

Joint Statement between Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and NAHT Cymru

Following constructive discussions between the parties on 30 September and 5 October 2026, Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and NAHT Cymru have agreed to enter a period of intensive negotiations concerning the issues giving rise to NAHT Cymru's current trade dispute.

The parties recognise the importance of securing a timely and meaningful resolution to concerns relating to school leaders' pay, workload, school funding and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision, and are committed to engaging positively and constructively throughout the process.

Further to constructive engagement between NAHT Cymru and Welsh Government on 30 September, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Welsh Language has confirmed that Welsh Government remains firmly committed to the principle of no detriment, whilst also recognising the current uncertain budgetary outlook. The Cabinet Secretary has also confirmed that the issue of multi-year pay agreements will be formally considered by Welsh Government, recognising both the context of UK Government Spending Review timelines and the current remit of the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body.

Welsh Government has also reaffirmed its commitment to finding a way forward on the funding of the ALN system for the benefit of schools, local authorities and learners. The parties agree that discussions should consider both existing pressures and the long-term sustainability of the system.

NAHT Cymru has welcomed the opportunity to engage in detailed negotiations intended to secure meaningful progress on pay, workload, school funding and ALN provision. The union has also offered to engage in detailed discussions on practical opportunities to reduce school leader workload, drawing on the experiences of members across Wales and elsewhere in the UK, and has proposed that this work aligns with the ongoing work of the Pay Partnership Forum.

The parties have agreed to commence a programme of intensive negotiations over the next 14 working days, guided by an outline Heads of Agreement. The Heads of Agreement will be developed and agreed by the parties and will establish the framework for negotiations, including the key issues to be addressed, the objectives of the process, the intended outcomes, and arrangements for engagement and facilitation. The parties recognise the important role of Welsh Local Government Association in these discussions as representatives of employers across Wales.

The parties recognise that the concerns underlying the dispute are longstanding and require both immediate action and longer-term solutions if school leadership is to remain sustainable across Wales.

The parties acknowledge that the NAHT Cymru dispute encompasses concerns relating to school leaders' pay, workload, school funding and Additional Learning Needs. We recognise the union's particular concern about the impact of pay and workload pressures on the recruitment, retention and wellbeing of school leaders.

The parties further recognise the importance of addressing both the immediate concerns facing school leaders and the longer-term sustainability of leadership within the Welsh education system. Discussions will therefore focus on identifying practical, deliverable solutions capable of making a meaningful difference to the experience of school leaders across Wales.

All parties enter these negotiations in good faith and with a shared commitment to exploring whether a negotiated settlement can be reached. Participation in these discussions is without prejudice to the position of any party and does not imply agreement on any specific proposal or outcome unless and until formally agreed.

The parties recognise the urgency of the issues facing school leaders and are committed to meeting regularly and working at pace throughout the negotiation period. A further update on progress will be provided in due course.