



Department for Education

**The Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP
Secretary of State for Education**

22nd October 2026

Dr Mike Aldred

Chair, The School Teachers' Review Body

Dear Mike,

I want to start by thanking the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) for your hard work over the last year, in particular delivering multi-year pay recommendations to support school budget planning and provide greater certainty over the next two years.

High-quality teaching is the in-school factor that has the biggest positive impact on a child's outcomes and remains critical to expanding opportunity for all children. These awards build on the almost 10% increase teachers have received over the last two years and will mean that by September 2027 teachers will have seen an increase in their pay of 17% since this government took power.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act

I write to you now to formally commence the next remit cycle. As you have already provided your recommendations for teacher pay for 2026/27 and 2027/28, this year's remit will focus on matters relating to teachers' and leaders' working conditions.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act (CWSA) is a key part of the Government's ambition to ensure that every child can succeed. Central to achieving this ambition is ensuring that schools can recruit and retain excellent teachers.

The measures in the Act will mean that all teachers have a guaranteed minimum pay offer whether they work in a maintained school or an academy school or alternative provision academy. The 'have regard' duty will mean that academy schools and alternative provision academies must follow the pay and conditions framework unless they have a good reason not to. Alongside this, our commitment to introduce flexibility to the pay and conditions framework and to remove the ceiling on pay will retain appropriate flexibility for schools to respond to local circumstances and workforce needs.

Against this backdrop, I would welcome the STRB's recommendations on the following matters relating to teachers' and leaders' working conditions.

Introduction of a minimum pay floor for academy teachers

Through the CWSA we committed to providing pay protection for teachers in academy schools and alternative provision academies by creating a requirement that they must not be paid below the pay minimum set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). We welcome the STRB's recommendations on how best to implement this, noting the following key points:

- Recommendations should be simple to implement while taking into account the fact that some academies operate different pay ranges to those set out in the STPCD.
- Any recommendations should be restricted to pay. We do not intend to include allowances, Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments or a link to pensions within the parameters of the pay floor.

In the context of bullet one above, consideration should be given as to whether the current individual pay ranges in the STPCD each require their own pay floor or whether one pay floor for all teachers, below which no teacher or leader can be paid regardless of their respective pay range, is a better approach.

Removal of the pay ceiling

We believe that the pay ranges set out in the STPCD should remain the benchmark for all schools. However, we recognise that additional flexibility to pay above those ranges may be useful for some schools to attract and retain the best teaching talent. Though not a specific provision within the CWSA, we committed to removing the ceiling on pay through the Bill process. The following key points should be noted by the STRB in their considerations and recommendations:

- We do not intend to remove or revise the current threshold arrangements. In order therefore to maintain the integrity of the threshold process, any recommendations that impact the main pay range must take that into account.
- In relation to the leadership pay range, consideration should be given as to whether the current facility for headteachers to be paid up to 25% above the maximum of their headteacher group (and beyond 25% in exceptional circumstances) is sufficient flexibility or whether there is evidence that the pay ceiling for leaders should be removed entirely. And, in the same context, whether the current flexibilities should be extended to include assistant and deputy headteachers.
- In the interests of ease of implementation and parity and fairness to teachers within a school, where a school decides to make use of this new flexibility to

pay above the ranges set out in the STPCD, it should, in the usual way whenever a substantive change is made to its pay policy, articulate its intentions clearly in its pay policy, following substantive discussion with governors, including on long term cost implications, value for money, risks and equalities and fairness considerations.

The 'have regard' duty

Whilst we do not require any action or recommendations from the STRB on this matter, as it will be introduced through separate commencement regulations, I wanted to alert you and statutory consultees of our intention to introduce the 'have regard' provision from the CWSA from September 2027.

Working hours – the 195-day provision

Following on from the previous remit seeking STRB's views of the benefits and drawbacks of working hours arrangements and the Government's commitment to introducing greater flexibility within a consistent framework, I would welcome the STRB's recommendation on a targeted amendment to the requirement for teachers to be available for work on 195 days each year. The STPCD currently provides that 'a teacher employed full-time must be available for work for 195 days...' and 'a teacher employed full-time must be available to perform such duties at such times and such places as may be specified by the headteacher (or, where the teacher is not assigned to any one school, by the employer or the headteacher of any school in which the teacher may be required to work) for 1265 hours, those hours to be allocated reasonably throughout those days in the school year on which the teacher is required to be available for work'.

We understand there is ambiguity within the current 195-day framework about schools' ability to offer flexibility in individual teacher working patterns. We are proposing a targeted amendment to clarify that teachers may be available to work their directed hours up to 195 days (or pro rata equivalent), with the intention to provide leaders with greater flexibility to choose to depart from the 195-day requirement to respond to evolving workforce needs.

I would welcome the STRB's recommendations on how the provision could be amended to support schools to respond to local workforce needs. Key points to note:

- Any recommendations should be made on the basis that a teacher employed full time will not be required to be available for work on more than 195 days per school year nor should the number of "directed hours" increase from 1,265 per school year.
- This should not be considered a wider review of teachers' working hours or directed time arrangements.

- Any recommendations must not affect pupil time in schools. As per The Education Regulations 1999, we expect maintained schools to continue to provide 380 sessions normally equivalent to 190 days a school year, and for all state-funded schools to continue educating pupils five days a week. There is also non-statutory guidance for state-funded schools that sets the expectation to deliver a core school week of at least 32.5 hours.

Timing

I am grateful to the STRB for providing recommendations which have enabled schools and trusts to have certainty over teacher pay arrangements for the 2027/28 academic year well in advance.

It is equally important that schools and trusts have sufficient notice of any changes to teachers' and leaders' terms and conditions to help schools plan effectively and ensure that all schools, including academies, can prepare for any changes to the STPCD.

I would therefore be grateful to receive the STRB's recommendations by April 2027. This will allow sufficient time for the Government to consider your recommendations and, where appropriate, implement any changes in advance of 1st September 2027.

Matters for recommendation

I refer to the STRB the following matters for recommendation:

- An assessment of how the minimum pay floor should be introduced for academy schools and alternative provision academies.
- An assessment of how the ceiling on pay should be removed for maintained schools.
- A targeted amendment to the 195-day provision within the STPCD to clarify that teachers may be available to work their directed hours on up to 195 days (or pro rata equivalent).

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 state of national teacher and leader supply.

- e. Evidence of the wider state of the labour market, including the impact of recommendations on the further education teaching workforce in England.
- 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 blue ink, reading 'Lucy Powell'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP

**Secretary of State for
Education**