

EIS Parliamentary Education Briefing on Stand Up for Quality Education

Background

The EIS is the largest teacher trade union in Scotland, representing over 80% of all teachers across nursery, special, primary and secondary education.

Scotland has a world class education system and delivers excellent outcomes for pupils despite significant resourcing challenges. Teachers and other staff work extremely hard to ensure that pupils are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens i.e. that young people are prepared for future learning and for life.

School teachers in Scotland face challenges. Scotland did not participate in OECD TALIS 2018 and there has been no national or systematic comprehensive engagement by the Scottish Government with teachers on their job satisfaction or work stressors. The EIS has had to fill this gap by surveying members and analysing the responses to determine findings and to make recommendations.

The EIS launched its Stand Up for Quality Education (SU4QE) campaign at its AGM in June 2023. The SU4QE campaign has 3 key priority areas identified in our 2023 members survey in which over 16,000 members responded:

- Build the skills, resources and school culture to address distressed, violent and aggressive pupil behaviour;
- An increase in funding and support for pupils with additional support needs (ASN); and
- A significant reduction in teacher workload.

If these issues are successfully addressed by the Scottish Government, COSLA, Local Authorities and teachers we shall be able to sustainably deliver quality education for all.

This briefing paper sets out the evidence supporting the need for national action in each of the three areas above, and the national actions sought.

Section 1: Pupil Behaviour

The 'Pupil Behaviour' element of the Stand Up for Quality Education (SU4QE) campaign was launched in the national context of:

- Over a **decade of austerity** in which **many Local Authorities' staffing and professional support services have reduced**
- An increase in pupil counselling need
- The **effect of the Covid Pandemic** on pupils, parents, teachers, schools and society
- Increasing influence of **social media**
- An exponential increase in the number of **pupils** with ASN
- A **presumption of mainstreaming and an increased reliance on restorative justice leading to fewer pupil exclusions**

The Health and Safety Executive and the EIS define violence and aggression as; *"any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work."* This definition includes:

- *verbal abuse or threats, including face-to-face, online and via telephone*
- *physical attacks"*

It should, therefore, be understood that the term violence and aggression goes beyond violence and includes aggression which may be exhibited verbally, in writing, by gesture as well as by physical means.

The Stand Up for Quality Education 'Pupil Behaviour' theme of the campaign aims to make learning and teaching environments safer for teachers, other school staff and pupils themselves.

The focus of this theme is to build the skills, resources, and school culture to address disruptive, distressed, violent and aggressive pupil behaviour. It's not focussed on the pupils- so it is not about blaming pupils and families for disruptive/distressed/violent/aggressive behaviours- but is focussed on the support that teachers have, or don't have, to foster supportive relationships and positive pupil behaviour, and on how schools and councils respond to provide support for teachers in managing pupil behaviour.

More support for teachers impacted by violent incidents is key to this. It should be possible for schools/councils to take a more 'Health and Safety' approach to teacher safety regarding violence and abuse in classrooms using a risk assessment process and stressing the employers' duty of care relative to employees' health, safety and wellbeing.

As part of the SU4QE campaign on violence and aggression, the EIS undertook a survey of branches (schools) to:

- Determine the nature and extent of the violence and aggression faced by teachers
- Determine the nature and extent of the violence and aggression faced by pupils
- Identify challenges around violence & aggression and good practice to address or mitigate violence & aggression in schools

- Recommend SU4QE campaigning objectives to address or mitigate violence and aggression in schools

There are 2,461 schools in Scotland according to the 2022 Scottish Government Pupil Census dataset; 1,994 primary, 358 secondary and 109 special schools. Responses were received from 875 EIS branches – i.e. schools. This is a high rate of return.

The following is an overview of the survey findings:

