

The Soulbury Committee Employers' Side

David Powell
Officers' Side Secretary
Soulbury Committee
National Education Union
Hamilton House
Mabledon Place
London
WC1 9BD

4 December 2024

Dear David

Soulbury Officers - Pay 2024

The Employers' Side has given further consideration to the Officers' Side's decision to reject the Employers' Side's pay offer for this year. We understand and acknowledge the concerns and disappointment on the offer which were expressed by members on the Officers' Side at the Soulbury Committee meeting on 28 November.

In terms of the process and the factors that determine the Employers' Side's decision on a pay offer, the Employers' Side bases this on evidence provided to it from local authorities and the overall economic context. Consideration is also given to the indicative cost impact of a claim and offer which is based on joint workforce data. The Officers' Side's pay claim is estimated to cost around £21 million which would be a 10.7% increase to a paybill of £196 million and this would be unsustainable for local authorities.

Local authorities continue to face a challenging fiscal environment with a funding gap next year of more than £2 billion and the LGA's analysis shows that due to inflation and wage pressures alongside cost and demand pressures, English local authorities face a £2.3 billion funding gap in 2025/26, rising to £3.9 billion in 2026/27. This is a £6.2 billion shortfall across the two years. As we explained during the Soulbury Committee meeting, each local authority must be able to afford any pay increase as these are not nationally owned or centrally held budgets. With one in four local authorities fearing it may have to apply for emergency government support in order to avoid bankruptcy over the next two years, we have to take the remit and direction that our local authorities give us with absolute seriousness.

You will be aware, and which was highlighted at the Soulbury Committee meeting, pay settlements have now been reached in local government for 1.8 million employees at the same level of the pay offer for Soulbury Officers. The feedback received from local authorities on their budgets and affordability shows that there is no support to make a pay offer that exceeds this for the Soulbury workforce.

With regard to the pay structure elements in your claim on the deletion of bottom points on pay spines for Education Improvement Professionals and Educational Psychologists as well as the deletion of points for an overlap on the Senior and Principal Educational Psychologists scale, it is clear that significant progress was made on structural changes as part of last year's settlement and while we are aware there may only be a minority of staff on the proposed deleted points, for some local authorities there would be a disproportionate cost if these were deleted. There is also support amongst local authorities for having the flexibility to appoint staff at these lower points and local authorities wish to maintain the autonomy to appoint staff on these pay scales.

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The Employers' Side therefore maintains the following offer:

- **An increase of 2.5% on all pay points with effect from 1 September 2024.**
- **An increase of 2.5% on all allowances with effect from 1 September 2024.**
- **Joint Secretariat discussions on reviews of the SPA System and London Area Payments.**

We would urge that the outstanding pay offer quickly forms the basis of an agreement between both Sides so that Soulbury Officers, who we recognise continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive a pay rise as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely



David Algie
Employers' Side Secretariat