

UCAC's Response to the STRB's 26th Report

November 2015

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

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. UCAC welcomes this opportunity to provide evidence to the STRB on teachers' pay and conditions.
- 1.2. This year, again, we are concerned by the narrow nature of the Remit and the fact that the wording severely limits what the STRB can recommend in terms of teachers' pay by defining the pay award as an average 1% award. The Government is clearly once again interfering with what should be an independent recommendation on teachers' pay.
- 1.3. In recent years the Government has tried to justify the decision to limit public sector pay by arguing for the need for pay restraint following the Recession. It has also used the effects of the recession on the private sector as an argument for public sector pay restraint. The need for austerity to reduce the deficit has been emphasised and the slow growth in the private sector has been seen as a justification for limiting public sector pay in general.
- 1.4. UCAC has always argued that the Austerity agenda has been overly harsh. Keeping people in employment, earning a fair pay to reflect the nature of their skills and employment, and paying taxes is a better way of ensuring that the Treasury has a regular income from tax and that people spend money in a way which is good for the private sector and the economy in general.
- 1.5. UCAC believes that public sector pay restraint has a serious impact on the economy in Wales. The public sector is an important employer in Wales and public sector jobs contribute a great deal to the local economy.
- 1.6. We believe that the Government can no longer argue for restraint in public sector pay when there is greater income than expected from taxes and there is also less interest to pay on the deficit.
- 1.7. It is inconsistent of the government to offer the triple-lock pledge on pensions to ensure that they retain their value while imposing a below-inflation cap on public sector pay.

2. Adjustment to salary ranges

What adjustment should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders to promote recruitment and retention within an average pay award of 1%?

- 2.1. UCAC disagrees with a 1% pay award as noted above. There has been a significant cumulative loss in gross pay for teachers from September 2010 to September 2015. There is a strong case for a far higher pay rise for all teachers and one that the Government must fund fully, including by adjusting the block grant for the Welsh Government to cover all the costs.
- 2.2. We are convinced that there is a strong case for an above 1% pay increase across the board. In addition to the significant reduction in take home pay year on year, teachers have also faced a further increase in pension contributions in April 2015. With the loss of the contracted out concession to National Insurance payments to be imposed in April 2016 the take home pay of all teachers will inevitably be reduced by 1.4%
- 2.3. There is a need for a significant increase in pay to ensure that teaching can compete with similar professions in attracting and retaining the highest calibre of teachers and school leaders. In Wales there is a projected rise in pupil numbers of 13,400 between 2014 and 2022 and we will most likely have to rely on re-entrants to the profession to fill vacant posts. We have to ensure that the profession will be attractive enough.
- 2.4. Another 1% increase can only be detrimental to the profession and the education system as a whole.

- 2.5. Private sector wages are already rising and are expected to continue to rise. There is no way that the Government can now try to justify limiting public sector pay. As private sector pay rises the Education sector will face more competition with greater opportunities for employment and better salaries being available outside of the sector.
- 2.6. UCAC disagrees with the notion of an average pay award. UCAC believes that the cost of living pay rise should be applicable to all teachers and that there can be no real justification for the STRB to recommend a different course of action.
- 2.7. UCAC would argue that the pay rise should be awarded regardless of salary progression. There has been a consensus on this in past evidence to the STRB with the Department for Education being isolated in its views.

3. Additional Flexibilities

What adjustments, if any, should be made to the pay and conditions framework to provide additional flexibilities for schools and incentives to recognise performance?

- 3.1. None. There are plenty of flexibilities within the current framework for schools to use to recognise performance if they choose to do so.
- 3.2. UCAC is against Performance Related Pay; we have argued consistently against it, as has the Welsh Government. We do not believe that PRP has a positive impact on either recruitment and retention of teachers or on pupil standards.
- 3.3. UCAC has grave concerns about the current workload crisis which is a major issue affecting our members' lives from day to day, causing poor morale, affecting retention within the profession and, of course, likely to affect performance. A workload report published by UCAC in January 2015 based on a survey of our members during 2014 revealed that over 91% felt that they have an excessive workload. The number of 'further comments' provided in response to the survey was high and highlighted frustrations about workload and the inability to achieve any form of reasonable work-life balance. Many noted their intentions to leave the profession.
- 3.4. Those who said they had a reasonable work-life balance were most often working part time and working on the days when they were not officially employed in order to be able to have family time in the evening and weekends.
- 3.5. The matter is, therefore, even more complex than losing people from the profession. In order to achieve any form of work life balance teachers are giving up full time posts to work part time or giving up posts with extra responsibility to work as classroom teachers. This leads to several important questions including:
 - Who will be our future middle managers and senior managers?
 - How can we retain people in a profession when it is viewed as one where there are no real opportunities for career advancement?
- 3.6. Performance related pay is not the answer. The responsibilities and workload from day to day must be manageable so that teachers will want to take on roles with greater responsibility and develop their careers, as well as provide the education system with managers and leaders.
- 3.7. Unless we can retain people in full time posts and encourage them to go on to middle management roles we have little hope of ensuring suitably experienced staff to move on to senior management roles in the future. Education Workforce Council Statistics show that a quarter of head teachers and assistant head teachers are over 55 years old, as are almost 15% of deputy head teachers.