- There is a significant amount of violence and aggression within Scotland’s schools with 82.7% of branches responding that there are incidents of violence and aggression every week. Over 72% of branches stated that the amount of violence and aggression had grown in the last four years – from levels before the Covid pandemic. Almost 40% of branches stated that prejudice-based violence had increased over the same period. In Primary and Special Education, “physical violence towards a teacher” was the most common type of violence and aggression, whilst, in secondary schools, “Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher” was the most common form of violence and aggression.
- A majority of school branches responded that boys were more likely to exhibit violent and aggressive behaviours towards teachers, as 51% of branches responded that boys were more likely to exhibit violent and aggressive behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers.
- Many schools/local authorities do not effectively disseminate policies and procedures to address violence and aggression as fewer than half (47.9%) of branch responses collected stated that everyone in their branch was aware of the policies and procedures in place for dealing with pupil-on-teacher violence and aggression. Many individual responses stated that no such policy existed in their school.
- Fewer than 11% of branches felt that teachers were “always” supported after a pupil-on-teacher violent and aggressive incident had been reported. A further 63% of branches stated that teachers were “sometimes” supported after a violent and aggressive incident. Over a quarter of branches (26.1%) stated that teachers were never supported after a violent and aggressive incident. A majority of branches therefore reported that the support given to teachers was inconsistent after a violent and aggressive incident was reported.
- A minority of branches (42.9%) thought that pupil victims were “well supported” after a violent and aggressive incident was reported. A majority of branches (51.7%) thought that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were “well supported” after a violent and aggressive incident was reported.
- Around 2/3 of branches (59.1%) felt that teachers were not well supported or received inconsistent support following pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression. A further 13.2% reported that even where some actions were taken, or there was a will to do so, there was a lack of follow-up or support available due to resource constraints. The nature and extent of

teacher support very much depended on the availability of colleagues to cover classes, work with and support the pupils involved, or overall resource capacity within the school.

- vii. A number of responses alluded to staffing pressures that led to insufficient time to deal with incidents, decompress, report the incident and properly engage with restorative practices. A lack of resources, training, local authority support and access to associated professionals were also cited as factors that did not help to address violence and aggression in schools. Senior management responses were mixed, and local authority support was much criticised.
- viii. Over half of our branches (53.3%) reported that parent/carer incidents of violence and aggression on teachers happened termly, monthly or weekly. Just over half of our branches (50.5%) responded that parent/carer-on-teacher violence and aggression was becoming more frequent. The most common violent and aggressive behaviour that teachers are exposed to from parents is 'derogatory comments or gossiping about a teacher'.
- ix. Almost all branches, 99% agreed that "violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour, including persistent low-level disruption, in your school" has an effect on pupils' learning. Almost every branch (99.8%) indicated that 'teaching and learning' was disrupted, followed by 'difficult to maintain or regain pupils' attention' (96.9%) and then followed closely by 'other pupils' behaviour is adversely affected' (96.8%) then 'it disrupts certain types of pedagogies' (94.9%).
- x. Almost all of the branches surveyed said that pupils are less focussed (98.2%), more agitated or nervous (96.5%), withdrawn (94.0%), less happy (94.8%), more likely to be disruptive themselves (95.9%) or become angry or upset (92.9%) as impacts of violence, disruption or aggressive behaviour on pupils. Additional comments by branches outline the scale and nature of the problems caused by violence and aggression to pupils, and the adverse impact on pupils' wellbeing, school attendance and learning.
- xi. Almost all branches reported an increase in stress anxiety and depression for some teachers in their school. More than three-quarters of branches (78.5%) said that some of their teachers are afraid of certain pupils. Three-quarters of branches (75.4%) said some of their teachers have sustained physical injuries and 61% said some of the teachers in their school had been on sick leave following a violent and aggressive incident.
- xii. Almost 80% of branches reported (79%) that "members of the branch" considered leaving teaching as a result of the violence and aggression.
- xiii. Well over half of our branches responded that they felt that reporting a violent and aggressive incident did not generate a better outcome for pupils (59.9%). Most branches responded that they felt that reporting a violent and aggressive incident did not generate a better outcome for teachers (66.9%).
- xiv. Qualitative responses from branches outlined a need for more ASN, de-escalation and CLPL training.
- xv. The survey included (state) nurseries and early years centres and the outcomes of this report therefore apply to those bodies too.

- xvi. Several challenges and examples of good practice were identified by branches. These are captured in the recommendations section of the full report¹.

Behaviour in Scottish Schools Report (BISSR)

The findings of our survey were highly aligned with the Scottish Government's own research report on Behaviour in Scottish Schools Report ² (BISSR). The Behaviour in Scottish Schools Survey confirms that incidents of violence, aggression and disruptive behaviour in Scotland's schools have risen significantly over the past few years, with worrying evidence to suggest a new increase in misogynistic views, attitudes and behaviour by male pupils.

In agreement with our findings, the BISSR report cites that whilst most pupils have positive behaviour in the classroom, low-level disruptive behaviour, disengagement and particularly serious disruptive behaviours were also frequently experienced by staff. Similarly, incidents of serious disruptive behaviours have reportedly increased since 2016, including sexist abuse towards staff, general verbal abuse, physical aggression and violence towards staff and other pupils within schools.

