



The Joint Trade Unions (ASCL, NAHT, NASUWT, NEU) requested a meeting, at the invitation of the Minister with representatives of the Isle of Man Government to resume negotiations around the pay dispute that were paused on 17 March, due to the Covid crisis. The meeting took place today, 14th July 2020. Prior to the meeting the Joint Trade Unions had been heartened to hear the Minister, Dr Alex Allinson MHK, quoted in the media on the 7th July; ***“... I hope better communication and dialogue can help find a fair settlement for our teachers and lecturers who provide such an excellent education for our children and young people”***¹. The Joint Trade Unions took him at his word.

The Joint Trade Unions were therefore deeply disappointed that the Government stated they had no position on which to negotiate a resolution to the pay dispute. They cited clear instructions from the Treasury, allegedly received 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting, that no additional funds were available.

The Government went on to say that any pay settlement, including the annual cost of living increase, would have to be met through cuts to educational provision in the form of efficiency savings and possible reductions in the teacher workforce.

The Joint Trade Unions were shocked and frustrated that despite agreeing to the meeting, the Government refused to enter into any negotiations other than to discuss cuts. The Government was clear throughout the meeting that they had nothing to put on the table to the unions. The Joint Trade Unions were further appalled that there seemed to be no immediate appetite from the Government representatives to request any additional funding from the Treasury.

The Government seemed to have conveniently erased from their collective memory the detailed submission by the Joint Trade Unions setting out the historic pay erosion experienced by all teachers and senior leaders on the Isle of Man over the past decade, currently standing at a 30% real terms reduction in pay - significantly more than other Isle of Man Government employees.

With little or no Government support, the profession has worked tirelessly for many months with key workers' and vulnerable children in hub schools, in order to keep the island functioning, whilst also providing emergency remote learning for other pupils. The Government's position is nothing less than shameful, and will come as a tremendous disappointment to all teachers who continue to go the extra mile.

The Joint Trade Unions remain committed to finding a resolution to this dispute but the Government needs to negotiate in good faith and put forward a serious proposal that avoids cuts to the education of children and young people on the Isle of Man.

¹ <https://www.gov.im/news/2020/jul/07/teaching-union-to-ballot-for-strike-action/>