



Living Wage Schools

FAQ

What is Living Wage Schools?

Simply put, it is a campaign to have the central government provide funding to schools to ensure they can pay the living wage to both their direct and contracted cleaners, caretakers, canteen staff, and groundskeepers (CCCG workers).

We are not expecting schools to bear the financial burden of these changes. The key objective of the campaign is to galvanise broad support across the school community for the living wage for CCCG workers. This will demonstrate to the government that schools and school communities support this campaign and want funding to pay these staff a living wage.

What are we asking of Schools?

We are seeking schools to sign a pledge endorsing our campaign and supporting the allocation of new specific operational funding to ensure CCCG workers can be paid the living wage.

How do Schools sign onto our pledge?

We ask schools to present the pledge as a motion during a Board of Trustees meeting, and then formally adopt it as a resolution. Following this, we kindly request a representative from the Board and school principal to sign our pledge, either in paper form or online. Additionally, we encourage the school to take a photo alongside the 'Living Wage Schools' banner or the printable 'Support Living Wage Schools' sign, as well as providing a written statement about why they signed on.

Subsequently, please send the pledge back to the individual(s) who engaged with the board, along with any accompanying photos.

How much will it cost the Central Government?

Any funding estimates we have made have been insignificant compared to the education budget and the amount allocated to operational funding. Furthermore, in the past, the central government has made living wage adjustments for directly employed staff and in such circumstances has prepared financial contingencies for the scenario that all contracted staff in schools, be shifted to being directly employed. Therefore, this is likely a matter of reallocating existing funding, rather than imposing additional financial obligations on the Ministry of Education.

Why does the scope of the campaign not include all non-teaching staff, such as support staff, teacher aides, administrative staff, library assistants, etc?

The vast majority of these staff members already earn the living wage through pay equity agreements, or are able to achieve a pay increase to the living wage through other mechanisms. An example of this is the pay equity settlement that teacher aides received in 2020, securing a 23 – 34 percent increase in their pay. These claims are set to be reviewed periodically and serve as a powerful mechanism to secure pay increases. Such an approach is not available to CCCG workers, which is a motivating factor behind this campaign.

Lastly, in order to achieve success, the campaign must draw clear lines in the sand regarding which workers are within the scope of living wage schools. This provides clarity not only to schools about what they are pledging to, but also to the central government when deciding whether to commit to our policy ask.

What sort of impact will this have on the average worker?

This change will increase the wage of an individual worker by an average of \$180 per fortnight. For a family consisting of two adults and two children on one and a half incomes, their total income will increase by \$270 per fortnight. This will provide essential funds to cover basic necessities and enable them to live with dignity.