Finally, in agreement with our findings, the BISSR report research reported that there has been a perceived decline in pupil behaviour since 2016, with primary and secondary staff reporting decreases in most positive behaviours and increases in most of the low-level disruptive, serious disruptive and other negative behaviours in schools. This research also noted teachers' concerns about the perceived failure of nurturing and restorative approaches with current resourcing, the lack of means to deal with distressed and dysregulated behaviour, and a lack of consequences for the more serious behaviours.

The BISS research made a number of conclusions around suggested changes that would be required:

1. Greater consistency in approaches to behaviour available to school staff, including alternative approaches for the worst of behaviours and consequences for these
2. A need for additional resources to fund nurture approaches and presumption of mainstreaming for pupils with ASN
3. Alternatives to mainstream available for pupils with highly dysregulated behaviour
4. More support from national and local government bodies
5. Greater resources at
6. local authority level, that go beyond short-term PEF and SAC funding
7. Additional staffing
8. Better training and collaboration
9. Parental and pupil engagement in managing behaviour

The EIS is in agreement with the conclusions and calls for action from the BISSR report.

¹ [Pupil Behaviour Survey Results | SU4QE \(eis.org.uk\)](https://www.eis.org.uk/pupil-behaviour-survey-results-su4qe)

² [Supporting documents - Behaviour in Scottish schools: research report 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/supporting-documents-behaviour-in-scottish-schools-research-report-2023)

The Scottish Government’s analysis of the PISA (2022) Report published in December 2023 makes the following points regarding bullying:

“Two-thirds of students (67 per cent) feel like they belong at their school. This is below the OECD average (74.6), but is higher than was the case in Scotland in PISA 2018 (64.7 per cent).”

“10.6 per cent of students reported experiencing any type of bullying at least once a week, which was higher than the OECD average of 9.4 per cent. Conversely, 40.6 per cent of students in Scotland ‘never or almost never’ experienced any type of bullying, compared to an OECD average of 49.0 per cent. Using these data, PISA constructs a measure of the percentage of students who are frequently bullied³.”

Table 1⁴: Percentage of students who reported the following (at least once per week)

	Scotland OECD Average	
	2022	2022
Any type of bullying act	10.6	9.4
Other students left me out of things on purpose	2.5	2.7
Other students made fun of me	7.2	5.2
I was threatened by other students	2.2	1.3
Other students took away or destroyed things that belong to me	0.8	1.3
I got hit or pushed around by other students	1.7	1.7
Other students spread nasty rumours about me	1.8	2.6
I was in a physical fight on school property	0.8	1.0
I stayed home from school because I felt unsafe	1.1	1.7
Percentage of frequently bullied students	10.8	8.3

³ A student is frequently bullied, according to PISA, if he or she is in the top 10% of the index of exposure to bullying across all countries/economies.

⁴ Drawn from Table 5.3 of <https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-international-student-assessment-pisa-2022-highlights-scotlands-results/pages/6/>

EIS Recommendations to Address Violence & Aggression in Schools

The EIS has harnessed the collective voice of our members in the survey, and offers a number of concrete national actions that need to be taken forward nationally:

- 1) For the Scottish Government, COSLA (and EIS) to make a public statement that schools should be places free of and protected from violence and aggression, and to develop a national plan with stakeholders to deliver that aim.
- 2) For the Scottish Government, COSLA and EIS to have a nationally agreed definition of violence and aggression. Furthermore, for the Scottish Government and COSLA to ensure that local violence and aggression incident reporting procedures are aligned with each other to allow for national data collection and scrutiny.
- 3) For the Scottish Government, COSLA, and Education Scotland to accept that violence and aggression has an adverse impact on pupil wellbeing, school attendance rates, learning and attainment.
- 4) For the Scottish Government, COSLA, and Education Scotland to accept that violence and aggression has an adverse impact on teacher wellbeing, sickness rates, recruitment and retention.
- 5) For the Scottish Government, COSLA, and Education Scotland to accept the scale of violence and aggression as evidenced by this Branch Survey and to reach out to parents' organisations Connect and the NPF5.
- 6) To work at the SNCT Support Group to review and amend SNCT Sections 6.23 and 6.25 to include a definition of violence and aggression and improved support for teachers who are subjected to violence and aggression incidents at work.
- 7) For the Scottish Government to publish a clear national policy as to the escalation of consequences for pupils exhibiting violence and aggression, up to and including exclusion (permanent or temporary) from a school. For these to be established as national good practice. Furthermore, to publish clear national policy as to the consequences to parents/carers exhibiting violence and aggression to school staff.
- 8) For the Scottish Government to provide resources sufficient to enable teacher staffing levels to adequately deal with violence and aggression including the proper and meaningful implementation of restorative practice in schools and to properly meet ASN needs.
- 9) To improve the recruitment and training pipeline of specialist teachers, educational psychologists and other specialist roles to help reduce 'violence and aggression' and to assist appropriate responses.
- 10) For Education Scotland to include reviewing violence and aggression procedures, incident reports and follow-up actions as a normal part of inspections.

