed on them by the previous government in its

teacher recruitment strategy. We continue to urge the current government to work with us and other partners to consider the alternative options we have put forward in previous submissions to the Review Body on the use of financial incentives to enhance teacher recruitment and retention.

- 4.3 On transitions from ITT into teaching, it is discouraging to note that 2023/24 saw the lowest number of new entrants into teaching since the School Workforce Census was established and that overall numbers of entrants into primary programmes have also fallen significantly.⁵ While the DfE references predicted trends for the overall primary pupil population to fall over the course of the rest of this decade, it is correct for it to note the critical importance of addressing under-recruitment into primary teaching, given the importance of sustaining a high-quality workforce that is able to continue to raise standards in the longer term.
- 4.4 While we welcome the confirmation set out in the DfE's evidence that the numbers of those returning to teaching has been increasing, we would note that the drivers of exit from the profession remain significant and will create a substantial barrier to retaining these teachers in the longer term.
- 4.5 We continue to welcome the Government's commitment to recruiting an additional 6,500 expert teachers across schools and colleges. We look forward to further engagement with ministers and officials on establishing a precise definition of this target and plans for its fulfilment over the course of the current Parliament.
- 4.6 We are clear that pay has a crucial role to play in ensuring that teacher supply is sustained in the long term through robust recruitment into teaching and retention of the workforce across all career stages. The importance of pay as

⁵ Department for Education (DfE) (2024). *Government Evidence to the STRB*. Available at: (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675c4a6198302e574b915383/Government_evidence_to_the_STRB_.pdf), accessed on 13.01.25.

an indispensable element of an effective teacher supply policy programme is well established by evidence.⁶

- 4.7 However, we accept the DfE's view that placing teacher supply on a more sustainable footing requires other non-pay interventions to be made alongside, and not instead of, improvements in pay and pay progression across the profession.
- 4.8 We note the emphasis placed in the DfE's evidence on ensuring that graduates are aware of teaching as an attractive career option. It is self-evident that any fit-for-purpose recruitment strategy will ensure that information, advice and guidance on teaching to graduates is provided in such a way as to ensure the highest possible levels of awareness among potential recruits.
- 4.9 Nonetheless, it is important to ensure that disproportionate emphasis is not placed on this element of strategies to improve teacher supply. The Review Body will be aware that the previous government repeatedly asserted that substantial improvements in teacher supply could be secured through better advertising and public awareness campaigns of teaching as a graduate career option. The current government insists in its evidence that it 'needs to do a better job' of telling graduates about teaching. While it is important that such campaigns are subject to ongoing review of their effectiveness, there is no evidence that the current teacher supply crisis is a product of deficient campaigning or advertising. It would not be wholly unreasonable to conclude that the more the previous government emphasised and invested in recruitment campaigns and advertising, the worse the recruitment crisis became due to policy deficiencies in more critical areas.
- 4.10 We strongly welcome the Government's commitment to ensure that all teachers working in the state-funded education sector have qualified teacher

⁶ See, for **example**, Burge, P.; Lu, H.; and Phillips, W. (2021). *Understanding Teacher Retention: Using a discrete choice experiment to measure teacher retention in England*. Available at: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-teacher-retention-a-discrete-choice-experiment>), accessed on 13.01.25.

status (QTS) or are on a pathway to securing QTS. Among other positive aspects of this policy, we agree that QTS is a key signifier of the professional standing of teaching. Mandating the acquisition of this status as a requirement of entry into the teaching profession will ensure that teaching is no longer disadvantaged relative to other comparable graduate professions.

- 4.11 The DfE confirms in its evidence that it will work towards a further update of the Early Career Framework (ECF), building on reforms implemented by the previous government. We strongly welcome this commitment. It is well established that ensuring that teachers have a well-supported transition from ITT into professional practice plays an important role in ensuring that high early career stage retention rates are secured and sustained. While the ECF has brought greater consistency in early career teacher (ECT) induction programmes, the Review Body will be aware that its introduction has been problematic in some important respects. In particular, it has placed unacceptable burdens on new teachers and their mentors in too many cases and has not always been effective in building coherently on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during ITT. There are also legitimate concerns about the extent to which ECF programmes reflect sufficiently the need for teachers to develop and make use of informed professional discretion.
- 4.12 We therefore look forward to working with the Government to address these shortcomings in the current ECF framework. More broadly, we are clear that beyond the ECF, it is important that all ECTs are able to access their statutory induction rights and entitlements. We continue to receive feedback from ECTs that this is far from the case in all circumstances. We encourage the Government to review current arrangements led by appropriate bodies for monitoring and securing compliance with statutory induction requirements which are only effective on an unacceptably inconsistent basis.
- 4.13 The DfE is right to note with concern that current wastage rates for teachers with between three and five years' service are at the highest levels since the School Workforce Census was introduced. While the drivers of exit from the

profession among this segment of the teaching workforce reflect those we have identified as applying to the workforce as a whole, we agree with the Government that access to professional development and training opportunities are important considerations in these respects.

