

SNCT Teachers' Side

Pay Claim 2018/2019

1. This paper sets out a narrative to accompany the 10% Pay Claim from the Teachers' Side of the SNCT, lodged in February 2018.
2. Teachers pay broadly maintained its real terms value between the McCrone Agreement and the financial crisis in 2008. However, since 2008 pay has declined in real terms by around 20%, as there has been a large rise in the Retail Prices Index (RPI) over this period. (RPI is the best proxy for the rise in the cost of living that teachers experience since it includes full housing costs including mortgage costs – which reflects the circumstances of most teachers - and the sample used excludes the richest 4% of households that account for over 10% of household spending.)
3. This means that a teacher on the same salary pay point in 2018 can only purchase 80% of what their salary could purchase in 2008. When increases to pension contributions and national insurance are factored in, Scotland's teachers have suffered a real-terms cut of almost 25% in their take-home pay over the same period. These are significant falls in the purchasing power of teachers over the last decade and have affected the quality of teachers' living. For the teachers who deliver the government's number one priority – the education of our young people – to be so severely undervalued is something that simply cannot continue.
4. To be clear, this is not a restorative pay claim, since a restorative pay claim would be 20%. This 10% pay claim is a first step towards restoring pay to previous levels, recognising that implementing a 20% pay uplift in one year may be problematic. A significant pay increase in 2018 is necessary, however, if teacher morale is to be boosted.
5. Note - the latest RPI figure is 4.1% (annual change to December 2017) and the Office of Budget Responsibility¹ (OBR) predicts that RPI will remain above 3% for at least the first three quarters of 2018.
6. Constant change has led to significantly increased workload and pressure for teachers. A backdrop to the current state of teacher morale is the excessive workload of the past period and the fact that teachers are working harder than ever to cope with the vast number of educational programmes, changes and initiatives introduced during the last decade. These include, but are not limited to: Curriculum for Excellence, new national qualifications, new literacy and numeracy initiatives, National Improvement Framework, new assessment procedures, new unit/course specification, GTCS Professional Update, national standardised testing etc. Whilst teachers are focussed on delivering Government targets on attainment and equity, they are more accountable than ever, leading in many cases to additional bureaucracy.

¹ <http://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

7. Teachers' pay is uncompetitive. The market for potential new teachers is the graduate market but teacher salaries are currently below market rates for graduate professionals after 5 years and therefore insufficiently attractive. A 30-year old graduate teacher will have reached the top of the pay unpromoted teacher pay scale and may be on that salary point until retirement at 67. This low pay plateau in teaching is systematic and makes teacher's pay unattractive for mid-career and late career teachers. This is affecting teacher retention rates.
8. It is currently recognised that Scottish teachers earn less than equivalent graduates – 21% less than other similarly educated professionals according to OECD figures². Furthermore, OECD figures show that Scotland's teachers' annual teaching hours are well over the EU and OECD averages.
9. The latest OECD figures³ also show that teachers in Scotland's pay has fallen in real term in recent years whilst those in most OECD countries have risen. As a consequence, Scottish teachers' pay has fallen in the OECD rankings of teacher pay and an experienced teacher is now below the OECD average. (Graduate earnings can accelerate quickly in the years following entry and evidence should be sought on movements on graduate earnings post entry.)
10. There is no reason why experienced Scottish teachers should be paid less than the OECD and EU averages for experienced teachers, and for that difference to grow in future.
11. Recruitment and retention of teachers is an indicator of the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Recruitment is generally evidenced by university places, the volume of applications and the places available. In previous years, while this has resulted in some subject specific issues, the view was that there was no crisis in the numbers of those who are seeking places. There is now evidence that for Secondary PGDE there are issues in recruiting sufficient graduates to places. In addition, there is nationwide concern over the shortage of teachers for specific subjects and in certain geographical areas and also concern about the lack of teachers available for supply and the number of vacancies across councils.
12. Retention, as big a priority as recruitment, is an area of growing challenge. There is some evidence that a significant number of teachers who secure SFR at the end of the probationary period are leaving teaching for other careers or to work in other jurisdictions. The reasons for this trend are not easily established but clearly salary is a key element in most career choices. In addition to this, evidence from the Bath Spa University research⁴ shows that 40% of teachers were considering leaving the profession and recent figures indicate an alarming rise in the number of teachers within the 45 to 55 age bracket who are leaving the profession.
13. Scotland's teachers deserve parity with college lecturers. The FE sector has agreed new national pay scales and the top of the scale for an unpromoted lecturer will be £40k in April 2019, with a starting salary of £32k. A 10%

² <http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm> Table 3.2a

³ http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2017_eag-2017-en

⁴ <http://www.eis.org.uk/Latest-News/IndependentResearch>

pay uplift would bring experienced main grade teachers parity with experienced main grade FE lecturers.

14. The Scottish economy is successful and there is no reason why experienced Scottish teachers should be undervalued in the way that they are. The Teachers' Side calls for increased investment in Scottish education, with the Government using its financial powers as necessary.

15. Valuing education and valuing teachers is a political choice. The Government's Draft Budget⁵ for 2018-19, for example, shows a £270m increase in the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work portfolio, which is greater than the cost of the teachers' side pay claim.

Conclusion

16. Scotland's teachers deserve a 10% pay rise. The Scottish Government has repeatedly said that education is its number one priority, and local authority representatives have also spoken of the importance of teachers in the delivery of high quality education.

17. Teachers are central to the provision of education and must be properly valued and fairly paid for the vital work that they do. A necessary step towards restoring teachers' pay to an acceptable level is the delivery of a 10% pay increase for all teachers at all grades in 2018.

⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/12/8959/12>