

UCAC's Supplementary Evidence to the STRB

February 2018

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

1. Introduction

- 1.1 UCAC welcomes this opportunity to provide supplementary evidence to the STRB.
- 1.2 We have decided to will focus mainly in this evidence on the views of the UK Government.
- 1.3 In our evidence UCAC called upon the STRB to recommend a restorative award of 5% as a starting point for restoring teachers' pay to pre-recession levels. In its evidence the U.K. Government puts a great deal of emphasis on affordability. UCAC, however, questions whether the Government can afford not to award 5%, considering the recruitment and retention issues now being faced throughout Wales and England.

2. The U.K. Government's Evidence – general information

- 2.1 The Government expects world-class public services on the cheap. The Government reflects on public finances and a pay award that would be fair to tax-payers generally but does not acknowledge how much teachers' pay in taxes and national insurance contributions which contribute to those public finances and the significant contribution they make to society.
- 2.2 The Government is clearly focused on public sector productivity but at no point does it define what this means in terms of the work of a teacher, nor does it acknowledge that teachers carry out a vast amount of unpaid "overtime." With no finite definition of a working week within the STPCD the hours teachers work outside of the school day have increased significantly over recent years. There is now a general acceptance that the unmanageable expectations in terms of workload are damaging the morale and health of those already within the profession and also affecting recruitment into the profession. Both the U.K. Government and the Welsh Government are working with the unions to try to reduce the burden of excessive workload – but there is still a long way to go and the situation needs significant and long-lasting change. It would be useful, therefore, to have a definition of *productivity* as the Government would recognise it within teaching. UCAC would argue that there is no room for working harder and that both Governments have a responsibility to continue to work towards cutting workload so that teachers can work more effectively and ensure that their students achieve their potential.
- 2.3 The UK Government argues (in paragraph 20) that the link between pay and inflation has been a weak one, historically. We would argue that following such an extended period of pay restraint and pay freezes we need to ensure that pay levels are restored to pre-recession levels – at least – so that teaching is seen as an attractive career option for graduates. It also needs to be an attractive career option for those who are already teachers – and in reality, for many, this is no longer true, with significant numbers already seeking a way out of teaching as a career.
- 2.4 In paragraph 21 of its evidence, the Government compares public and private sector pay (for the three months to October 2017), showing public sector pay approx. 1% behind. The Government, however, refers to employer pension contributions as part of the over-all remuneration, giving public sector workers a pay premium. UCAC believes that a consideration of pensions in this way is unfair. More and more teachers in the early years of teaching are opting-out of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, as they cannot afford to pay their contributions and there has been a shift in the last year as we see teachers in an older age bracket opting out of the scheme (see table below from latest TPS Opt-out Report for October – December 2017). The peak age for male opt-outs is now 30-34 and for female teachers is 25-29. The report notes that for 2017, 53% of those opting out noted personal financial reasons as the reason for leaving the pension scheme.

Table 1¹

Month	October to December 2017	July to September 2017	October to December 2016
Total number of Opt-Outs	2,323	2,545	1,984
Peak age - Male	30-34	30-34	25-29
Peak age - Female	25-29	25-29	25-29
Opt-Outs within 1 year of service	43.0%	42.2%	42.6%
Opt-Outs within 5 years of service	77.1%	74.7%	75.6%

- 2.5 Figure 3 in the Government’s evidence, purporting to show the Percentage of public sector pay premium based on hourly pay for all employees, is certainly unfair where teachers are concerned. We believe that these figures do not include all the unpaid overtime worked by teachers.
- 2.6 UCAC believes that the Government’s references to Defined Benefit (DB) and Defined Contribution (DC) schemes in paragraph 22 are misleading, as:
- all teachers joining the TPS since April 2015 have service only within a DC scheme;
 - the majority of teachers, in fact, have mixed service – within one or two DB schemes and within the new DC scheme introduced in 2015.
 - only those who were within 10 years of the normal pension age of their pension scheme in April 2012 remain fully within their DB scheme.
- 2.7 The TPS has been through significant changes, with a Government pledge that there will be no more major changes for a period of 25 years. As those older teachers within the profession retire we will ultimately have a DC scheme only. It is a major concern to UCAC that there are significant numbers of NQTs who are opting out of the TPS. This is will undermine their own pension arrangements for the future and it will also ultimately undermine the Scheme unless we reverse this trend. The Government seems to have forgotten about them in its references to public sector pension schemes. Addressing issues about pay would go some way to making it more likely that NQTs and teachers within the early years of their career would contribute to the pension scheme.
- 2.8 In UCAC’s opinion there is little in the first 8 pages of the Government’s evidence that has a bearing on the position of teachers’ pay.
- 2.9 In Paragraph 32 the Government refers to teachers “receiving pay rises of around 8% as they move up the main pay scale,” but since the Government’s move to de-regulate teachers’ pay, there is no one “main pay scale.”
- 2.10 The Government also acknowledges in this paragraph the uncertainty created by the increased flexibility within the pay structure “regarding the overall pay rise.” There are clear arguments for restoring a common pay structure and the ability to be able to plan and foresee the pay bill is one of them.

¹ Teachers’ Pension Scheme – Opt-Out and Opt-In Monitoring Report - October to December 2017 (page 4)

- 2.11 In paragraph 33 the Government notes the importance of investing money in other activities and priorities apart from teachers' pay. UCAC believes that you cannot have a good education system, without good teachers; you cannot have an outstanding education system without outstanding teachers. What better investment could there be, therefore, than securing the future of teaching as a profession? And, at this moment, in order to do this, we need an investment in teachers' pay.
- 2.12 Yet again this year, the vast majority of the Government's evidence is about schools in England.

