

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MANAGEMENT SIDE OF THE TEACHERS' NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

DATE: 06 February 2025

Disappointment that Teachers' Pay Offer is not accepted

The Management Side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee has expressed disappointment that the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) has not ratified this year's pay offer.

Management Side made a substantial offer of a 5.5% cost of living increase for teachers from 1 September 2024, as well as wide-ranging commitments on workload issues. A commitment to timeframes for future pay offers was also included.

The pay offer would mean teachers' salary scales excluding allowances range from £31,650 to £48,919 and would require an additional, £83m funding each year. It comes at a time of significant financial pressures in education and follows on from the April 2024 pay deal that raised the starting salary for teachers' by almost 25%, and all other teachers pay by over 10%, at a cost of a further £170m each year.

While teachers were balloted for action by the trade unions solely on the grounds of pay, Management Side is committed to working collaboratively with NITC to ensure a sustained period of stability for pupils that is free from industrial action.

Eve Bremner, Chair of the Management Side said:

"It is extremely disappointing that the NITC have not ratified this offer and that the trade unions are proceeding with industrial action.

"We offered a substantial increase as teachers deserve fair pay, but we also wanted to ensure pupils have a sustained period free from industrial action, so the offer included a commitment to work with the trade unions to deliver over twenty measures addressing workload concerns."

Eve Bremner said that the offer was at the very limits of affordability and that the planned industrial action will have serious implications for children and young people's education. It will also limit the capacity to progress the measures on workload.

Management Side has therefore asked the NITC to suspend the planned industrial action and to bring forward proposals to resolve this dispute.

"Action Short of Strike (ASOS) has been an almost permanent feature in schools for nearly a decade. As a result of this action, we are the only jurisdiction that has been without functioning systems of assessment and inspection and lack even basic data and assurances on individual school or system performance. Many other, important aspects of school life have also been restricted, including meetings and communication with parents, classroom cover, extra-curricular activity, school improvement planning and staff meetings.

"Management Side cannot accept a position where teachers are not fulfilling the full extent of their contractual duties and it is important that industrial action is only taken as a last resort in any dispute.

"We are committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils and teaching staff. I would therefore again call upon the Trade Unions to cease their intended industrial action and bring forward proposals to resolve this dispute," she said.

ENDS

Additional Notes:

- The Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) is comprised of Management Side and the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC).
- Management Side is made up of employing authorities (CCMS, Education Authority), sectoral bodies (GBA, NICIE, CnaG) and the Department of Education (DE).
- The NITC (Northern Ireland Teachers' Council) comprises the five recognised teaching trade unions (INTO, NAHT(NI), NASUWT, NEU and UTU).
- INTO, UTU, NASUWT and NEU balloted members for industrial action on the grounds of pay in November 2024.
- Management Side's Offer for Teachers' Pay 2024/25 was made on 31 January 2025 following several months of informal talks and formal negotiations in January 2025.
- The offer included:
 - A 5.5% cost of living award for all teacher and leadership pay scales, including Teaching and Special Needs Allowances, from 1st September 2024 in addition to the incremental progression within salary scales which is payable by contractual entitlement.
 - Over 20 steps to positively impact workload were also included in the offer.
 - A separate 'Heads of Agreement' was reached with the NITC on timescales for delivery of workload commitments and future pay negotiations.
- Management Side's offer sought an assurance from the NITC that, in line with the existing Code of Practice, industrial action would only be taken as a last resort in any dispute having already exhausted other informal and formal mechanisms. The NITC were also invited to provide an assurance that pupils would experience a period of sustained stability, free from industrial action and the threat of industrial action in the context of the commitments and timeframes of the offer and Heads of Agreement.
- The NITC endorsed the terms of this offer on 31 January 2025 and proceeded to communicate with the terms of this agreement to their membership.
- Management Side was subsequently advised by the NITC on 6 February that they were unable to ratify the offer at this time.
- Teachers' terms and conditions of employment are outlined in the Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (NI)1987 (As Amended) which states a teacher's basic minimum legal contractual requirement is as follows:
 - i. To be available for work for 195 days in any year, of which not more than 190 days should involve teaching children in a classroom situation.
 - ii. To work for 1,265 hours in any year exclusive of time spent off school premises in preparing and marking lessons.
 - iii. To teach no more than 25 hours in any week in a primary or special school and 23.5 hours in any week in a secondary school.
- INTO, NASUWT, NEU and UTU advised employers on 3 February 2025 that their members will commence Action Short of Strike Action in schools from 10 February 2025 with members being asked to follow over 30 separate directions, many of which Management Side consider to be a breach of the teacher's contract of employment.

For further information, please contact: press@eani.org.uk