



Department for Education

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education

Dr Mike Aldred

Chair, The School Teachers' Review Body

22nd July 2025

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your thoughtful and considered views and recommendations earlier in the year. I was pleased to be able to accept in full your recommendations for a 4% pay award and changes to TLR pro-rating in your last report, and to have taken action on flexible working in the STPCD. The Government remains committed to supporting teachers to stay in the profession and thrive, as high quality teaching is the in-school factor that makes the biggest difference to a child's education. I want to thank you and the other STRB members for your valuable advice, which contributes to us achieving that goal, and for your ongoing hard work.

Pay Awards

I write to you now to formally commence the next pay round. Over the next three years, we will be asking the schools sector to continue to innovate in order to deliver the best possible education for every child, with ambitious reforms to Ofsted/accountability, curriculum and assessment, and SEND. I know how important budget certainty is when making strategic decisions – especially in the context of the wider ask on the public sector to maximise value from every pound spent – and I want to help schools plan to spend their money as effectively as possible to provide every child with the high-quality education they deserve. I would, therefore, ask you to look further ahead with your pay recommendations. I would like your formal recommendations for pay awards for school teachers and leaders in the academic year 2026/27 and 2027/28, as well as an indicative pay award for the 2028/29 academic year to be confirmed or reconsidered in a future remit.

During this pay round, you will receive evidence from my Department, HM Treasury and statutory consultees. My Department's evidence will, as usual, cover the recruitment and retention context for school teachers and leaders, alongside pay and earnings data, and our work towards delivering an additional 6,500 new expert teachers across secondary and special schools and in our colleges.

As last year's pay recommendation came in above the figures we set out as affordable within evidence, the decision to accept the recommendation required trade-offs. We've taken tough but fair decisions to ensure every pound of taxpayers' money is driving high and rising standards for our children. As was confirmed at the Spending Review, the Department's settlement was predicated on the basis that no additional funding will be made available for pay awards, in any year of the multi-year Spending Review period. We will continue to support schools to drive better value from every pound as we expect schools will need to continue to contribute to the costs of future pay awards and ensure spending is maximised to deliver for children and young people.

Teachers' and Leaders' Working Conditions

Working conditions are important to teachers' and leaders' experience and wellbeing, and support the recruitment and retention of staff. Conditions can also play a role in supporting schools to strategically and efficiently manage their budgets and deploy their workforce to best support schools' local needs.

You will be aware that I am introducing measures in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill which will require academies to offer at least a minimum level of pay and to have regard to the STPCD. This legislation is passing through Parliament. I have also committed to make changes to the teacher pay and conditions framework to create a pay floor with no ceiling, to enable healthy competition and innovation beyond a core framework, that will help to improve all state schools. These changes will mean that all state school teachers will be able to rely on a core pay offer and all schools will be able to innovate to attract and retain the best teachers that our children need. Whilst the bill continues its passage through Parliament, to begin laying the groundwork for increased flexibility, in this year's remit I would value your expert advice on some initial changes, namely to salary safeguarding and the facility to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses).

Firstly, on salary safeguarding, we understand that the existing salary safeguarding period of 3 years can be a barrier to schools making workforce changes. I invite you to provide recommendations on whether the salary safeguarding period should be reduced to enable employers to deploy their workforce most effectively, whilst ensuring that teachers are still protected from sudden drops in their salary.

Secondly, maintained schools cannot currently make non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to their teachers, whilst academy schools can use them to recruit, retain or reward their staff. In line with my commitment to ensure all schools have the ability to innovate to attract and retain the best teachers, I am seeking your recommendations on whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to reward teachers, separate to and above any pay progression arrangements and the annual STRB recommended pay uplift.

Finally, teachers and leaders are at the heart of delivering our reforms to the school system. I know that workload is a commonly cited reason for teachers leaving the profession and our evidence tells us that teachers and leaders often work long hours. I appreciate that directed time is also an unusual contractual provision, potentially creating a constraint on schools' deployment of teachers, other than what is best for pupils and staff. However, I also recognise that a change to the current system of directed and undirected time could bring substantial complexities and unintended consequences to the system, and any such change would need careful consideration. I would welcome the STRB's views of the benefits and drawbacks of the current working hours arrangement within the STPCD, considering both directed and non-directed time for teachers, and working hours for leaders.

Alongside the pay round, we will continue to work on wider reforms as part of the STPCD review, push forward to make progress to support our schools and raise the status of the teaching profession, and work with stakeholders through various channels, including the Improving Education Together partnership.

Timing

We know that public sector workers delivering our vital public services deserve timely pay awards, and that early notice of the pay award is important for schools' budget planning. The Government announced 2025-26 pay awards two months earlier than last year, and we remain committed to bringing 2026-27 pay announcements forwards further. That is why we are launching this pay round two months earlier than the previous pay round, and five months before the previous government commenced the 2024-25 pay round.

I would be grateful if you could support an earlier pay announcement by submitting your recommendations for the pay award at the earliest point that allows you to give due consideration to the relevant evidence, which I understand to be the end of February. I recognise that changing the timeline from recent years will present challenges for you and statutory consultees, but I am sure you also share the government's belief in the importance of returning to more timely annual pay processes.

I also understand that producing detailed and considered views on the other matters covered in this remit letter would be highly challenging to this timeframe, and therefore I would be content for you to provide a separate response to the remaining matters in a second report, to be provided by April 2026. My officials would be happy to work with you to support this ambition.

Matters for recommendation

I refer to the STRB the following matters for recommendation:

- By February 2026, an assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in the academic years **2026/27 and 2027/28**;
- By February 2026, an indicative assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in the **2028/29** academic year, to be confirmed or reconsidered in a subsequent remit;
- By April 2026, an assessment of whether the current salary safeguarding period should be reduced to enable employers to deploy their workforce and resources most effectively, whilst maintaining core teacher protections;
- By April 2026, whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses), for those who want to use them, separate to and above any pay progression arrangements and the annual STRB recommended pay uplift.

Matters for your views

In addition, I refer to the STRB the following matters for views by April 2026:

- Views on current working hours arrangements in the STPCD for teachers;
- Views on current working hours arrangement for leaders.

I look forward to hearing your views on this important topic and will reflect before deciding whether to formally remit the STRB on this matter in future remits.

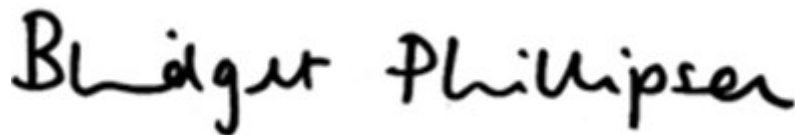
Considerations to which the STRB should have regard

In considering your recommendations and views, you should have regard to the following:

- a) The cost pressures that schools are already facing and may face over the coming years (and how they affect individual schools).
- b) Potential equalities impacts associated with any changes proposed to the STPCD.
- c) The need to ensure that any proposals are not too difficult or onerous for schools to implement and minimise the impact on staff.
- 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.

Thank you again for your considered and important advice. I look forward to engaging with the process over the coming year.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Phillipson". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Bridget" and the surname "Phillipson" clearly legible.

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