11) That prejudice-based violence and aggression is monitored with a national approach that is integrated with Local Authorities' work.

12) To continue to campaign for smaller class sizes, fewer weekly contact hours, improved ASN support and other SU4QE aims.

There are further recommendations for Local Authorities and Schools to make – essentially to develop a culture that has no tolerance for violence and aggression in educational settings and that has effective violence and aggression reporting procedures that support and feed back to staff. Furthermore, more effective use of risk assessments and the use of a balanced range of consequences for pupils who are repeatedly exhibiting violence and aggression that include exclusions to restorative justice practices.

Both our survey findings and the research findings of the Scottish Government leave us in no doubt that increasing levels of disruptive, violent and aggressive behaviours in Scottish schools require immediate and urgent action. Whilst the recent pupil behaviour summits and an intention from the Cabinet Secretary to develop an action plan on pupil behaviour indicates a commitment to act, we hope that the Scottish Government take account of the teacher's voice as contained in the actions outlined above in the development of the national action plan on pupil behaviour.

SECTION 2 ASN

The ASN element of the Stand Up for Quality Education campaign was launched in the national context of:

- Over a decade of austerity, coupled with high inflation, and real-term **reduction in local authority and school budgets**
- **Rising numbers of children with ASN** – in 2023, **37%** of the school population have an identified additional support need as compared to **6.5%** in 2009
- **Rising additional support needs** as a result of the pandemic, resulting in delayed development in children, particularly in the early stages of primary and an entire generation of young people now in secondary schools who have had their personal, social and emotional development inhibited as a result of repeated lockdowns and only very weak governmental response to education recovery
- **Rising need** about mental health issues
- **Rising need** related to the impact of poverty and hunger
- **Reduced numbers** of pupil support assistants
- **Reduced numbers** of ASN specialist teachers
- Large class sizes
- **Decreased access** to Educational Psychology services
- **Decreased pupil access** to Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services ('CAMHS')
- **Reduced** social work, youthwork and outreach teaching services
- **A significant increase** in the incidence of violence and aggression by pupils towards teachers and pupil support assistants
- **Negative impact** on the mental and physical health, safety, and general wellbeing of teachers and school staff, the majority of whom are female
- **Increased workload and pressures** associated with seeking to meet learners' needs in large classes, where children with complex needs all require different kinds of support.

What about more recent developments?

For a long number of years now, the EIS has campaigned for increased resourcing of ASL to bridge the gap between policy and practice in our schools and for the development of a long-term resourcing strategy – including action to reduce class sizes and significantly enhance the availability of specialist ASL support and expertise within schools.

Recently, the outputs of research and consultations that the Scottish Government has initiated as part of Education Reform have reaffirmed the Institute's concerns in this area. The final report⁵ by Professors Alma Harris and Carol Campbell, emerging from the National Discussion, sends a strong message to the Scottish Government, calling for '*adequate sustained funding to provide staffing and specialist resources to be able to achieve the commitment to inclusivity and [meet] the needs of each learner, with a particular urgency for children and young people identified as having Additional Support Needs*'.

⁵ All Learners in Scotland Matter - [*All Learners in Scotland Matter: The National Discussion on Education Final Report \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/all-learners-in-scotland-matter-2022/pages/all-learners-in-scotland-matter-the-national-discussion-on-education-final-report.aspx)

The Humanly Report⁶, independent research commissioned by the Scottish Government and published in September 2023, examines provision for pupils with complex additional support needs and again focuses on the imperative of resourcing to deliver inclusive education. Despite this clear recommendation, in her letter to the Education, Children and Young People Committee⁷ outlining the findings of the report, the Cabinet Secretary made no reference to resourcing as part of the Government's response to this research.

