



The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfes

Dr Mike Aldred
Chair, The School Teachers' Review Body

30 September 2024

Dear Mike,

I want to start by thanking the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) for your vital contribution to the sector, and for your hard work over the past year.

I am pleased that this government was able to accept the STRB's recommendations for the 2024/25 pay round in full, despite the affordability challenges we inherited. We know high quality teaching is the factor that makes the biggest difference to a child's education, giving them the knowledge and skills to succeed throughout life. This government is committed to supporting teachers to stay in the profession and thrive. This award is a key step towards our pledge to deliver an additional 6,500 teachers, and in the longer term, our mission to raise standards and break down the barriers to opportunity for every child at every stage. I also want to thank you for your views on targeted remuneration in your last report, and I acknowledge further consideration and detailed sector engagement is required by my department before any further decisions on that are made.

I write to you now to formally commence the 2025/26 pay round and ask for your recommendations on the pay and conditions for school teachers and leaders for academic year 2025/26. During this pay round, you will receive evidence from my department, HM Treasury and key stakeholders. My department's evidence will, as usual, cover the recruitment and retention context for school teachers and leaders, alongside pay and earnings data, and the expected position following the implementation of the 2024/25 pay award. It will also set out the core funding available to schools for financial year 2025-26, which will be finalised through the Spending Review and announced at the Autumn Budget on 30 October.

That comes against the backdrop of the challenging financial position this government has inherited, including a £22 billion pressure against the spending plans set out for departments at Spring Budget 2024. My department will continue to strive to deliver a mission-led approach to ensuring our vital public services are equipped to deliver the high quality on which we rely, whilst providing value for money for taxpayers.

More broadly, I note your observation on the need for more frequent and detailed equality, diversity and inclusion data at a national level, something echoed by consultees in discussion with my officials. I will therefore commit to publication of pay and progression data by protected characteristics, in parallel with the Department's written evidence, which can support your recommendations this year, and be viewed by the sector.

I know this data will be valuable, but I also recognise the calls to go further. I am interested in your views on how the current framework can best support teachers from all backgrounds and with protected characteristics, including by promoting flexible working. I am aware the pro rating of teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) payments are a concern for many in the sector, so I am specifically asking for your recommendation on whether changes should be made to enable greater flexibility.

Alongside the pay round and formal funding processes, we will not hesitate to make further progress on wider issues that affect the teaching profession in order that we raise its status and improve recruitment and retention. We will work with stakeholders through existing and new channels to ensure constant momentum. My department is also exploring new ways of partnership working with unions and employers, and workforce recruitment and retention is expected to play an important role in future discussions. While we are clear this will not change or impact the STRB's role in setting pay recommendations, these discussions may cover elements in the STRB's scope and inform future remits.

Matters for recommendation

I refer to the STRB the following matters for recommendation:

- An assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in 2025/26 academic year.
- An assessment of any changes to flexibilities around TLR payments, concerning the existing pro-rata rule.

Considerations to which the STRB should have regard

In considering your recommendations on pay and views on wider structural matters you should have regard to the following:

- a) Potential equalities impacts associated with any changes proposed to the STPCD.
- b) The cost pressures that schools are already facing and may face over the year (and how they affect individual schools).
- c) The need to ensure that any proposals are not too difficult or onerous for schools to implement.
- d) Evidence of the national state of school teacher and leader supply, including rates of recruitment and retention, vacancy rates, and the quality of candidates entering the profession.
- e) Evidence of the wider state of the labour market, including the impact of recommendations on the further education teaching workforce in England.
- f) Forecast changes in the size and shape of the pupil population and consequent changes in the level of demand for teachers.
- g) The flexibilities that exist in the current framework, which allow school leaders and governors to develop pay arrangements suited to the individual circumstances and to determine teachers' pay within the statutory minima and maxima.

We know that public sector workers deserve timely pay awards, so, as the Chancellor said in her July Statement, the government's intention is to announce the upcoming pay awards as close to the start of the financial year of 1 April as possible. It is unfortunate that, given the knock-on effects from the previous government's delays to the previous round, it is unlikely that the pay award will be announced before maintained schools should be setting their budgets, but by bringing the pay round forwards this year, we can more fully reset the timeline in 2026/27.

To this end, I would be grateful if you can deliver recommendations to the government on the 2025/26 pay award for school teachers and leaders at the earliest point that allows you to give due consideration to the relevant evidence. To support with this, the government will publish its written evidence as soon as possible after the Spending Review is finalised and financial year 2025-26 budgets are set on 30 October, including budgets relating to pay. I recognise that changing the timeline from recent years will present challenges for the STRB, but I am sure you also share the government's belief in the importance of returning to more timely annual pay processes, so I hope you will understand the necessity of doing so.

Thank you again for the vital work you do. I look forward to engaging with the process over the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Phillipson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education**