3. Teacher Recruitment and Retention

- 3.1 The U.K. Government's evidence conflicts with that of the trade unions and NEOST. The information in NEOST's evidence refers to how the overwhelming majority of respondents to their survey reported that schools within their Local Authority were experiencing recruitment and retention challenges and that "their responses indicate a further increase in the type and scale of the difficulties and a deepening of the impact from that which we have seen previously."
- 3.2 The Government does acknowledge, though, that there are challenges in some areas and specialisms. It is also clear from their own figures that there are challenges recruiting to secondary school posts, with a shortfall of 20% in their recruitment. It is also clear from Welsh Government figures that the challenges to recruitment in Secondary schools in particular will increase between 2017-2027.
- 3.3 The U.K. Government also acknowledges that there is also a problem with retention, especially within the first five years of teaching with a loss of at least 30% of teachers in their first five years of teaching in England from the state sector. This leads us to question the considerable sums of money spent on bursaries, sponsorship, etc when, within a few years, people move on to careers in different fields. The Government has not included information about the total sum of money used in this way – only the values of individual bursaries etc. When we consider that in England 2017/18 there were 27,895 new entrants to post graduate ITT courses considerable sums of money could be involved.
- 3.4 The same trend for losing teachers within their first five years of teaching occurs in Wales and there is also an investment in bursaries of this kind. Apart from the Welsh medium bursary, there is no link to a requirement to teach for a specific period in order to receive the whole amount.
- 3.5 UCAC does not agree that the changes to teachers' pay introduced since 2012/13 have improved the recruitment and retention situation.
- 3.6 UCAC is familiar with the challenges NEOST identifies in finding suitable candidates for SEND posts. We can recognise the concerns about access to suitable training opportunities and we are also very aware that SEN co-ordinators will face added requirements under the Additional Learning Needs Bill (Wales) which is due to complete its passage through the assembly later this year. We concur with NEOST's views that funding issues have a major impact in this field and believe that SENCOs have already been missing out financially due to the provisions of the STPCD for SEN allowances / TLRs. There are also issues concerning middle leaders generally.
- 3.7 The Government appears to claim that the situation concerning school leaders is quite a positive one but it does acknowledge that some schools face challenges. UCAC believes that the challenges are more significant than the Government claims and this is certainly true in Wales. It is very disappointing that the U.K. Government's evidence contains only one paragraph about leadership in Wales (and that is contained in the Annexe). Clearly teachers and school leaders in Wales and their situation does not feature on the UK Government's agenda, even though it is presently still responsible for pay and conditions in Wales.

- 3.8 In its evidence NEOST refers to difficulties in areas of significant disadvantage or deprivation and also difficulties for small primary schools – they all face challenges in attracting suitable applicants for head teacher and deputy head teacher posts. We can recognise this as a situation that arises in Wales with re-advertisements of posts or with established head teachers taking responsibility for more than one school until a post is filled. In Wales there is also the added difficulty of attracting suitable candidates to Welsh Medium school leadership post and Welsh medium posts generally.
- 3.9 The Welsh Government statistics show clearly the challenges recruiting to Welsh Medium school teaching posts:
- Primary school applications – on average 18 applications (English medium) and 7 applications (Welsh medium)
 - Secondary school applications – on average 8 applications (English medium) and 3 applications (Welsh medium)

4. Applying 2018/19 award (74-78)

- 4.1 UCAC does not agree with the Government's view that the changes introduced to the pay structure have brought positive change.
- 4.2 Restoring points within the pay ranges would help with financial planning, provide an element of certainty for those considering entering the profession – something to compare with other potential career pathways – would give the school / LA / Government a clearer idea of the pay bill for the coming year(s).
- 4.3 UCAC reiterates the view that every teacher should receive the cost of living uplift and it should be applied to all salaries and allowances in payment. This is a view common to the unions, employers and Welsh Government.
- 4.4 We support NEOST's evidence (paragraph 23), a view expressed by the majority of employers they surveyed who viewed the "potential differentiation in a *cost of living* increase within the MPR as an unwelcome flexibility and a major distraction which caused more reported problems than positive immediate or long-lasting benefits."
- 4.5 We welcome NEOST's view that: "the Review Body should not seek to differentiate the award in 2018 by applying different percentage uplifts within the same pay ranges not across them," and that the award should be above 1%.
- 4.6 We believe that the unions and the employers are in agreement on this issue and that the U.K. Government is out of kilter with the common-sense way to ensure transparency and accountability for teachers' pay decisions and to ensure a fairer pay award for teachers which will also begin to address some of our common concerns.
- 4.7 UCAC reiterates the view that the cost of living rise must be fully funded by the UK Government with sufficient funds provided to the Welsh Government to allow full implementation of the award. Schools have faced increasing funding pressures during the period of austerity and this at a time of increasing financial demands, e.g. increases in National Insurance Contributions, the apprenticeship levy, changes to the TPS, increasing costs due to inflation. Schools need to be properly funded and the pay rise has to be fully funded.
- 4.8 In Wales the 2% main pay range uplift was implemented only for those on the minimum and maximum of the main pay range. Local Authorities recommended this approach to schools based

on funding concerns. We support the majority view that the pay award must be fully funded by the UK Government and that the STRB should recommend that the award be implemented across every pay range – for all salaries and allowances and that the same percentage rise should apply to all.

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