

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department of Education

PAY SETTLEMENT FOR TEACHERS FOR 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24.

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Mr Givan (The Minister of Education): I wish to update MLAs on the current position regarding the proposed pay settlement for Northern Ireland teaching staff.

Even before appointment to this role, I have been acutely aware of the disruption and detrimental impact that the ongoing industrial action in schools is having on the education of our pupils. The resolution of the industrial action among teaching staff has therefore been the highest priority for me. I am committed to stabilising the education system and this cannot be achieved with the ongoing industrial action, including action short of strike.

I know members across all parties will share my gratitude for the commitment and dedication of our teachers and school leaders and will agree that it is not acceptable that teachers have been waiting for a pay award for three years. Our teachers and school leaders deserve to be paid at a level which recognises the value of the outstanding job they do.

I am therefore pleased that a pay offer has now been tabled by Management Side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC). The pay offer equates to a cumulative uplift of 10.4% plus £1,000 on teachers' pay scales over the three-year period of the settlement for 2021, 2022 and 2023. In addition, the starting salary for teachers will rise to £30,000 from 1 September 2023, representing a 24.3% increase from the current starting salary for teachers in Northern Ireland and bringing the starting point equal to England.

Each of the five recognised teaching trade unions that are members of the Northern Ireland Teachers Council (NITC) have agreed to consult their members on the proposed settlement. I welcome this decision and commend the constructive negotiations that have taken place to achieve this. I want the unions now to be given the opportunity to conduct their respective consultations.

The pay offer has been made possible through additional monies made available by the financial package from HM Treasury. While this is a positive development, I know Members will share my concern at the one-off nature of this funding and the pressing need for additional funding to be made available for future years, given the recurrent nature of pay settlements.

Notwithstanding the current and projected pressures on all Departmental budgets, I am sure Members will join me in welcoming this prospective pay settlement that has been reached. I hope that this will bring to an end this long running dispute and our schools can return to normality in the best interest of all of our pupils.