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PAY PARITY MYTHS

Teachers in Northern Ireland get a better salary deal than their colleagues in England and Wales. The pay scales are strictly similar but Northern Ireland kept Teaching Allowances rather than TLRs (a higher payment for a small number of teachers). 70% of teachers in school should have a Teaching Allowance. NASUWT advocated TLRs for as few as 20% of teachers but this was so against the interests of Northern Ireland teachers, it was rejected by the unions on the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council.

NASUWT also campaigned for the so-called National Agreement to be introduced into Northern Ireland. This would have reengineered school staffing structures leading to fewer Teaching Allowances. The National Agreement framework has now been dumped by the Tories in Britain. Another daft proposal was an attempt to introduce an 'Excellent Teacher' allowance for up to 20% of UPS3 teachers. This divisive proposal was never taken up by teachers in England and Wales, where it was available, and here it was rightly kicked into touch. INTO has now tabled a 'Long- Term teaching allowance for all UPS3 teachers, principals and vice-principals.

Through the Northern Ireland Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) all schools are still on the agreed salary scales. Dodgey 'Honorary Payments' being abused by some schools were identified by INTO and have now been suspended by the DE. Pay flexibility, rampant like a virus in School Academies in Britain, has been successfully resisted in Northern Ireland. This will be a battle as the Teachers' Pay situation continues to deteriorate in Britain.

From 1 September 2010, the 2 SEN allowances in England and Wales were abolished and replaced with principals having the flexibility to pay SEN allowances within a specified range. This range, with a minimum of £2001 and a max of £3954, replicates our 2 points but indicates the potential dangers of pay flexibility.

The message is clear. Strict parity with teachers' salaries in England and Wales remains madness. INTO continues to support the recommendation of the DE Independent Curran Inquiry that teachers' pay should be on the basis of contextualised parity.

Frank Bunting
Northern Secretary

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