

22 October 2018



Teachers' Pay Award

Local schools are awaiting guidance from the Council on how and when the recently confirmed national teachers' pay award will be implemented locally.

The Schools Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), as issued, sets out the statutory requirements for the pay award. The attached letter from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) sets out a framework for the use of discretion in the application of the pay award to all grades over and above the statutory requirements. The intention of the letter of the WLGA, as the employers' body for local government in Wales, is to ensure a consistent approach across Wales. Whereas the terms of the STPCD have to be implemented by a local education authority and its schools, it is the governing bodies of the schools themselves who have the responsibility to make the decisions on any discretionary.

The Council can confirm that it is expecting to receive additional funds from Welsh Government to help meet the costs of the pay award in-year for the period 1 September 2018 to 31 March 2019. We are awaiting confirmation of when we will receive this funding of 1% of the pay award. Our intention is to distribute this funding in full to our local schools network once we are in receipt of the funds. We appreciate that this will leave schools having to find the other 1% of the award from within their own budgets for this period. UK Government has already given extra funding to Welsh Government equivalent to 1% of the pay award (around £420k for Flintshire) so it is right that we expect this to be passed straight on to local education authorities.

We have explained - at the School Budget Forum, the recent session with Heads and Chairs of Governors, and to the Headteacher Federations - the contents of the Welsh Government draft budget for 2019/20. At this point the budget, which is out for consultation and is still subject to change, provides no new funding to meet the costs of the pay award in 2019/20 as the first full year of its introduction. On the contrary, Flintshire is faced with a 1% (£1.9M) reduction in its funding allocation from Welsh Government. Therefore, there is no true additionality for any budget pressures we face, including the teachers' pay award.

In planning our corporate budget for 2019/20 it is the Council's intention that we will make provision for an uplift in the base funding for schools to meet 1% of the pay award, as a minimum. Our aspiration is to be in a position to provide an uplift for the full amount. However, we are not in a position to confirm either the minimum or the aspirational provision at this point in the national budget setting process as the Council faces a potentially unmanageable gap in its budget-setting forecast for 2019/20 - with such a poor provisional Local Government Settlement as outlined by Welsh Government.

We have already given a commitment that we would not seek to reduce the current level of annual funding in the school funding formula, however intense the budget pressures might be. Managing the implementation of the pay award, without full funding at Government funding, will be a challenge for us all.

Given the above commentary it is essential that the pressure is maintained on Welsh Government to re-balance its draft budget and to prioritise local government alongside other stated policy priorities.