

# **UCAC's Response to the Government's Response to the STRB's 28th Report**

August 2018

**UCAC** | yr undeb sy'n diogelu athrawon a darlithwyr Cymru

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. UCAC welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Government's Response to the STRB's 28th Report, published 24 July 2018.
- 1.2. UCAC represents teachers, school leaders and lecturers in Wales.
- 1.3. UCAC has also contributed to joint evidence with ASCL NAHT, NEU and VOICE, which is being presented separately.
- 1.4. Teaching should be a highly valued, respected and highly rewarded profession. Teaching is a very demanding, highly skilled profession and remuneration is an important factor in the recognition of skills and status. UCAC is disappointed that the Government, yet again, is unwilling to acknowledge the importance of the profession, not only to the future of our children and young people, but also to the future prosperity and success of our countries.
- 1.5. The disparity in pay between graduates who are teachers and those in other professions, both in their early career and later, undoubtedly has an impact on recruitment and retention and on the way the profession is valued and perceived. The Government must address this issue as a matter of urgency through its decisions on teachers' pay and conditions.

## 2. Delay in publication

- 2.1 There are a number of issues which cause concern about the Government's response to the STRB's 28th Report, not least is the extreme delay in publication of the report and the Government's response. With schools already closed for the summer break before publication, this has allowed no time for head teachers and governing bodies to plan for implementation and consult with their staff and their unions in order to make sure that their revised pay policies are in place by the beginning of the school term.
- 2.2 The Government's delay has caused uncertainty and will undoubtedly result in the unprecedented failure to implement pay decisions by the end of September 2018.
- 2.3 The Government has provided no explanation for this delay.

## 3. Funding the pay rise

- 3.1 UCAC has always argued that teachers' pay rises should be fully funded by the U.K. Government.
- 3.2 The lack of detail about funding for schools in England places schools in a difficult position. The lack of any information about funding for schools in Wales is totally unacceptable.
- 3.3 The U.K. Government is, at present, still responsible for the teachers' pay award in Wales. The responsibility for pay and conditions in Wales will be devolved at the end of September for the 2019-20 pay award and the Welsh Government has no responsibility for the decision for the 2018-19 pay award.
- 3.4 UCAC believes that the U.K. Government is differentiating unfairly between schools in Wales and schools in England and is reneging on its responsibilities for teachers in Wales in this pay round. The Government's refusal to fund the pay rise has significant cost implications for schools at a time when school budgets are under great strain due to long term under – funding.
- 3.5 All schools in Wales face real terms cuts during the lifetime of this parliament. Schools have already made the savings that are possible and head teachers and school governors are facing desperate situations. As a direct result of financial uncertainty many schools have gone through redundancy procedures and / or restructuring processes with teachers who have responsibility allowances (e.g. TLR or SEN allowances) facing a cut to the value of those allowances following the statutory safeguarding period. This is in reality a pay cut. Fewer

These financial issues in themselves make teaching a less attractive career option at this time.

- 3.6 We call on the UK Government to issue extra money to the Welsh Government earmarked for the funding of this pay rise for schools in Wales – the money should include a sufficient sum to implement the pay award for every teacher and school leader.

## 4. The pay award

- 4.1. In our evidence to the STRB we called for a restorative award of 5%. UCAC believes that, as a minimum, 5% is required to set teachers' pay on the path to being comparable in future with the pay of those in other graduate professions. The STRB has gone some way to meeting our request but, in our opinion, the 3.5% recommendation is not sufficient to undo the harm of years of decline in the value of teachers' pay due to the Government's public sector pay policies since 2010 (pay cap/ freeze) and also the Government's decision to target pay rises to particular groups. The years of austerity with pay stagnation and loss of income in real terms have undermined the value placed on the profession.

- 4.2. This year, again, the Government Remit asked the STRB to consider recruitment and retention issues: I refer to the STRB the following matters for recommendation

- *An assessment of what adjustments should be made to the salary and allowance ranges of classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders to promote recruitment and retention.*

It is significant that the STRB has chosen to recommend the same award to teachers on all pay ranges, in recognition of the fact that recruitment and retention issues are now affecting every career stage of the teaching profession.

*"In addition to ensuring that a sufficient number of good teachers can be recruited and retained in the profession, the teachers' pay structure must also provide the right incentives for suitable teachers to progress to middle and senior leadership roles."*

- 4.3. The STRB came to the conclusion that *"the recruitment and retention situation has deteriorated, with the trends that we identified in previous reports continuing."*

- 4.4. In Wales we have a range of recruitment and retention issues:

- We are facing a situation of missing the targets for recruitment into ITT (by a third) in some cases, which is worrying for the future.
- There has been a reduction in applications for teaching posts in all sectors in Wales with the reduction being particularly significant in the Welsh medium sector.
- Education Workforce Council Head Teacher Statistics for 2017 show a number of issues concerning the recruitment and retention of head teachers in Wales, e.g. in 2017 there were, on average, 5.6 applications per head teacher and deputy head teacher post (for middle and secondary schools), compared with 18.5 applications in 2014. This serious reduction does not bode well for future recruitment. Considering the reduction in applications for posts and the age profile of head teachers in Wales as of March 2017, with over 20% of head teachers over 55 years old and 45% of head teachers over 50 years old, there is a worrying recruitment situation.
- UCAC is aware of members (at different stages in their career) who are looking to leave the profession. Significant numbers of teachers in Wales are looking for a way out of teaching. Our own research, a Retention Survey carried out in March 2017, with 450 teachers responding, shows that:
  - 36% saw themselves remaining in the profession for a further 2-5 years only
  - 19% could see themselves working another 5-10 years; and
  - only 31% could see themselves teaching until retirement age.
  - 70% of 368 respondents had considered leaving teaching within the previous two academic years
  - 54% of whom had already been looking for a post outside of teaching
- The Welsh Government and Education Workforce Council's data from the School Workforce Survey results based on the responses of 5,115 teachers

raise similar concerns. In response to their question: How do you see your teaching career changing in the next 3 years?

