



**The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP**  
Secretary of State for Education

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Mary Bousted & Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretaries, NEU

15 May 2023

Dear Mary and Kevin,

As you will be aware, the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) wrote both to the Department for Education<sup>1</sup>, and to the National Education Union (NEU)<sup>2</sup>, on 10 May. These letters followed a request from the Department for the OSR to provide its view as to whether, in saying that the teachers' pay offer presented to the unions in March was fully funded, the Department's public explanations and statements had been sufficiently clear, trustworthy, and reliable. The NEU had separately raised some questions with the OSR about aspects of the Department's explanations.

The OSR's response is unequivocal. The OSR considered the Department's explanations in line with its regulatory guidance on statements about public funding, and concluded that the "Department for Education has evidenced its claim that the offer is fully funded", in line with the definition used in the evidence that the Department provided to the School Teachers' Review Body, and in the Schools' Costs Technical Note, both published in February. The OSR notes that those documents are clear that the Department's approach focuses on averages across all schools in England.

The NEU's letter to the OSR highlighted five specific points. Four of these were technical points. The NEU's main contention related to the Department's definition of a "fully funded" pay offer. In its response, the OSR is again clear: that "the Department has evidenced its claim that the offer is fully funded in line with its definition and that it has been open in saying that each school will be affected differently by the pay offer".

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<sup>1</sup> [Ed Humpherson to Graham Archer: Schools' Costs Funding – Office for Statistics Regulation \(statisticsauthority.gov.uk\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [Ed Humpherson to Mary Bousted and Kevin Courtney: Schools' Costs Funding – Office for Statistics Regulation \(statisticsauthority.gov.uk\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk)

The OSR judgement appears to contradict several statements on your website<sup>3</sup>, including “DfE failed to provide the adequate information on funding to school leaders.” I am sure you will endeavour to seek clarity from the OSR, as I have done, and correct those statements if necessary.

Earlier this year, the government made a pay offer in good faith – an offer I recognise has been rejected, following criticism from unions that it was not fully funded. Polling evidence from Teacher Tapp suggested that teachers would have accepted the offer had they believed it was funded.

As a leader and public figure, I know I have a duty to act with integrity, objectivity and accountability. That is why I was keen for the UK Stats Authority to review my department’s presentation of the facts and supporting evidence. I believe all parties in this dispute should seek to uphold these standards as we seek resolution to the teacher pay dispute.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Keegan', with a long, sweeping tail extending to the right.

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<sup>3</sup> [OSR adjudicates on Gillian Keegan funding claims | NEU](#)