

## **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND**

### **RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION FROM THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT'S EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE ON THE 2016/2017 DRAFT BUDGET**

1. The Educational Institute of Scotland welcomes this opportunity to provide a written response to the consultation initiated by the Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee.
2. The EIS has concerns regarding ongoing, real terms spending on education across all of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities.
3. In our response to last year's budget the EIS highlighted the following concerns with reference to Audit Scotland's 2014 report:
  - Real Terms Spending - Audit Scotland revealed that, in real terms, spending fell in every Scottish Council bar one in the period.
  - Variations across Scotland - There are significant and unacceptable variations on spend per pupil across Scotland.
  - Loss of Posts - The Audit Scotland report indicated the loss of posts across the whole of Scottish education. At a time of significant curricular change a 22% drop in Quality Improvement posts threatens the role of Councils in supporting development, schools and teachers. In addition the EIS is concerned about posts not included in the Report and, in particular, in the reduction in posts in Psychological Services and Instrumental Music teaching.
  - Teacher Numbers - 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 2013 the figures were 673,530 pupils and 51,078 teachers. While the pupil numbers are standing at 97.3% of the 2007 figures, the number of teachers stands at 92.7% of the 2007 figure. Over the same period the Pupil-Teacher ratio has risen from 13.0 to 13.5.

- Teachers' Pay - External research commissioned by the EIS in 2012 indicated that teachers' pay had lagged behind the final element of the 2001 settlement (in 2003) by 6.5% (CPI) or 12% (RPI).
  - Statutory Provision and Supply Cover - There is a very real risk of failure to meet statutory provisions. On a weekly basis, in parts of Scotland, pupils could be sent home through a lack of availability of supply teachers. This does not happen due to teacher goodwill. Such goodwill cannot be presumed and increased workload and declining living standards will bring a risk of teachers not covering beyond contractual requirements.
  - Secondary Subject Provision - In secondary schools shortages of specific subject teachers are covered by non-specialist school supply which impacts on the quality of pupils' learning experiences and can impact on examination preparation particularly.
4. All of these concerns remain pertinent. The proposed budget for 2016 – 2017 does not provide resources to redress the deficit in spending suffered by the Education sector in Scotland and it does not address areas of continued concern. It is our view that the cuts to local Education budgets have had an adverse impact on both learners and teachers.
5. In addition to the concerns already set out we wish to draw the Committee's attention to the following issues:
- **Nursery** - The EIS has been concerned for some time about the removal of nursery teachers from Early Years establishments by some local authorities as a means of making savings. While we welcome the Scottish Government's recent announcement that additional nursery teachers or degree qualified childcare practitioners will be appointed to nurseries in areas of deprivation, we remain committed to the principle of universal equal and minimum access to a nursery teacher as the most sound means of ensuring both quality and equity within Early Years. This would require significant additional funding and a realisation in practice of the Government's commitment to every nursery pupil having "access" to a teacher.

- **ASN** – Members have expressed concerns about the lack of resources available to support Additional Support Needs provision and with GIRFEC implementation costs and issues coming on-stream we have increased concerns about the level of funding available.
- **EAL** –We have researched the provision of English as an Additional Language support and believe additional funding and support is required, particularly for local authority areas which have higher density migrant populations and where, consequently, available provision is very stretched. In the context of Scotland welcoming refugees, a sentiment endorsed by the EIS, is important that provision is made in key budgets such as education, to ensure that the children of refugees are supported in their development.
- **Teacher Numbers** – The EIS does not believe that teacher numbers should be seen as flexible in allowing Councils to meet their spending/cutting targets. We welcome the Scottish Government’s bilateral agreement with the EIS about maintaining the commitment on teacher numbers for the second year of the SNCT agreed 2-year pay deal but obviously this requires the necessary funding to be put in place to deliver this objective. Suggestions that the number of teachers in the system does not have a direct impact on educational attainment are not accepted. The development of a national staffing standard is a proposal that the EIS has advocated and would continue to support but clearly not in the context of such a development being based on a cost cutting objective. The EIS would oppose any attempt to cut the number of teachers, reduce the existing Pupil-Teacher ratios or to increase class sizes.
- **Attainment and Standardised Assessments** - The cost of the introduction of standardised assessments as part of the National Improvement Framework needs to be considered. At present nearly all Local Authorities use some form of standardised testing. In 2013 the EIS carried out an FIO request on the costs of standardised base-line assessments and found that councils spent large amounts of money, up to £120,000 in one case, each year on these. In our view Local Authorities should commit to discontinuation of their local testing regimes in the event of a national assessment system being

established with the money saved being redeployed into other areas of educational spending.

- **Teachers' Pay** – The 2015/2016 pay award has not addressed the real terms decline in teachers' pay since 2003.

6. From the summaries of the local authority "round-table discussions" it seems that some representatives of Local Authorities would wish "flexibility" to assist with making the cost savings needed to meet their budgets.

The EIS does not believe that reducing teacher numbers, removing preparation time for teachers or increasing class sizes are means to achieving a better education provision or raising attainment within Scotland's schools.

7. Closing the attainment gap – equity. The EIS welcomes the funding associated with the Attainment Challenge which will make a significant difference in those areas where it is being spent. The scale of the challenge, however, means that if the shared objective of reducing inequity in our education system is to be achieved, substantial additional investment will be required. Resource has to match rhetoric or we will be left with little more than pious statements.