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Monday 29th July 2024

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter dated December 2023 and sincere apologies for the delay in responding.

I wholeheartedly agree that the standardisation in London weighting is imperative to improve recruitment and retention of public sector workers and a necessity to provide dignity in the cost of-living crisis.

Here in Islington, I am pleased to say we adopt the Inner London rates. Teaching and Support staff in Islington schools are paid on the Inner London rates, including London Weighting, which is consolidated within pay.

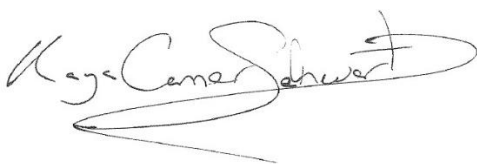
Speaking to schools, there are a number of reasons for concerns in recruiting Teaching Assistants, in addition to pay, including:

- School budgets mean that more frequently Teaching Assistants are recruited at Scale 4 to ensure the right level of staffing to support across the school and meet SEND needs.
- Although flexible working is available and applied, not all flexibilities are available within a school environment (working from home, adjusted and flexible start and finish times) due to the nature of the school day and to meet the needs of the pupils
- When recruiting through Agency, schools find it difficult to find candidates with the required skills and experience, including work with children with SEND.

I welcome the Assembly's work on this and would be happy to explore ways in which we can collaborate to reduce the disparities in contract type as well as better flexibilities for staff that align with the school working day.

Thanks again for your letter.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz
Leader, London Borough of Islington