- 35% of teachers / senior teachers and 25% of respondents in leadership roles selected the option “Leaving teaching”; 20.8% of those respondents were under 45.

- This information is very worrying and reflects the severity of the retention situation in Wales at this time.

- 4.5. The STRB also received evidence from representatives of those involved directly with recruitment, such as School Governors and Local Authorities, who “*reported that there were significant challenges in recruiting head teachers and middle and senior leaders.*” Those who have to manage recruitment and retention issues are all too aware of the problems and the consequent impact on schools and pupils. It is unacceptable that the Government chooses to ignore not only the warnings of employers who struggle to fill posts, but also the recommendations of an independent body set up to ensure a fair deal for both the teaching profession and the public purse.
- 4.6. UCAC believes that the Government’s decision to differentiate between the pay of the MPR and those on other pay ranges will do nothing to improve the retention situation and is more likely to exacerbate it.
- 4.7. The STRB has recommended that the 3.5% pay award should be applied to all pay ranges and all allowances to provide the right incentives. By only partly accepting the STRB’s recommendations the Government is potentially creating further recruitment and retention challenges for the future. In UCAC’s opinion it is also devaluing the role of experienced teachers and those in middle and senior management positions. It claims to value teaching and teachers but sends the very stark message that all teachers are equal but some are more equal than others. This is an insult to all those hard-working experienced teachers and those in middle and senior leadership positions, many of whom are currently questioning their place within the profession.
- 4.8. This lack of investment in teachers and teaching is unacceptable. The 3.5% recommendation should be accepted for teachers on all pay ranges including the Leadership Pay Range and allowances in payment.
- 4.9. By targeting the 3.5% for the main pay range only, the Government has failed to:
  - acknowledge the need to ensure that the pay of the profession as a whole is competitive with that of other graduate professions
  - has failed to ensure continued differentiation between the Main Pay Range and Upper Pay Range
  - has failed to give teachers a pay increase commensurate with the cost of living.
- 4.10. The 3.5%, 2% and 1.5% increases, following the 2% and 1% increases last year will once again affect the differentiation between pay ranges. Any recommendation concerning a pay range should be considered in the context of the other pay ranges, to ensure that differentials are protected. UCAC believes that failing to award a 2% cost of living pay rise to all teachers during the last pay round had a negative impact on teachers’ pay generally. The fact that those on the UPR did not receive a 2% pay increase in September 2017 reduced the differential between M6 and UPR 1:
  - In 2016 the Main Pay Range maximum outside London was £33,160 and the Upper Pay Range minimum was £35,571; a differential of £2,411.
  - In 2017 the maximum of the Main Pay Range outside of London was £33,824 and the Upper Pay Range minimum was £35,927; a differential of £2,103Already there is now a £300+ reduction in the differential between the maximum of the MPR and the minimum of the UPR. This differential will be further reduced this year if the Government persists in its decision to award 3.5% to those on the MPR and only 2% to those on the UPR.
- 4.11. UCAC believes that the Government’s policy of introducing increased flexibility is a flawed policy which has affected teachers’ pay negatively. In UCAC’s opinion the Document is now a flawed document following the Government’s introduction of more local flexibilities over a number of years. This has created greater disparity in pay and is likely to be a contributory

factor in the worsening recruitment and retention situation – impacting negatively on the perception of teachers' pay rather than impacting positively.

- 4.12. UCAC believes that when an increase is applied to the minimum and maximum of a pay range there should be a corresponding shift in the whole of the pay range; this is the common sense approach, and the only way to ensure that, over time, the minimum of the range does not pass the next point on that range. We believe that this recommendation should be included in the STPCD.
- 4.13. UCAC has always called for the annual award to be a cost of living pay award, applied to the whole of the pay framework and separate from any pay progression. The Government should have accepted all of the STRB's recommendations and should have defined the award clearly as a cost of living pay award, applied to all salaries in payment to be applied consistently, i.e. 3.5% for all teachers and school leaders.

## 5 Conclusion

- 5.1 It is bitterly disappointing for the majority of teachers that the Government has decided to reject the recommendation to award them a pay rise of 3.5%. We urge the Secretary of State to reconsider this position.
- 5.2 UCAC calls on the Government to recommend that all salaries in payment are uplifted by 3.5%.
- 5.3 UCAC calls on the Government to make extra funding available for the Welsh Government, earmarked for the teachers' pay award, to ensure parity and fairness in the treatment of teachers in Wales and England by the Government responsible for their pay and conditions at this time.

UCAC, August 2018



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