

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	<b>TO:</b>	Schools Forum
	<b>DATE:</b>	14 June 2023
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Amy Leech HRBP CYPS <a href="mailto:Amy.leech@Rotherham.gov.uk">Amy.leech@Rotherham.gov.uk</a>
	<b>TITLE:</b>	NJC Support Staff and Teachers Pay Award Update

## 1. Background

### 1.1 Support Staff

The National Employers made a full and final, one-year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive** *this equates to a 9.42% pay award at SCP2 and a 3.88% pay award at SCP43*
- **With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer** *(in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4[1])*
- **With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all allowances** *(as listed in the 2022 NJC pay agreement circular dated 1 November 2022)*

The employers explained to the unions that they believe the offer is fair to employees, given the wider economic backdrop. By way of an example, if the offer were to be accepted by the unions, an employee on the bottom pay point in April 2021 (earning £18,333) will have received an increase in their pay of £4,033 (22.0 per cent) over the two years to April 2023. For an employee at the mid-point of the pay spine (pay point 22), their pay will have increased over the same period by £3,850 (13.99 per cent).

### Teachers Pay

Teachers in England have been offered a pay rise after the Government set out an offer on pay, conditions and workload to the education unions.

The offer follows intensive talks between the Government and the National Education Union (NEU), National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and NASUWT.

The offer includes pay increases for teachers for this academic year and next year.

- Teachers will receive a one-off payment of £1,000 for the current academic year.

- This is on top of the average pay rise of 5.4% which teachers received in September 2022. Teachers and leaders have been offered an average pay rise of 4.5% in 2023 to 2024. This is above the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast for inflation at the end of this calendar year, which is 2.9% and forecast to fall further.
- The starting salary for new teachers will rise 7.1% to £30,000, delivering on the Government's commitment.

The Government announced that schools will receive further funding for the pay awards.

The £1,000 one-off payment for teachers will be funded by Government, via a new grant to schools. Schools will receive an additional £2 billion in 2023 to 2024, and in 2024 to 2025, taking school funding to its highest level in history.

The Government believe that because energy costs are forecast to fall at a faster rate than previously expected, an average pay rise of 4% is now judged to be affordable for schools.

## 2. Key Issues

### 2.1 Support Staff

The national committees of all three unions (Unison, GMB and Unite) have rejected the employers' final offer. UNISON has announced a ballot for industrial action, whilst GMB and Unite members will be consulted on the basis of a recommendation that the offer has been rejected.

UNISON's ballot did not get underway until mid / late May. The reason UNISON has given for the delay before balloting starts, is that it needs to cleanse its member data records in order to ensure it meets its legal obligations of conducting an industrial action ballot. The law requires that there is a ballot of employees in accordance with strict legal requirements before industrial action is called for or endorsed. Only where such a ballot produces a majority in favour of industrial action and at least 50 per cent of those eligible to vote have voted, will the action be lawful. The ballot will only be effective for and mandate industrial action that takes place within six months, beginning with the date of the ballot (which is the date the ballot closes).

Ballot papers were posted out from Tuesday 23 May 2023 in England and Wales with a deadline of Tuesday 4 July 2023.

UNISON has confirmed it will be balloting on a disaggregated basis. This means that action could be taken at each individual council / school where a turn-out of over 50 per cent is secured (if members vote in favour strike action).

If UNISON meets the threshold for lawful industrial action to take place, its timetable means such action may not start until September, more than six months after the employers' offer was made. This potential lengthy delay will mean many months of uncertainty for employers and employees.

GMB announced it conducted a consultative ballot of its members with a recommendation that the offer be rejected. It explained that by rejecting the offer, its members will be indicating their willingness to participate in future industrial action. GMB are currently now in the process of balloting in September for formal industrial action.

Unite announced it recommended rejection of the offer by stating, “*Local government employers need to enter into full pay negotiations and make a decent pay offer if industrial action is to be avoided.*”

Unite ballot for strike action will run from 20<sup>th</sup> June to noon on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023, with results likely to be shared by the end July. If the action is supported through the ballot, the window for action will be mid-August to January 2024.

As with any ballot, they will need a 50% turnout plus majority of those who voted supporting action for any industrial action to meet the legal threshold. The Unite ballot is also on a disaggregated basis, so results and resulting action will be on a council by council basis.

### Teachers Pay

Members of the National Education Union (NEU), Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and the NASUWT have all rejected the latest pay offer from the Department for Education. They announced at the end of April that future industrial action will be coordinated.

The NEU secured a mandate for strike action for schools and sixth forms during this school year.

There are currently no further teacher strike dates confirmed but the NEU has confirmed that they have balloted their members for further strike action. Closing date for this is 28 July 2023 if no agreement is reached then strike action will resume in September scheduled for week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> September.

The general secretaries of unions, including NAHT, ASCL and NEU, have written to their members in all schools in England encouraging them to hold joint-union staff meetings on industrial action. They pointed out that their combined memberships would mean industrial action, if taken, would affect nearly every school in England.

The ASCL has announced its first-ever strike ballot after more than 87% of its members rejected the pay offer on a turnout of 56%. Voting will take place in the summer term with action in the autumn if members vote in favour.

The NAHT, which has 37,000 members working predominantly in primary schools, has not been on strike in England, having previously failed to meet the 50% turnout threshold to organise strikes. On 15 May it launched a formal ballot, closing 31 July, of its members on industrial action over pay, funding, workload and wellbeing.

## **3. Key Actions and Timelines**

**3.1** Schools will be updated and informed of future progress with Trade Unions regarding Pay and any future potential Industrial Action Dates.

If agreement is agreed on either of the pay awards, once the finalised Pay & Conditions Document is published, HR will provide further updates regarding the decisions made by Government, and any potential actions that need to be undertaken. HR will provide a further update within the next Schools Forum.

## **4. Recommendations**

**4.1**

That Schools Forum members note the information contained within this report.