



**WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO  
THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' REVIEW BODY  
JANUARY 2020**

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## 1) Introduction

- 1.1 In order to address both the recruitment to and retention of teachers to the profession what is needed is a fully funded pay award and a pay structure that supports teaching as a long term career choice.
- 1.2 Voice – the Union for Education Professionals, represents teachers, lecturers, school support staff and childcare professional, we are an independent trade union.
- 1.3 As always, we welcome the opportunity to submit written evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body in response to the remit for its latest Report. We remain committed to working productively with the STRB and the government on matters of teachers' pay. We agree with the Review Body that *"The national pay framework must therefore support initial teacher recruitment, motivate and retain experienced teachers, and provide a career pathway with incentives to progress into leadership roles"* (STRB 29<sup>th</sup> Report) and were therefore understandably disappointed that the Government chose a divisive approach in its implementation of the uplift across unqualified, MPS and UPS and Leadership Roles.
- 1.4 We continue to be dismayed by the repeated emphasis that the STRB reports on the steps it has taken to ensure affordability. Such constraints have no place in the work of a truly independent Review Body. Indeed, the STRB noted, *"Failing to prioritise teacher supply through an investment in pay may lead to financial savings in the short term, but these are likely to be outweighed by additional costs and reduced productivity across the education system in the longer term"* (STRB 29<sup>th</sup> Report). Therefore, we encourage the review body to recommend on the basis of the evidence, written and oral, presented to it, not in response to external instruction and constraint.
- 1.5 Despite the last recommended pay award, the full benefits of which are denied to more experienced teachers and school leaders, teaching salaries still lag behind those available elsewhere. We know that teachers are not entirely motivated by financial reward, but in the current context low salary and uncertain progression do not help.
- 1.6 Voice therefore calls on the STRB to:
  - Recommend on the basis of evidence on the state of teacher supply rather than in response to instructions regarding affordability.
  - Recommend an across the board increase of 5% for all teachers and school leaders.
  - Review the teacher pay framework with a view to introducing national pay scales to ensure that the pay framework provides a clear career pathway, meets current challenges and provides an attractive offer for teachers at all career stages.
  - Seek to establish sustainable and appropriate pay levels in the long term.
  - Work to ensure that teaching re-claims its place in today's graduate job market.
- 1.7 Voice, together with ASCL, NAHT and NEU, has also submitted a joint statement on pay (November 2019). This submission should be considered alongside that joint statement.

## 2) Background

### The Graduate Labour Market

- 2.1 Attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers is a right and proper aim for a government which is determined to raise standards for all pupils in all areas. It is clear from diverse evidence that this remains an issue, that the “crisis” remains and that real steps need to be taken to ensure the situation does not worsen.
- 2.2 According to the High Fliers’ report the number of graduates hired by organisations featured in The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers increased by 4.3% in 2018 with graduate recruitment expected to rise further in 2019. The biggest increases in vacancies are expected at public sector employers, including schools, colleges and educational services as the graduate market moves away from these areas of employment.
- 2.3 Graduate starting salaries at the UK’s leading graduate employers are expected to remain unchanged at £30,000 but with a sixth of places on the top graduate programmes now provide starting salaries of more than £40,000 and nine of the country’s best-known graduate employers paying salaries in excess of £45,000 this year this is significantly in excess of the starting salary for teachers. This provides excellent evidence to support the government’s initiative to raise teacher starting salaries in order that they remain commensurate with other graduate employment.
- 2.4 What do graduates do? 2018/19 reveals a graduate labour market in relatively good health. However, again this data revealed significant falls in the number of new graduates entering teaching roles with just over a tenth (11.6%) working in education, with primary education and universities themselves the largest employers.
- 2.5 At the start of the year the British Chambers of Commerce, warned that ‘labour and skills shortages are set to be the biggest potential drag anchor on business in 2018, since ultimately it is people that make businesses work.’ Data subsequently reveals that 71% of firms in the service sector attempting to recruit in 2017 had experienced difficulty, and the most difficult roles to recruit were graduate jobs.
- 2.6 Perhaps more worrying is the suggestion that the graduate labour market is becoming more urban. 22.4% of all graduates – 41,290, found jobs in the capital, and all the major metropolitan areas (with the exception of West Yorkshire, where numbers held steady) saw rises in the number of graduates. The proportion working outside large metropolitan areas fell from 59% to 58.5%. Educational settings in coastal areas have already been identified as *areas of skills shortage*. Could this now extend into rural and extra-urban areas and what can be done to safeguard these positions?

