



Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00049/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff

6 February 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 10 January 2023 highlighting the concerns raised by the petition P-06-1317 Recognise Teaching Assistants as an important asset to schools by raising wages.

The Welsh Government recognises and appreciates the hard work and dedication school support staff do to improve the lives of our young people in Wales. Teaching Assistants (TAs) are a valued and integral part of the school workforce and have an important role as part of a high-quality education profession.

I issued a Written Statement in February 2022 outlining some of the work being undertaken over the next 5 years to address workforce issues and access to professional learning to support those assisting teaching. My officials will continue the work underway with our partners to make improvements to:

- deployment of teaching assistants;
- access to training and professional development;
- standardisation of roles; and
- pay, as a longer term consideration for local authorities based on outcomes achieved above.

This is a really innovative piece of work initiated by government and highlights many of the concerns and issues that teaching assistants are facing.

I am committed to ensuring that Teaching Assistants have access to high-quality professional learning as identified through the National Professional Learning Entitlement however, pay and conditions for all non-teaching local government staff, including TAs, form part of the national pay negotiations for local authority employees. School support staff pay structures and policies, including any allocation of supplementary allowances remain the responsibility

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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.

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.

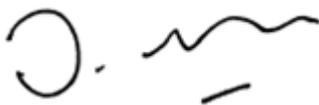
of individual employers, whether this is the school or the local authority. I understand a £1,925 pay award has been accepted for all NJC pay points which equates to a 10.5% increase for employees at the lowest pay point for 2022/2023 and this is a step in the right direction for these valued members of the education workforce. Although the Welsh Government has no authority in these matters we will continue to do everything we can to progress this work with our partners.

We realise that pay and deployment are difficult and complex issues and we as a government will play our part in reaching a good outcome however, we also recognise that this is a long term process. Teaching Assistants job descriptions are currently being considered by a WLGA sub-group of the School Social Partnership Group, which is comprised of the Welsh Government, local authority employers and education workforce unions and we are expecting them to make recommendations shortly on how job descriptions can be better aligned for all TAs. This will also consider the specific issues faced by TA's in Special Schools.

In order to support Teaching Assistants we have also been working with [Education Support Partnership](#) to provide independent, confidential support, to help people deal with stress and anxiety, bullying, career and money worries, and a range of other issues. This support is available to all the education workforce.

I would like to reiterate that the Welsh Government has a clear understanding of the issues being faced by Teaching Assistants and we appreciate their dedication and hard work. We will continue to support the work being undertaken to progress improvements in terms of their pay and conditions.

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