

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND

RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION FROM THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT'S COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITIES

THE 2018/2019 DRAFT BUDGET

Introduction

1. The Educational Institute of Scotland, Scotland's largest education union, welcomes this opportunity to provide a written response to the consultation initiated by the Scottish Parliament's Local Government & Communities Committee.
2. It is difficult to find clear and transparent data to follow and comment on public expenditure in Scotland in general, and on schools in particular. It is unfortunate that Audit Scotland has not done an update on its Schools 2014 Report¹.
3. Notwithstanding the challenge around data, the EIS has concerns regarding ongoing spending on education across all of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities, based on feedback from our members and local associations who deal on a daily basis with the impact of spending reductions.

The Need for Increased Investment in Education

4. The Audit Scotland Schools 2014 Report stated that "*In 2012/13, councils spent £4.8 billion on education, of which £4 billion was provided through the block grant.*" It is clear, therefore, that Scottish Government sets the limit for the vast majority of school funding.
5. The EIS has repeatedly rejected the policy of austerity in public finances i.e. fiscal consolidation with public spending cuts. This means that the EIS believes that there should be greater public spending.
6. The EIS recognises that UK public sector spending decisions have limited significantly expenditure available to Scottish Government regarding public spending in Scotland but notes that it has not used its powers significantly to vary taxation to

¹ http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2014/nr_140619_school_education.pdf

increase its own revenue. Last year, the STUC argued in favour of a 1p basic tax rise as well as favouring a 50p rate for higher earners. The EIS is of the view that the previous approach of Scottish Government needs to be reviewed in light of the additional taxation powers now available to the Scottish Parliament and that the Scottish Government should explore its options around using its new fiscal powers to support public sector provision.

7. A recent SPICe Briefing² on Local Government finance reveals that the proportion of Scottish Government spending on Local Government shows a downwards trend in recent years. Figure 3 of the Report states that *"Between 2008-09 and 2016-17 the Local Government budget decreased 4.0 percentage points more than the Scottish Government budget."* The EIS is concerned with this trend and its on-going consequences.
8. A Local Government Benchmarking Framework Report³ the Public Finance' website (which is associated with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), looks into Education spending between 2010-11 and 2015-16.
9. According to the Report, *"Across the period of the LGBF, total current spending by Scottish councils has reduced by 11% in real terms from £17.18 billion to £15.30 billion. Local government's relative share of the Scottish budget has fallen and the NHS share has grown. Reduction in spend has been variable across service areas: education has been relatively protected (-4%)."*
10. According to the Report: *"Spending on secondary education has fallen by 8% across the period, linked to falling pupil numbers, but attainment overall, attainment on average and attainment of the most deprived pupils have all substantially improved."*
11. The Report also considers the change in real terms funding per pupil group between 2010-11 and 2015-16, showing that the funding per primary pupil went down by 9.2% in real terms, and down 2.2% (in real terms) for the same period for secondary pupils.

² http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_16-26_Local_Government_Finance_facts_and_figures_1999-2017.pdf

³ http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/documents/2017_Overview_Report.pdf

12. The EIS recognises that some additional funding has been made available to schools through the Pupil Equity Fund. Whilst this resource is welcome it is not universal, it is focussed on a specific policy objective of addressing the impact of poverty (which the EIS shares) and it is clearly intended to be an additional spending stream. It is inappropriate, therefore, to factor this additional funding into consideration of core funding and budget allocations.
13. There is considerable anecdotal evidence that schools and pupil support services are experiencing funding levels that are having a detrimental impact on the working lives of teachers and others working in school education. This anecdotal evidence suggests fewer support workers in classes, less ASN support, fewer educational psychologists, fewer Quality Improvement Officers and fewer school resources resulting in teachers buying basic materials such as pencils, glues etc.
14. The 2011 Pay and Conditions Agreement provided a protection on teacher numbers. However, it is important to note the following statistics: In 2007 there were 692,215 pupils and 55,100 teachers, in 2011 the figures were 670,511 pupils and 51,368 teachers, and in 2016 the figures were 684,415 pupils and 50,970 teachers.
15. According to Government figures⁴, the teacher pupil ratio was 13.2 in 2007, 13.4 in 2011 and 13.7 in 2016. The pupil ratio in primary schools has increased from 16.1 in 2011 to 16.6 in 2016. The number of ELC teachers (early learning & childcare aka nursery teachers) has dropped from 1630 in 2009 to 985⁵ in 2016. The EIS believes that this is as a direct consequence of funding cuts.
16. The Scottish Government has acknowledged that it has maintained a public sector pay cap in order to maintain staffing⁶. Teachers, like most of the public sector has been subject to sustained sub-inflationary pay rises pegged to a maximum of 1%, which has led to a cut in real terms value of around 16.4% in the value of a top of the scale unpromoted

⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/teachcensusuppdata/teachcensus2015/teachercensus2016>

⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/TrendTeacherNumbers>

⁶ "The pay cap, while never desirable, was necessary to protect jobs and services."

https://www.snp.org/first_minister_nicola_sturgeon_scottish_programme_for_government

school teacher since 2003 (using RPI). There has been a recruitment challenge in some areas (such as STEM) for some time, but this is now developing across the sector, with some Universities being unable to recruit sufficient entrants into post graduate courses.

17. A recent independent report by Bath Spa University stated that Scottish *"teachers have high levels of demands, poor control over how they perform their [work], poor support from management, at times strained relationships at work, a poor understanding of their role in an organisation, and are exposed to a lot of organisational change without any consultation. Furthermore, on average teachers work at a minimum 11 hours more than they are contracted to each week, the majority of dissatisfied in their role, and over 40% are planning on leaving the job in the next 18 months."*
18. Pay is undoubtedly an issue across the public sector and specifically a factor in relation to the status of teaching as a profession. There is increasing evidence that teachers pay is dropping relative to previously comparable graduate professions – particularly after six years (at the top of the main scale) – and teachers in other OECD countries. This makes recruitment and retention of teachers increasingly difficult.

Summary

19. The EIS believes that the Government needs to invest more in schools and the education system in general. The increased investment should deliver more teachers and more resources so that pupils can thrive in our education system.
20. The EIS believes that the Scottish Government should, in actions, reject the austerity policies of the UK Government and issue a draft budget that significantly increases public spending, including measures that increase spending on schools.