### Demand for Teachers

- 2.7 As can be expected the DfE workforce survey reflects a buoyant and healthy picture with total teacher numbers up again for 2017. The total number of teachers is 453,411, up slightly due to the number of new entrants exceeding the number of leavers.
- 2.8 Whilst the number of nursery and primary teachers has risen by 0.5%, those working in secondary classrooms has fallen by 0.3% despite this being where the pupil population bulge is now heading. This population is forecast to continue rising until around 2025 reaching an estimated 3.28 million pupils leading to an increase in the pupil teacher ratio unless remedial action is taken.

- 2.9 With rising pupil numbers, and optimistic graduate market it is perhaps unsurprising that key subjects such as maths and science are suffering from significant under recruitment. And DfE statistics reveal that this has fallen from last year.
- 2.10 Other subjects that fall short of the recruitment targets include computing, chemistry and modern foreign languages – the last of which fell from 88 per cent last year to 62 per cent.
- 2.11 The government only met 85% of its postgraduate trainee recruitment targets for secondary schools in total despite significant outlay on a national advertising campaign.

### **3) Matters for recommendation**

#### Adjustments to the Salary and Allowance Ranges

- 3.1 In line with previous evidence submitted and statements made on behalf of the joint unions, Voice remains convinced that salary increases made since the lifting of the 1% cap have remained insufficient to address the real term losses sustained by teachers over the last 10 years.
- 3.2 We have welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement that he intends to raise the starting salary for teachers to £30,000 by 2022, thereby finally bringing it in line with salaries available to graduates in other professions. However, we are clear that this move, and any interim increases to pave the way to this level of salary, must also be reflected in the rest of the pay structure. This will mean significant investment in schools to enable them to implement these changes. In our view it is not enough to have an attractive starting salary if it is not followed by an equally attractive prospect of career progression. Pay differentials need to be maintained in order to retain teachers long term. Failure to do this will not halt the current trend for new teachers to leave within the first four years of service.
- 3.3 The remit letter speaks of a "strong case for schools to move towards a relatively flatter pay progression structure than is currently typical, alongside significantly higher starting and early career salaries". It is unclear here what is meant by a "flatter pay progression structure". We have interpreted this to mean either a shorter pay scale or range or smaller increases year on year as teachers progress up the scale/range.
- 3.4 Voice has warned before about "frontloading" the pay structure. We agree that teaching needs a competitive and attractive starting salary and attempts in this direction have already been made. However, this has proved that recent pay increases have had the very negative effect of making more experienced teachers feel forgotten and undervalued. The effects of this on the teacher recruitment crisis have not been as positive as had been hoped – in the case of older more experienced teachers quite the opposite.
- 3.5 As we have said before, Voice is very much opposed to differential pay awards. When retention throughout the profession is so crucial, it is important that all teachers are treated equitably. This is why we are clear that any major uplift in starting salary to £30,000 cannot be viewed in isolation. We hope that this is not just a grand gesture that cannot be followed up in the rest of the pay structure.
- 3.6 In the interim period and for the 2020 pay increase we remain of the view that a minimum of 5% is needed for all teachers to include the pay ranges and the allowances.

## Performance related pay progression

- 3.7 Voice believes that the re-examination of the pay progression pathway for teachers outlined in the remit letter is very timely. In our view the changes made to the pay framework in 2013 have not had the intended effect ie the recruitment and retention of more teachers and the delegation of pay decisions to the level of the individual school with only a very loose, flexible overarching structure. Instead of improving the reward on offer to teachers, this system has become a contributory factor to the current crisis in teacher supply.
- 3.8 From September 2013 teachers' pay progression became overtly linked to performance in all areas of the pay scales. Previously this had only been the case on the Upper and Leadership Scales. Since 2014 Voice and Voice members have taken part in a longitudinal study of performance related pay for teachers in England and Wales, carried out by David Marsden of the London School of Economics. The findings of this research support the feedback that we have had from members that PRP does not always sit comfortably with teachers and their perception of their job. The research has found that overall teachers are sceptical about the benefits of linking pay directly to performance (however that is measured). They do not feel that it will lead to greater fairness or reward good teaching. Many are sceptical because they think that even if they do perform well, their schools will not have the resources to pay them an increased salary. The research confirmed a widely held belief amongst teachers that it is difficult to judge the performance of individuals in isolation and that overall standards are the result of teamwork.
- 3.9 Pay flexibility at school level has also led to widespread fears of favouritism and lack of the transparency that a national framework provides. The LSE research has also shown that it is experienced teachers, those on the Upper Pay Range who are distinctly more negative towards current performance related arrangements than those earlier in their career. School leaders too voiced concern about differentiated pay harming teamwork amongst staff.
- 3.10 A significant factor underlying dissatisfaction with the post 2013 pay structure seems to be its perceived impact on teachers at specific points on the former pay scales. Specifically, those at the top of the old main scale (M6) had a sharp increase in negative views of performance related pay which may be to do with the threshold and the perception that going onto the Upper Pay Range brings with it increased workload.
- 3.11 Previous research by the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) has also showed that the teaching profession was more sceptical about the suitability of performance related pay to their work than other groups of public sector employees. This was linked with negative views about its value as an incentive and, equally important, whether schools would be able to deliver on this even if implemented. The research has shown that few teachers think performance related pay gives them an incentive to improve the quality of their teaching or to remain in teaching.

