



9 March 2023

Dear all,

I would like to reiterate my thanks for the constructive talks we have had over recent weeks. By working together, we have made good progress in a number of shared priority areas.

During our meeting on Tuesday 7th March, it was agreed I would write to you setting out the government's position regarding the 2022-23 pay offer.

I hope that you would recognise that our talks over recent months have been productive and our negotiations conducted in good faith.

However, we are fast approaching the end of the financial year and the 17th March deadline for practically delivering a payment in this year. I am concerned we have not yet agreed a deal for your members and that pupils risk missing out on more days of school. The government has previously offered an additional 3% pay increase, of which 1.5% is consolidated and 1.5% is non-consolidated. This would mean members benefit from an 8% increase for 2022-23.

Despite this offer being rejected by both NEU and NASUWT, I am willing, as a sign of good faith, to make this payment to teachers as soon as possible. As you know, the funds which we have managed to identify for this financial year would otherwise be used for other priorities, so I am keen to make sure that they don't become unavailable for teachers' pay due to the absence of overall agreement.

In return for the payment of the 3%, we would ask for full strike action, currently notified for 15th and 16th March to be paused, so that negotiations can continue. It is imperative that whilst we work together to seek a full resolution, we should not place pupils, in particular those preparing for and sitting exams, under additional pressure of losing more school days. In light of that, we would ask for a suspension until the end of the academic year or until meaningful discussions have ceased. For those teaching unions who did not reach the legal threshold, we would request the same in respect of not re-balloting members during that time.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

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.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales

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.

This solution will allow teachers to receive a significant back payment during this cost of living crisis, but it is also in the clear interests of Wales's pupils, especially as the exam period approaches.

I believe making a payment without reaching an agreement and a significant pause of strike action while we continue discussions would be a strong signal of good faith from all parties and one which crucially benefits pupils and teachers whilst we seek a resolution.

I would like to be absolutely clear that I recognise that, despite making this payment, we would remain in dispute with the relevant Trade Unions and that the payment would not imply acceptance of the offer.

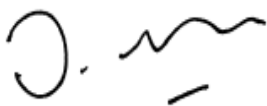
Notwithstanding the above, I believe we have an opportunity to settle this dispute in order to deliver in the interests of learners and your members. I am therefore prepared to propose that the current recommended pay award for 2023 – 24 of 3.5% be increased to 5% with effect from 1 September 2023. This would be a decision made without the need to refer that award to the IWPRB and I confirm that it would be fully funded. If this proposal is accepted, taken together with the commitments on workload, we would regard the dispute as settled.

I would like now for us also to start delivering on the workload offer we have worked on together.

My previous letter set out what the package available is. Some unions have sought further clarity on some aspects. I believe we can best address those points by engaging on the substantive workload issues set out in the letter rather than negotiating the wording of the letter itself. That will allow us to get on with making a reality of the proposals. For the avoidance of doubt we confirm that we are progressing a variety of issues relating to the deployment of Teaching Assistants in accordance with the existing arrangements we have in place.

On the 'no detriment' principle, I can confirm that should conversations in England result in an offer for teachers and leaders which is higher than any pay settlement in Wales, we would match the pay award.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Miles', with a stylized flourish.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg

Minister for Education and Welsh Language