Yet the total number of pupils with an identified additional support need as per the December 2023 Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland data is 261,045 (37% of the school population).

The same document also highlights that pupils with ASN are at significantly higher risk of exclusion than pupils without an ASN. The rate of exclusion for pupils with an ASN was 34.6 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in 2022/23, almost five times the rate for pupils without an ASN (7.1 exclusions per 1,000 pupils)^{8,9}. These statistics cannot be ignored.

Whilst the pledge in the Scottish Government's budget to employ more teachers on permanent contracts is welcome, this must actually lead to there being additional, permanently employed teachers in our schools and not just funding to maintain teacher numbers. Teacher numbers have fallen across Scotland in each of the last two years, and the numbers of teachers on temporary contracts remains high. Despite a Scottish Government pledge to recruit 3,500 additional teachers across the country by 2026, we have seen no movement to bring this to fruition.

ASN in Scotland- facts and figures

- **Over 1 in 3 school pupils (261,045 pupils/37%)** has an identified ASN; in 2009, the overall number was 44,177; the increase over that period is **491%**.
- 95% of children with additional support needs spend some, or all of their time, in mainstream classes in line with the Presumption to Mainstreaming legislation¹⁰.
- Special school provision, where significantly smaller class sizes are determined by strict national agreements, are a necessity and must be available for children whose complex needs cannot be properly addressed in mainstream settings.

Yet in the period between 2016 and 2022, there was a **23% reduction** (from 141 settings in 2016 to 109 in 2022) in the number of special schools.¹¹

- Teacher census data shows that there are too few staff working in ASL and that the general trend over recent years has been a decline in staff with specialist roles, e.g. Behaviour Support, English as an Additional Language ('EAL'), and Learning Support.
- Scottish Government statistics demonstrate that across Scotland, ASN teacher numbers fell in 22 out of the 32 local authorities over the period 2010 to 2022.

⁶ Research into Provision for Pupils with Complex Additional Support Needs - [1 \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁷ [SG - Gaelic - Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills \(parliament.scot\)](http://parliament.scot)

⁸ [Summary statistics for schools in Scotland 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁹ 25.3 exclusions per 1,000 pupils compared to 7.2

¹⁰ [Pupil+census+supplementary+statistics+2023+-+December.xlsx \(live.com\)](http://live.com)

¹¹ [Schools in Scotland 2022: summary statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

- In 2010, there were 3,524 Full Time Equivalent ('FTE') ASN teachers¹² across all local authorities falling to 2,843 FTE in 2022¹³ – **a loss of 681 FTE teachers or a staggering 19% decrease in provision**, at a time when the number of children and young people with an identified ASN in Scotland's schools had increased by almost 24%¹⁴.
- Some schools no longer have any one-to-one support for pupils with additional support needs or specialist services.
- On occasions when support in the classroom is available, EIS members have highlighted in our recent national [Violence and Aggression Survey Report](#), that pupil support workers are often pulled away to help manage behaviour issues.
- In the same survey, branches were asked what actions would best support all pupils and teachers in dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour. **Increased numbers of support staff to support pupils with ASN was the most commonly recorded answer for both primary (75/5%) and special education branches (65.4%).**
- There are far too few Educational Psychologists, which hinders the assessment of certain additional support needs. Despite the exponential growth in the numbers of children and young people with ASN, there were only 11 more Educational Psychologists employed in Scottish schools in 2022 than in 2012.
- Rather than working directly with children and young people, Educational Psychologists are now more removed from schools, providing consultancy and training services rather than supporting young people directly.
- **On average, one in four** children in Scotland lives in poverty (often strongly linked to having ASN). **In some school communities, the figure is more than 1 in 3.**
- In the EIS national Violence and Aggression Survey, **83% of respondents reported incidents of violence and aggression every single week.** The report also makes a clear link between the unmet needs of pupils with ASN and incidents of violence and aggression, with 94.3% of branches highlighting that unmet ASN need exacerbates this behaviour.
- With 92.3% of special school branches also citing the correlation between the unmet additional support needs and incidents of violence and aggression, the issues around meeting the needs of learners is prevalent in those settings, in the same way as in mainstream schools.
- In the wake of the pandemic, it is clear the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland, together with the underlying causes of ill health, continue to raise significant concerns. The mental health and wellbeing of girls, especially adolescent girls, is particularly poor and deteriorating.

