

What is the current policy/legal framework?

There is no statutory, national pay body for school support staff. Most school support staff are employed on terms and conditions set by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. The NJC agrees a national framework with potential for local modification. There are no national job descriptions for school support staff, but the NJC also publishes advisory staff role profiles.

Policy Intent

The Government intends to recognise the value and professionalism of the whole school workforce by reinstating the School Support Staff Negotiating Body. The body will give a voice to support staff, who make up roughly half of the school workforce. It will enable bespoke negotiation on pay, and terms and conditions to ensure that staff are paid fairly for the work they do, as well as advise on suitable training and career progression routes for the varied roles support staff undertake. The body will support work to drive high and rising standards in schools and ensure we give children the best possible life chances.

The proposed approach is for support staff in all state-funded schools in England to benefit from a core pay and conditions offer, whilst allowing these providers the flexibility to respond to local circumstances, above minimum agreements reached (or a 'floor'). We will be consulting on this approach and how best to achieve the right balance between greater consistency whilst maintaining flexibility and protecting individuals.

How will it work?

The Employment Rights Bill will establish the School Support Staff Negotiating Body. The body will comprise employee and employer representatives, a representative of the Secretary of State and an independent chair. It may also include other, non-voting, members. The body will have a remit to negotiate remuneration and terms and conditions, and to advise on training and career progression for school support staff in state-funded schools in England. After primary legislation, we will use secondary legislation to name the representative organisations for employers and employees, and to further define support staff for the purposes of the body. There is a duty for the Secretary of State to consult the TUC on membership of the employee side, and we will consult more widely on the right definition of school support staff given the wide range of roles that now exist in schools.

When agreements have been reached and ratified by the Secretary of State on remuneration and/or terms and conditions, secondary legislation will be required for agreements to go into individual employee contracts. The Secretary of State will also be able to issue statutory guidance following recommendations and advice from the body on training and career progression.

Key Stats

798,085 support staff in state-funded schools in England in 2023/24.¹

510,392 FTE support staff in state-funded schools in England in 2023/24.²

¹ [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2023 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

² [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2023 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Common questions

When will the SSSNB have an impact on pay?

- It is estimated that the body could be in a position to start making pay-related recommendations in 2027-28 at the earliest.
- This factors in the time it takes to legislate, consult, set up an Arm's Length Body, and ensure a smooth transition from the current National Joint Council (NJC) process. This should also allow for better alignment with the teacher pay process.

Why are you doing different things for school support staff and school teachers?

- It is important that in delivering on our commitment to reinstate the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB), we reflect the context and demands in the school system of 2025 and in the future.
- Rather than extending an existing framework, we are legislating for a new body for school support staff with a statutory remit for pay and conditions, and an advisory remit for training and career progression. Unlike for teachers, there is currently no national, school specific approach for school support staff in any of these areas.
- Most support staff are currently employed on terms and conditions that are negotiated for local Government employees, rather than specifically for staff undertaking roles in schools such as teaching assistants supporting pupils with SEND. It is no longer viable to continue with this approach, or establish a two-tier system for support staff from the outset, when state schools of all types report that they are struggling to recruit and retain the support staff they need to meet the needs of their pupils. This is why all-state funded schools are included in the statutory remit for the SSSNB.

What will you be consulting on and when?

- We intend to consult before the summer holidays on the definition of school support staff to confirm which staff are within the SSSNB's remit, call for evidence on current pay and conditions and to confirm what pay protections may be necessary for individual employees, and on bringing agency workers into scope of the SSSNB via future legislation.
- Ahead of this, we are continuing to engage with a wide range of partners to inform our work going forward.