## Advisory pay points

- 3.12. The removal of the former Main and Upper Pay Scales and their replacement with pay "ranges" have created confusion and uncertainty amongst the profession. Anecdotal evidence from our members suggests that the intended pay flexibilities are not being well used in schools. There seems to be two reasons for this. Most, if not all, schools do not have the financial capacity to reward some teachers more, even if they wanted to. Current school funding is so tight that some schools struggle even to implement the

annual pay uplift. Coupled with this is the lack of appetite, cited above in this evidence, for differentiated awards to colleagues in the same school. The pay flexibilities also cause potential further bureaucracy and another layer of decision making at school level which are not welcomed.

- 3.13 We are therefore pleased that the reintroduction of even “advisory” pay spine points is being considered. It is no secret that Voice, alongside the other teacher unions has always called for the restoration of a true national pay structure for teachers. This would make starting salaries, routes, prospects and timelines for pay progression clear to all those embarking on a teaching career.
- 3.14 Alongside colleagues in other unions we have continued to publish updated spine points for the reference of the many schools which still want to continue to use them. The stated intention behind having pay ranges as opposed to incremental spines was to enable heads to accelerate pay progression for those (majority of) teachers who are performing well. Although many schools, including academies, have maintained their pay structure more or less intact – including using the spine points – others have used the flexibilities as a way of saving money. Voice is not, in saying this, necessarily blaming some schools which are in very difficult financial situations which can only be addressed by more adequate funding.
- 3.15 Our casework experience tells us that in many schools teachers are being denied progression on both the Main and Upper Pay Ranges for no clear performance related reason. Several Voice members have even been told “we are not a UPS school”! Unless there is capacity in school budgets any use of flexibilities will not be a reality for the majority of teachers. We are very much in favour of the reintroduction of pay scales as a statutory provision in all schools, including academies.

#### Progression to the Upper Pay Range

- 3.16 Voice has been broadly supportive of the developments that have happened regarding the Threshold since its inception in 2000. Simplified application by linking it to annual performance management rather than the former form and evidence gathering exercise has made the process far more streamlined and less workload-heavy in the majority of schools.
- 3.17 However, in other aspects the Threshold and Upper Pay Spine/Range have, in our experience, drifted away from its original purpose. The UPS was introduced to offer an alternative career path to teachers who worked to stay in the classroom rather than to go into management and leadership roles. Feedback from our members is that in many schools additional tasks and increased workload are an expectation of “UPS teachers”. This was not the original intention. There appears to be a blurring in many instances between UPS and TLRs especially, but not exclusively, in the primary sector. Our members who choose not to apply to be considered for UPS do this solely for what they see as the increase in workload, many feeling unable to take on any more work.
- 3.18 For this reason, we can see some merit in a reconsideration of the pay scales and a possible merging of the MPS and UPS. This would remove the somewhat artificial barrier of the Threshold and open up the higher end of the salary scale potentially to all classroom teachers. It would also simplify pay progression and present a perhaps more attractive career structure to potential and current teachers. For this to happen, there would need to be a disaggregation of UPS and additional workload. Voice is interested in exploring these options further with the STRB and with other stakeholders.

#### **4) Conclusion**

- 4.1 As in previous years, Voice continues to make the case that ongoing pay restraint is failing to incentivise the right kind of high calibre professionals to enter the profession. Furthermore, the failure to address other factors impacting on teacher wellbeing continues to cause teachers to leave the profession. This has a direct impact on the ability of schools to recruit the necessary staff to ensure high-quality education for all learners.
- 4.2 The evidence we have provided shows the ongoing recruitment situation and highlights the other demands placed on the graduate market. It is clear that significant steps need to be taken if the exodus is to be abated and recruitment increased. The promise of a £30,000 starting salary may help to assuage the issue at the recruitment end, but a flattening of the salary structure will not indicate the value of, nor support the retention of those with experience.
- 4.3 We believe that the time is right for there to be a fully funded, profession-wide increase. This should be coupled with a return to nationally recognised pay scales which will ensure pay parity for all teachers across England.