¹² ASN teachers described by the government as teachers whose main subject is Learning Support Primary and Secondary; ASN; ASN Behavioural Support; ASN Learning Disabilities; Hearing impairment; Visual Impairment; or English as an Additional Language.

¹³ [Teacher+Census+Supplementary+Statistics+2022+V2.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

¹⁴ [Pupils+Census+Supplementary+Statistics+2022+V2.xlsx \(live.com\) – table 6.7](#)

- Access to support services is inconsistent, and many children and young people have to wait lengthy periods before receiving an appointment with the professional involved.
- Reports demonstrate that **a total of 1,570 children had been waiting over a year for treatment at the end of 2021¹⁵**.
- Demand continues to outstrip capacity, not only in CAMHS but in other services designed to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Some children's needs are best met when teachers can augment the support offered in the classroom with support from specialists such as English as an Additional Language ('EAL') teachers or Speech and Language Therapists. Under austerity budgeting, many of these services have experienced significant cuts.
- Members report increasing difficulty in referring children to the services they need to be fully engaged and involved in their education and even where they can access the service, the nature of the support has changed from direct engagement to one of consultancy for the class teacher.
- In the EIS 2023 all member survey, members were asked to what extent children and young people in their settings were able to access front line services when the support need was identified. **12% of all respondents said they were never able to access front line services when the need was identified (17% in Primary and Nursery), and 44% said they could only access this occasionally at the point of first need (48% in Primary and 42% in Nursery).**
- There is evidence to suggest that parents of children with additional learning needs, who have higher income, greater social and educational capital, and therefore greater capacity to advocate on behalf of their children, have greater success in ensuring that resources are secured on their children's behalf. As a result, existing educational inequalities between more and less affluent children with additional needs, are widened.
- If early intervention strategies which underpin 'Getting It Right for Every Child' are to operate effectively, the immediacy of access must be secured.
- With an average class size of 23.3 in 2022, Scotland is lagging behind the OECD and the EU22 average. The OCED average is 21 in primary and 23 in lower secondary and the EU 22 average class size in primary schools was 20. Many pupils with ASN, such as neurodiverse pupils, would benefit from smaller groupings.
- EIS members have made it clear that a reduction in class sizes would allow time to embed more inclusive approaches, giving teachers time and space to build the relationships with pupils that they need to provide effective support for children with additional support needs and allowing them to engage meaningfully with parents.
- When asked, in our national survey, what actions would assist teachers in dealing with violence and aggression in the classroom, **secondary school branches (72.8%) recorded smaller class sizes**

¹⁵ [Waiting times grow for Scotland's child mental health services - BBC News](#)

as their favoured action. Primary school teachers (65.5%) ranked this second, only to the provision of increased support staff.

The impact of under-resourcing ASL provision

The issues caused by the continuing under-resourcing of ASL provision are well-documented. These can be summarised as follows:

Impacts on learners' wellbeing

- There are multiple health and wellbeing impacts caused by reduced ASN for learners, both those who have additional support needs and those who don't.
- Learners who have additional support needs can experience reduced morale and lower self-esteem, due to:
 - receiving less support to have their needs met than is required;
 - being less supported to take part in enrichment/after-school activities than is required;
 - higher levels of generalised anxiety;
 - being more likely to display challenging behaviour;
 - being involved in more violent incidents, fights and low-level disruption to learning; and
 - experiencing a loss of dignity e.g. when they exhibit high levels of distress (“a meltdown”).
- Among the general pupil population, learners can experience higher levels of anxiety due to more stressful atmospheres developing when children with ASN do not receive the requisite support; stress caused by disrupted learning - e.g. when a classroom has to be evacuated due to a violent incident; potential distress caused by witnessing peers' violent behaviour towards staff and/or pupils; and overall, reduced enjoyment of school.

Impacts on staff safety, health and wellbeing

- Increased stress and risk of personal injury or other health impacts for staff, because of exposure to violent incidents, abuse or aggression, from learners who require more support but are not getting it, and from their parents.
- Reduced morale among staff, owing to a feeling of failing young people and their families; a feeling of being 'useless'; feeling blamed for repetitive unacceptable pupil behaviour; feeling unsupported by School Management Teams; concern for vulnerable children.
- Reduced wellbeing both at and outside of work – lack of sleep, headaches, generalised anxiety – all of which undermine effectiveness at work and potentially contribute to more long-term illnesses and absence from work. Unsurprisingly, the results of the EIS 2023 all-member survey highlight these concerns.
- It found that:
 - 72.5 % of respondents were stressed all the time or frequently (19.7% and 52.8% respectively)
 - 53% of respondents from secondary schools indicated that improved pupil behaviour in class would make the biggest impact on improving their wellbeing at work
 - 65.2% of respondents from the primary sector indicated that having more classroom assistants and support for inclusion and pupils with ASN would have the biggest impact on improving their wellbeing at work.

