



The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State

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**To the General Secretary Elect of NEU and General Secretaries of NEU,
NASUWT, ASCL and NAHT**

14 July 2023

Dear Kevin, Mary, Daniel, Patrick, Geoff and Paul,

I am writing following our meeting on Wednesday to update you on: the Department for Education's response to the Schools Teachers' Review Body's (STRB's) recommendations for 2023/24 teacher pay awards; funding for the pay award; measures to tackle workload in schools; and additional funding for further education.

The Government has accepted the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) recommendations for 2023/24 teacher pay awards in full, meaning teachers and leaders will receive a pay award of at least 6.5%. The STRB's 33rd report, which sets out its recommendations for teacher pay from September, also recommends higher uplifts to starting salaries outside London. This means that as of September, the Government will have delivered on its manifesto commitment of starting salaries of £30,000 or more for teachers in all areas of the country – this is equivalent to up to a 7.1% award for teachers outside London. These pay awards will come on top of those already received last year and for many teachers will also be accompanied by additional pay rises due to progression.

Schools will be receiving an additional £525m in 2023-24, and £900m in 2024-25 to support them to meet the cost of this pay award. That is equivalent to the full costs of the pay award over 3.5% which our evidence shows is affordable to schools, nationally, and in line with the evidence the Government submitted to the STRB and which many schools will have accounted for in budgets. This support is being provided for mainstream and special schools, as well as school-based early years and post-16 provision. This amount more than matches the amount that the independent Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) previously calculated was required to ensure that the pay award would be affordable and I am pleased that you have confirmed that this means the pay award is properly funded.

Schools can look up how much they will receive [here](#). This provides schools with the information they need to finalise their budgets. For special and AP schools, an equivalent level of additional funding will flow through the local authority, as usual, because DfE does not have the data to direct it sufficiently accurately. My strong expectation is that all schools will use these additional funds for teacher pay as is intended.

I recognise that, despite this additional funding, there will be a small number of schools that face particular financial challenges. I will increase the support we offer to schools facing the most difficult financial circumstances with up to £40m in additional funding this year, which will be provided on a case-by-case basis.

This support comes on top of the £2 billion a year provided for schools in our Autumn Statement. The core schools budget will now total more than £59.6 billion in 2024-25 – its highest ever level, in real terms per pupil, as confirmed by the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies.

I know how important it is for schools to get their budgets early so they can plan effectively. I plan to align the timing of the STRB process with the school budget cycle to help with that. As someone who has managed budgets across many businesses, I understand how challenging it is not to be able to plan budgets in advance and will work to improve this process.

I am also announcing today other measures to promote recruitment and retention of teachers which remains a priority for this government. We will convene a workload reduction taskforce to explore how we can go further to support trust and school leaders to minimise workload for teachers and leaders. The taskforce will build on the successes of previous working groups and be made up of experts, union representatives and experienced practitioners. This will support our ambition to reduce workload by five hours per week for teachers and leaders, building on the five-hour reduction achieved through a joint concerted effort between 2016 and 2019. Further details in our commitments on non-pay matters can be found in the Annex.


In addition to the funding for schools, we will also be investing £185m in 2023-24 and £285m in 2024-25 to drive forward skills delivery in the further education sector. This funding will help colleges and other providers to address key priorities which are of critical importance to our economic growth and prosperity.

This Government is committed to living within its means and delivering value for the taxpayer. Therefore we are reprioritising within the Department for Education's existing budget to deliver this additional funding to schools, while protecting core budgets. These investments will be paid for by reprioritising existing departmental funding whilst ensuring there are no cuts to core schools' and colleges' budgets, including SEND provision and funds for the early years entitlements, and no cuts to allocations and programmes to address building safety.

This announcement recognises the huge contribution that teachers and leaders make to the lives of children and young people whilst ensuring a fair deal for the taxpayer.

I very much hope that you and your members will now agree to end the current trade disputes so teachers can return to the classroom and the disruption to children's learning can end. I am grateful for your statement yesterday confirming your intention to do that. I know we all share the same commitment to support the learning of children and young people across the country and I look forward to confirmation that they can start the autumn term without the threat of industrial action.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Keegan', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

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Annex A - Commitments on non-pay matters

- i. Government will set a **target to reduce workload** for teachers and leaders by a further five hours per week to enable them to focus on what matters – high quality teaching within three years. This builds on the five hour reduction seen between 2016 and 2019 (see DfE wave 1 report - ‘Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders’ (2023)).
- ii. The Department for Education will establish a **new workload reduction taskforce** to reduce workload burdens on teachers and school leaders.
 - Taskforce membership will be agreed between union general secretaries and ministers within two weeks of the announcement. It will be made up of union representatives, experts and experienced practitioners – with membership focused on maximising impact on workload reductions.
 - The taskforce will focus on securing workload reduction for teachers and leaders. This will include reviewing the causes of workload, the effectiveness of current measures and existing working time rights of teachers and leaders and recommending actions to reduce workload and working hours.
 - The taskforce will make recommendations to government, Ofsted, school and trust leaders by March 2024.
- iii. In addition, the Department will remit the workload reduction taskforce to make **rapid recommendations on two areas by the end of October 2023:**
 - Updating the list of **21 administrative tasks** which do not call for the exercise of teachers’ professional skills and judgement (building on unions’ work with officials in March); we will ask the taskforce to finalise the details and to develop a similar wording for leaders that will be published as statutory guidance and reinserted into the STPCD.
 - **Strengthening the implementation of the 2016 independent workload review group reports** and maximising sign up to the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter.
- iv. Ministers will consider which of the recommendations of the taskforce should be included in the 2024 **STPCD and other statutory DfE guidance**, where this would strengthen their importance and implementation.
- v. It is the Department’s intention to **align the timing of the STRB process** with the school budget cycle to make it easier for schools to plan ahead, make effective choices and reduce nugatory contingency planning.
- vi. Recent **changes to Ofsted school inspection** which were announced on 11 June. Ministers are keen to engage with you and Ofsted on the inspection arrangements, and further changes needed going forward to address the adverse impacts of inspection on workload and wellbeing of teachers and school leaders. We are also confident that the new HMCI will want to ensure a positive and constructive relationship with sector representatives, including the unions.

All of these commitments will sit alongside our substantive existing programme of work on the issues that matter most to teacher retention and wellbeing, including the following recent commitments and improvements:

- Last month we appointed seven **Flexible Working Ambassador Multi-Academy Trusts and Schools** to offer practical advice to school leaders on implementing flexible working, alongside a lead national provider, which will deliver over 50 webinars promoting flexible working. We are currently running a competition to expand the coverage of the ambassadors and are grateful for your ongoing support in helping us shape the programme through the flexible working advisory group.
- We have been working closely with you to develop resources for a **flexible working toolkit**. This will include practical resources for both leaders and teachers. We are hoping to publish this in the autumn term, following testing with the headteacher and teacher reference groups and after further collaboration with you.
- We are **updating the school workload reduction toolkit** to improve its user navigation for teachers and leaders.
- Last month, we launched a **new digital sign up to the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter** for schools which is driving a greater number of signatories and published new wellbeing resources for teachers and leaders. Research is underway on the impact of the charter in schools.
- We have committed to **expand the current school leader wellbeing support programme** this FY to enable up to an additional 500 school leaders to benefit.
- We have committed to **extend the school leader wellbeing support offer beyond March 2024**, when it was due to end.
- We are committed to the continuation of the **Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders study**, in order to monitor changes in workload and provide ongoing insight into workforce issues such as wellbeing, retention, pay and progression.