



Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT

3 September 2018

Dear Secretary of State

This letter sets out a joint response from the unions representing the vast majority of teachers and school leaders in England and Wales. Whilst we will also individually respond to your consultation on the proposals for the 2018 pay award, the fact of this joint response underlines the consensus within the teaching profession on the matters below.

### **The STRB's 28<sup>th</sup> report**

The STRB's 28<sup>th</sup> report acknowledged that the last year has seen a "further deterioration in both recruitment and retention" in the profession. Their report contains a wealth of evidence of the crisis in the recruitment and retention of both teachers and school leaders.

The STRB is clear that "relative pay trends are important contributory factors in the recruitment and retention problems facing the teaching profession in England and Wales. The decline in the position of the teachers' pay framework in the labour market for graduate professions needs to be addressed as a matter of priority. With the prospects for wage growth in the wider economy better than for several years, a significant uplift to teachers' pay is required to forestall a further weakening in the competitive position of the teaching profession."

The independent pay review body has, in recent years reported increasing alarm at the deepening recruitment and retention crisis; and highlighted the need for an urgent response to this, including effective action to increase the real and relative value of teacher pay, yet their warnings have gone unheeded by government. This year, there seemed to be an opportunity, free from the shackles of the public sector pay cap, for them to act with independence to protect the profession. They went some way to take up that challenge in recommending an uplift of 3.5% to all pay and allowance ranges for September 2018.

We wrote to you in November 2017 regarding the decline in pay in the profession, both in real terms and relative to other professions; making the case for a fully funded, restorative, pay award of 5% for all teachers and school leaders as a first step to addressing this. We

presented the evidence to substantiate this to the STRB and the wealth of independent additional evidence and data in the STRB's report regarding the decline in teachers' pay further supported the case for a significant pay award. It is disappointing therefore that their recommended award, at 3.5%, only affords just over 1% as a restorative element over the current rate of 2.4% for CPI and even less over the 3.2% rate for RPI.

### **The government's proposal**

The government proposes to depart from the STRB's evidence and recommendations and award 3.5% only to teachers on the main pay range. No reason has been provided for this departure from the independent pay review body's clear recommendation of what is required to protect the profession. Their report considered the potential for a differentiated award but concluded that there were recruitment and retention challenges at all levels in the profession that required a consistent uplift to all ranges and allowances. There has been no justification given for a proposal to award UPR and leadership scale teachers a lesser pay award, and one that, below the cost of living, will see a further decline in the value of their pay. We roundly reject this proposal. It has been received as deeply insulting by our hard working members who are experienced teachers and school leaders, at a time when you have personally acknowledged the enormous workload and pressure that they face in delivering the government's education policies. It is simply unacceptable to differentiate in this way, and with no explanation given.

### **Funding the award**

The scale of the school funding crisis in England and Wales is widely acknowledged. The government's refusal to fully fund even the lower pay increases it proposes to implement will put more strain on school finances. As a matter of policy, the government should fully fund the teachers' pay award.

### **The pay grant**

The consultation on the pay award for 2018 does not include detail about the proposed pay grant, and we are concerned about whether this will deliver the protection for all schools in England that was suggested with your original announcement. It is imperative that the grant to each school reflects the shape of their staffing structure and does not disadvantage those with higher staffing costs because they are working with a challenging intake of pupils or engaged in a teaching school or other examples of system leadership. It is also important to recognise the higher staffing levels in special schools and alternative provision in designing the pay grant. We are deeply uncomfortable that the government is not allowing us the opportunity to provide formal views on this part of the proposal.

The announcements made by yourself and Chief Secretary to the Treasury Liz Truss in parliament have led our members to believe that all schools will be funded for the differential between the cost of the increase and one per cent. This is an important principle yet our informal discussions with your officials have thus far suggested that those costs may not be fully covered in many schools. This would undermine the announcements made and could plunge more schools into deficit or having to make further budget cuts. It is critical that the pay grant is designed so that so that every school receives the appropriate funding to make the percentage increases set out in your announcement to every teacher.

Our unions have always asserted, that all teachers and school leaders require an annual cost of living increase to ensure that their salaries keep pace with rising prices, so that no teacher or school leader is worse off in real terms from year to year. We are clear that a cost

of living increase should be applied to all salaries and allowances, and should be wholly distinct from pay progression based on performance.

### **Funding for Schools in Wales**

It is deeply disappointing that the Treasury has failed to provide support to enable the award to be even partially funded in Wales. Whilst the DfE has been able to identify funding to partially fund this year's award, in making a decision about the pay proposal for September 2018, they have failed to consult and prepare the Welsh Government to support schools in Wales in a similar way. Without funding for schools in Wales, the impact of this year's pay proposals could prove disastrous for already stretched budgets.

The funding situation for schools in Wales to implement the pay award is likely to continue to be a source of concern into the new term. The government is responsible for the pay award in Wales for the 2018-19 school year and it is unacceptable that no consideration appears to have been given to funding the award even at this very late stage.

### **Timing of the publication**

When the STRB report was published late in the academic year in 2016 and 2017, we highlighted the problems caused by this unacceptable short timescale for statutory consultation on the Government's proposal and the draft STPCD. We called on your predecessor to ensure that this problem was avoided in future. Instead, this year, the government received the STRB Report in early May, but waited until 24<sup>th</sup> July to publish it – by which time schools had started the summer break. The publication of the STRB Report and your proposals came far too late to allow schools to prepare for the implementation of changes from September. Employers are required to consult formally with teachers and their representatives before finalising pay policies and pay scales for September. This consultation could not be carried out before the end of the school year and schools will be put under additional pressure as they start the new school year.

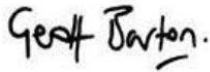
The final STPCD will not now be published until September, when the new academic year has already started, with further potential delays before the publication of the Welsh version of the Document. Even then, the details of the determination and distribution of the Teacher Pay Grant – a key piece of information without which schools will be unable to fully plan – could still not be available. This will create unnecessary additional workload and difficulty for schools.

We again call on the government to understand the pressures on schools and set out and respect a more reasonable timetable for the publication of the STRB Report and the government's response in future years.

## Conclusion

The STRB has recognised the continuing crisis facing the teaching profession and we urge you to heed their recommendations and fully fund a 3.5% award for all. This would be a helpful step in assisting schools to recruit and retain teachers and school leaders in both England and Wales.

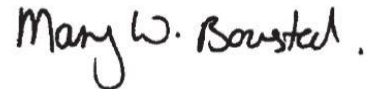
Yours sincerely



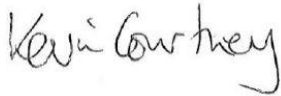
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