- Increased workload for teachers and support staff against a backdrop of rising need and reduced human resources to address it.
- In the EIS 2023 all-member survey, 70% of primary respondents indicated that having more classroom assistants and support for inclusion would make the biggest impact on reducing workload.

Impacts on learners' educational experiences

- Some pupils being unable to access learning due to social/emotional issues.
- Less access to learning support for some pupils, as this is diverted to supporting the most complex and severe needs, e.g. less support for children with dyslexia.
- Some pupils having longer waits for work to be marked or new work set.
- Risk of reduced attainment and achievement, due to increasing non-attendance, opting out of school, disruption of learning or less time with teachers
- Differential impacts depending on socio-economic status: children from higher income families often getting more support than those from poorer backgrounds, as a result of more powerful parental advocacy.
- Less support available at transition times.
- Some pupils having fewer positive interactions with Senior Management Teams and other teachers who are dealing with large numbers of acute cases/crises.

SECTION 3 WORKLOAD

The 'workload' element of the Stand Up for Quality Education campaign was launched in the national context of:

- Over a **decade of austerity** in which **many Local Authorities staffing, and professional support services have not kept up with rising demand**
- The development of **significant variation in the amount of education funding per pupil** by different Local Authorities
- A programme of 'facultisation' that has led to fewer principal teachers to provide leadership and support
- The **effect of the Covid Pandemic** on pupils, parents, teachers, schools and society
- Significant change to national assessment, standardised testing, professional update, CfE changes and several government education initiatives
- An increase in **the number of pupils** with ASN
- **Workload intensification**
- **Recruitment and retention issues within certain subjects and geographic areas**

There is much research published on teachers' workload; one paper¹⁶ concluded:

"This paper presents a synthesis of research literature concerned with teachers' and school leaders' experiences of workload and work intensification. Forty papers met the inclusion criteria for the research synthesis. Secondly, the research indicates that the effects of workload and work intensification negatively impact teachers, in relation to health, wellbeing, and attrition. Further, teachers' capacity to deliver educational priorities which support the learning of all students is undermined by the experience of a heavy workload and heightened work intensification."

EIS Member (2023) Survey: Workload

Recent EIS surveys have shown that the current workload of teachers is excessive and unsustainable and needs to be addressed urgently and decisively. The latest EIS 2023 all-member Survey suggests it is not possible to effectively complete all necessary teaching duties within the 35-hour working week.

The 2023 EIS all-member Survey¹⁷ identified five key drivers of workload: 'completing paperwork/admin/bureaucracy; tracking and monitoring activities; managing the behaviour of certain students; responding to management requests and additional tasks which require training/professional learning.'

Some key findings of the 2023 EIS all-member Survey are listed:

¹⁶ Workload, work intensification and time poverty for teachers and school leaders: a systematic research synthesis by S Creagh (Educational Review, 2023)

¹⁷ <https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/Research/2023MemberSurvey.pdf>

- Members were then asked how satisfied they were with their workload levels generally...only 15% of members are satisfied or very satisfied with their workload levels generally, with 71% saying they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- When asked if members felt they could complete all of the tasks that are given to them, only 2% of respondents said they could do so within their contracted hours. Over a third, 38%, said that they can never complete everything they are asked to do within their set hours, and a further 40% said they are rarely able to.
- More than 40% of members said that they work more than a full extra day each week, with only 2% saying that they very rarely work extra hours. Part-time workers also reported working many additional hours with, again, only 2% saying that they rarely work extra hours, and almost a quarter saying they work more than 8 extra hours each week.

Teacher Class Contact Hours

The last national working time survey carried out by the EIS in 2015 found that the average teacher works 46.5 hours per week¹⁸. This is an average of 11.5 hours per week beyond the contractual amount and is equivalent to an additional 1.5 days of unpaid work per week. The EIS will be carrying out further work on workload in 2024.