Anecdotal evidence also shows that many deputy head teachers and assistant head teachers who have the NPQH qualification have no intention of ever trying for a head teacher post. In addition, an alarming number of head teachers in their 40s and early 50s are electing to leave their posts because of the excessive demands of their roles and many vacant head teacher posts are being readvertised.

- 3.8. Excessive workload is clearly the major issue. UCAC believes that providing a minimum statutory requirement of 20% PPA time for teaching staff and 50% management time for school leaders is crucial if we are to get to grips with retention issues and encourage teachers to follow a career path. This will do far more to help the profession and the education system than Performance Related Pay.
- 3.9. Although there is no specific reference in the Remit to PPA and Management time nor to workload UCAC hopes that the STRB will urge the Government to consider these issues.

4. Salary Sacrifice

Whether the existing salary sacrifice arrangements should be extended to provide scope for a salary advance scheme for rental deposits.

- 4.1. Many people, including professionals, experience difficulties getting on to the housing ladder (due to the lack of affordable housing and issues concerning deposits and mortgages). In many areas of the country rental costs have also increased significantly and finding good quality affordable rental properties is a challenge. UCAC would support extending the salary sacrifice scheme to provide scope for a salary advance scheme for rental deposits.
- 4.2. We also believe that we need a long term solution to the housing situation to avert a crisis.

5. Education Workforce Council Fee

What changes to the Document may be appropriate following the introduction of new registration fee arrangements to finance the Welsh Education Workforce Council?

- 5.1. The £33 payment referred to in the current Document used to be the total of the fee paid to the GTCE and GTCW. When the fee for the GTCW was increased the references in the Document remained the same for both England and Wales at £33.
- 5.2. UCAC has, in the past, drawn attention to this unfair treatment of teachers in Wales. The increased fee for teachers will now be used to subsidise the EWC's work in other fields (e.g. Support Staff). UCAC believes that this is unfair.
- 5.3. UCAC also believes that as Registration with the EWC is a compulsory condition of employment in maintained schools in Wales, the fee should be paid in full by the employer. This view is supported by the Wales TUC.

Appendix

According to Welsh Government data¹ (PLASC July 2015):

- There are 1,633 LA maintained schools; almost 500 of them teach through the medium of Welsh.
- There has been a rise in the total number of pupils in LA maintained schools of 623 since January 2014. The total number of pupils in July 2015 was 465,704.
- There has been an increase of over 3,000 pupils aged 5-10 (from 200,580 to 203,847) since 2014.

¹ PLASC data July 2015

- The number of pupils aged 5-10 has been increasing since 2006.
- Class sizes appear to be increasing with 7.3% of pupils in infant classes in classes of over 30 (7,835 pupils); this is an increase from 6.9% in January 2014.
- There has been a 311.7 decrease in the number of full-time equivalent teachers in LA maintained schools (24,510 FTE qualified teachers in 2015).
- There has been an increase of 86.5 FTE support staff in LA maintained schools to 24,441, continuing the trend of recent years.

Education Workforce Council Statistics²

Age of teachers registered as members of a school Leadership Group:

- 45% of head teachers are over 50 with almost 25% over 55 years old.
- Over 30% of deputy head teachers are over 50 with almost 15% over 55 years old.
- Almost 40% of assistant head teachers are over 50 years old with over 20% over 55 years old.

UCAC's Workload Report³

² EWC Statistical Digest 2015

³ See separate document UCAC's Workload Report: Workload Issues (Materion Llwyth Gwaith)




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