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Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MA/KW/0831/20

Mrs Sharron Lusher
Chair
Independent Welsh Pay Review Body
C/o:
Secretariat
Independent Welsh Pay Review Body
Secretariat@ewc.wales

May 2020

Dear Sharron

WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO THE INDEPENDENT WELSH PAY REVIEW BODY (IWPRB)

Thank you for the invitation to provide a written submission to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body on the matters detailed in my remit to you.

As you are aware, the IWPRB is tasked with recommending reforms that should be made to teachers' pay and conditions in order to raise the status of the profession and best support the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers and leaders in our schools. Following the first year, which directly related to pay, I have now asked the IWPRB to consider matters for both pay and conditions. I note that you have considered the scope of this year's remit and have requested evidence accordingly.

The Welsh Government's evidence submission provides factual information and data on matters related to teachers' pay and conditions, including that relating to the wider economy and public sector financial context.

I reiterate, from last year's pay award that it is paramount that recommendations on public sector pay take into account the current economic and fiscal context of Wales, and above all, that any increases to teachers' pay are deliverable and do not place undue pressure on school and local authority budgets. Information on local authority and school budgets is included with the attached advice. Consideration of this data is vital to your deliberations, as this sets out what impact any recommendations will have in real terms.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I also recognise that there will be an impact on budgets of schools and LAs as a consequence of COVID-19. The Welsh Government is doing everything it can to ensure Wales' public services have all the resources they need to respond to, and mitigate the impact of, the crisis. Inevitably, this is placing unprecedented strain on public sector budgets as we reprioritise existing budgets to be able to fund the measures we want to do.

The future path of the economy and the impact on public finances is also unclear. Even before the crisis, we were concerned about the longer-term trajectory for public spending. The UK Government's March Budget implied continued spending constraints for public services in the next spending review period. Based on current forecasts, and without certainty about public spending increases, we will be facing difficult choices and decisions both in the current year and beyond.

The implications of these matters and any possible strain on budgets this year and next will need to be considered in determining any future pay awards, alongside similar concerns across the public sector. However, I believe that teachers will rightly expect fair consideration of their pay, terms and conditions moving forward. It is therefore important that such consideration is given to longer term issues such as these.

Within the 2020-21 local government settlement, funding was included to take account of additional pressures facing local government as a result of both the 2019/20 pay deal and upcoming 2020/21 pay deal. Details are provided in the attached Annex.

In this context, I propose that any recommendations made should not in total exceed 3% of the current total salary bill. Any increase above this would potentially place unsustainable pressures on school budgets. Additionally, it is clear from the attached evidence, that here in Wales the overall position on recruitment and, particularly, retention of experienced practitioners is relatively robust. Consequently, a more flexible approach across the differing salary ranges may be appropriate this year. Several options are provided in the accompanying evidence along with their overall cost to school budgets.

You will wish to note that I have previously made a commitment that the profession in Wales will suffer 'no detriment' compared with their counterparts in England. The UK Government has confirmed that a 3% increase across the pay bill is affordable in England. Further, they have outlined a longer term strategy to increase the starting salary point for teachers to £30,000 by September 2022 and their evidence to STRB reflects this approach. Here in Wales teachers' starting salary is currently higher than in England and pay matches all other ranges. The options mentioned above allow for this to at least continue and/or improve.

With regard to terms and conditions my remit asked that you specifically look at a number of pressing and interconnected issues. In your report last year you recommended changes to the Main Pay Range and the reintroduction of pay scales. Such an approach will require more extensive changes to terms and conditions particularly in relation to pay progression based on performance. Any proposed

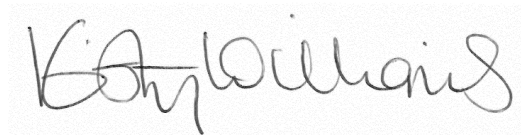
changes must take into consideration all such associated matters including those highlighted in my remit letter.

Specifically in regard to pay progression based on performance, there does not appear to be any conclusive evidence of its positive impact on the profession since its introduction. Indeed, anecdotal evidence from practitioners suggests that operating pay policies in this way has increased bureaucracy and not impacted positively on performance. Consequently, it would appear appropriate to move back to the traditional approach of annual pay progression on a new 6 point Main Scale and 2 yearly progression on the Upper Scale. In such a scenario, a return to an assumption in favour of progression unless an individual recorded unsatisfactory performance would also seem fair. I welcome your advice on amendments to teachers' pay and conditions to accommodate such a change.

Finally, in regard to longer term issues, since devolution of these powers we have an opportunity to ensure that the pay, terms and conditions of teachers are designed to best suit the profession here in Wales. I look forward to seeing your suggestions of areas within the current structure, for discussion with relevant stakeholders, which might be improved in this way.

I look forward to receiving the IWPRB's recommendations once concluded.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive.

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