- 4.14 Although it is helpful for the Government to signal that it intends to review the effectiveness of the current suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) available to more experienced teachers, it is important to recognise that these programmes are targeted at teachers beyond the three- to five-year experience range. As we have noted in previous submissions to the Review Body, the ECF and NPQs were portrayed by the previous government as representing a ‘golden thread’ of progressive training and development opportunities. However, we made it clear repeatedly to the previous government that this approach neglected teachers who have completed induction but who are not yet at a stage in their careers where an NPQ would be appropriate. Consequently, these teachers’ access to high-quality, relevant and engaging professional development and training remains inconsistent. We will continue to advocate to the Government that teachers across all career stages should have a contractual entitlement to professional development and training, and we are encouraged by the recognition by the Government of this critical deficiency in current teacher workforce policy.
- 4.15 The DfE correctly highlights the significant contribution made by excessive workload and poor wellbeing to teacher wastage. Our previous submissions to the Review Body have confirmed the extent of the adverse impact that these issues continue to have on the propensity of teachers to contemplate leaving the profession or to commit to a career in teaching. The most recent outcomes of the DfE’s *Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders (WLTL): Wave 3* study serves to underline the well-established nature of the problems that the workforce faces in these respects.⁷

⁷ DfE (2024). *Working lives of teachers and leaders: Wave 3 summary report*. Available at: (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67852c953a9388161c5d2335/Wave_3_Summary_Report.pdf), accessed on 13.01.25.

- 4.16 The DfE is right to acknowledge the early steps it has taken to seek to exert downward pressure on teacher and leader workload. In particular, its decision to implement the recommendations set out in the interim report of the Workload Reduction Taskforce, to remove the requirement to link pay progression to the outcomes of performance management, is likely to have a discernible impact on the excessive workload burdens that performance-related pay generates. The reintroduction into the statutory requirements of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) of the list of administrative and clerical tasks that should be undertaken routinely by teachers is a further positive step, as is the removal of headline grades from Ofsted inspection reports as a means of reducing accountability-related workload issues.
- 4.17 However, as the Government acknowledges, sustained reductions in workload that have a demonstrable impact on recruitment and retention will require further radical action. We are encouraged by the commitment of the Government to work together with trade unions and employers, through the Improving Education Together structures it has established, to co-produce and implement solutions to the workload and wellbeing problems faced by the profession. Furthermore, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) reported that teachers worked the largest amount of unpaid overtime in 2023, an average of £15,000 per teacher.⁸
- 4.18 We will also continue to draw attention to the impact of poor pupil behaviour on teacher supply. As the WLTL study confirms, pupil indiscipline has become a significant contributor to actual and potential exit from the profession by teachers and leaders.
- 4.19 We look forward to working with the Government and other stakeholders to ensure that every school has the support it needs to ensure that children can learn – and staff can work – in safe, calm and respectful environments.

⁸ TUC analysis (2024)

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/uk-workers-put-26-billion-worth-unpaid-overtime-during-last-year-tuc-analysis>

5. The National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) submission

- 5.1 NASUWT notes with concern the NEOST evidence, which raises the alarm that budgetary pressures on schools could result in schools having no other option other than to make workforce reductions, leading to increased teacher workload and a subsequent drop in teacher retention and pupil attainment where targeted support from Teaching Assistants (TAs) is crucial for managing a growing SEND demand in schools.⁹
- 5.2 The NEOST consultation survey evidence highlights employer awareness about workload pressure and wellbeing concerns for staff. NEOST is concerned that the financial settlement in schools must be a factor to assist in improving recruitment and retention without exacerbating existing cost challenges.
- 5.3 Noting that 'staffing costs make up, on average, around 80% of a school's total costs', and therefore represent the highest demand on overall school budgets, NEOST continues to argue that adequate and sustainable funding is needed to ensure that any proposed pay award can be fully implemented by all schools.¹⁰
- 5.4 NASUWT asks the Review Body to reject NEOST's request to ask the Secretary of State to include the worsening of provisions that would provide for teachers to be moved from the Upper Pay Range (UPR) to the MPR in a future remit.
- 5.5 These matters have been considered by the Review Body previously, and the Review Body has advised against their introduction.
- 5.6 The introduction of such provisions would have a significant detrimental effect on teachers' national terms and conditions and would have a devastating

⁹ National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST), [NEOST evidence to the STRB - 11 December 2024](#).

¹⁰ Ibid.

impact on teacher morale, motivation and retention, when this has already been damaged severely by the workload impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the teachers' pay freeze.