



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

29th July 2023

Dear Contribute,

RE: TEACHERS' PAY

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about teachers' pay. I have read your comments with interest.

Teachers have a huge impact on children's futures, and I want all our children to be taught by the brightest and the best. I am aware that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and educational staff faced many challenges and played an incredible role in ensuring that children have continued to receive a fantastic education.

I am delighted that the Government has accepted the recommendations made by the independent School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) of a 6.5 percent pay rise for teachers and school leaders. This is the largest ever recommendation from the STRB. A 6.5 percent increase recognises the vital role that teachers play in our country and ensures that teaching will continue to be an attractive profession. The Government has also agreed to bring forward wider reforms to reduce teacher and leader workload in partnership with all four unions.

Importantly, the Government's offer is properly funded for schools. The Government has committed that all schools will receive additional funding above what was proposed in March - building on the additional £2 billion given to schools in the Autumn Statement. The Government will also provide a hardship fund of up to £40 million to support those schools facing the greatest financial challenges.

ASCL, NAHT, NASUWT and NEU will now put this deal to their members, with a recommendation to accept the STRB recommendation. This deal will allow teachers and school leaders to call off strike action and resume normal relations with the Government.

Turning to your comments about teacher recruitment and retention, since 2010, there are 27,000 more teachers in England, with over 468,731 full time equivalent teachers currently working in state funded schools across the country, including more rural areas.

The department recognises that there is more to do to ensure teaching remains an attractive, high status profession, and to recruit and retain teachers in key subjects. Reforms are aimed not only at increasing teacher recruitment through an attractive pay offer and financial incentives, such as bursaries, but also at ensuring teachers stay and succeed in the profession.



The department is making £181 million available in bursaries and scholarships to attract trainee teachers in high priority subjects for the 2023/24 academic year. This is a £52 million increase on the current academic year. As graduates in science technology, engineering, and mathematics attract the highest salaries outside teaching, the department is offering a £27,000 tax-free bursary, or a £29,000 tax-free scholarship in chemistry, computing, mathematics and physics. The department is also offering a £20,000 tax-free bursary in design and technology.

The department also offers a Levelling Up Premium worth up to £3,000 annually for mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers, who work in disadvantaged schools across England, including in rural areas and Education Investment Areas (EIAs). This will support recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in the subjects, and in the schools and areas, that need them most.

To make teaching here even more attractive to the best teachers from around the world, the department plans to introduce a new relocation premium for overseas nationals coming here to train or teach languages and physics. This will help with visas and other expenses. The department will also extend bursary and scholarship eligibility to international trainees in physics and languages.

The department launched its new digital service, 'Apply for teacher training', in autumn 2021 to make it easier for people across the country to train to become teachers, particularly in shortage subjects.

In autumn 2022, the department expanded the 'Engineers Teach Physics' initial teacher training programme with a national roll-out. This course has been designed to support more engineers and material scientists to train to become physics teachers. The department is working closely with sector experts, representative bodies and academic institutions, such as the Institute of Physics, Engineering UK, the University of Birmingham and the Gatsby Institute, to ensure that the course reflects best practice and includes the most up-to-date industry knowledge.

These initiatives all support the work of the department in creating a world-class teacher development system by transforming the support teachers and school leaders receive at every stage of their career. This begins with initial teacher training through to an Early Careers Framework based induction for early career teachers, and specialist and leadership National Professional Qualifications for more experienced teachers.

I would also add that the Department for Education is aware of the challenges that teachers have faced over the past three years. As such, I welcome that the department is taking action to support teachers to stay in the profession and thrive. This includes the increase in pay, as well as the launch of the 'Education Staff Wellbeing Charter'. The charter is a set of commitments from the DfE, Ofsted, schools and colleges to promote the wellbeing of staff. This includes pledges to work with the sector to drive down unnecessary workload, improve access to wellbeing resources, and champion flexible working, among a number of other actions. More than 2,350 schools have signed up to the charter since it was launched in November 2021.




The department has also published the workload reduction toolkit, developed alongside school leadership staff to help reduce workload, and resources to support schools to implement effective flexible working practices. Additionally, before the COVID-19 pandemic, average teacher and head teacher working hours reduced by five hours per week over the previous three years, as found by the 'Teacher Workload Survey' in 2019.

I understand that the department is also offering state-funded schools and colleges to grant pay for senior mental health lead training, providing skills and knowledge to implement a 'whole school or college approach' to mental health and wellbeing in a setting. Further, the department is supporting staff wellbeing and is funding peer support, individual supervision and counselling from experts to school leaders through the charity, Education Support. Over 1,000 head teachers have benefited from this programme. Education Support also provides a free helpline for school staff.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank teachers again for their remarkable commitment throughout the difficult times over the past three years.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,


**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**