The SNCT contract in Scotland has 22.5 hours per week of class contact, although the Scottish Government has pledged itself to reducing it to 21.0 hours in its election manifesto and in its 2021-22 Programme for Government¹⁹:

“Over the course of the Parliament, we will provide funding to support the recruitment of at least 3,500 teachers and 500 classrooms - over and above the 1,400 recruited during the pandemic - with further funding to enable councils to make these posts permanent. This will give teachers the capacity to reduce contact time by an hour and a half a week which they can use to prepare for lessons, raise standards and undertake professional development.”

Progress towards this reduction in weekly class contact has been glacial.

OECD TALIS 2018 (the last survey) showed that teachers in the OECD worked an average of around 41 hours per week and spent an average of 21.5 hours per week teaching.²⁰

Teachers in Scotland are therefore working more weekly hours than the OECD average, and have higher weekly class contact time.

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-32926585>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-greener-scotland-programme-government-2021-22/pages/5/>

²⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f6484c2e90e075a01d2f4ce/TALIS_2018_research.pdf

Teaching time for a full-time teacher in Scotland is among the highest in Europe with 855 teaching hours²¹ per year for all levels, compared to the OECD average of 800 teaching hours²² per year per full-time teacher.

The EIS aims to reduce weekly class contact to 20 hours per week, which would be an annual total of 760 annual teaching hours. This is slightly better than the OECD average figure as Scotland is a rich country and should aim to be better than the OECD average.

The Scottish Government manifesto pledge and Programme for Government 2021-22 commitment to reduce the weekly teacher contact time to 21 hours per week would lead to 798 annual contact (i.e. teaching) hours which is almost exactly the OECD average of 800 annual hours. The EIS seeks the reduction to 21 contact hours per week as a first step.

Amount of Annual Instruction Time (Teaching Time) per Pupil

Most pupils in Scotland have 38 weeks of school, with around 25 hours of lessons – i.e. 950 hours per year – with secondary school pupils having slightly more instruction than primary pupils.

The Scottish Government website²³ states:

“It has been accepted practice for at least the last 40 years that around 25 hours per week (or 950 hours per academic year) of teaching time is made available in most local authority run primary schools, and 27.5 hours per week (or 1045 hours per academic year) in most local authority run secondary schools.”

The OECD average in OECD Education at a Glance 2023²⁴ is 805 hours of instruction per year in primary schools and 916 hours of instruction in (lower) secondary schools.

Scotland, therefore, has a significantly higher than OECD average amount of annual learning hours per pupil. From a teacher’s perspective in Scotland, this high annual number of learning hours is partly a consequence of teaching 22.5 hours per week, which again is higher than the TALIS average. The EIS believes more teachers are required to sustainably maintain these annual learning hours.

For the avoidance of doubt, the EIS is not seeking a reduction in learning hours for students, and has opposed reductions at the local authority level in recent years. The reason these times are listed is an illustration of the high number of teaching hours teachers have in Scotland now that drive workload,

²¹ 190 teaching days per year; i.e. 38 weeks of 22.5 contact hours per week per FTE teacher. (Pupils receive around 25 hours per week of instruction time in Scotland, but there are no regulations that prescribe compulsory instruction time).

²² OECD (2024), Teaching hours (indicator). doi: 10.1787/af23ce9b-en (Accessed on 17 January 2024) These figures are an average of all sectors.

²³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/prescribing-minimum-annual-number-learning-hours-consultation/pages/3/#:~:text=It%20has%20been%20accepted%20practice,local%20authority%20run%20secondary%20schools.>

²⁴ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/8008b7a1-en.pdf?expires=1705501640&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=FF85D5C6B7EA67D05ABA9DE168796BA9>. Page 16

and that weekly contact hours for teachers should be reduced and facilitated by extra teachers – for example the 3500 extra teachers previously pledged by the Scottish Government (SNP and SGP).

Average Class Sizes & Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTR)

The Scottish Government’s School Census for 2023 states the following class sizes in Scotland; overall average class size for the primary was 23.2 in 2023, the average class size for P1-P3 was 23.0 while the average class size for P4-7 was 25.7.

OECD last considered class sizes in ‘Education at a Glance’ 2021 where the OECD average for primary class size was 21.

Statistics on class sizes in the secondary sector are not collected by the Scottish Government as it states that “*class size varies widely across subjects.*”²⁵

The OECD ‘Education at a Glance’ 2021²⁶, the UK is cited as having an average class size of 24, higher than the OECD average class size of 23.

Figure 1 Pupil teacher ratios (PTR) by sector, Scotland, 2017 to 2023²⁷

Sector	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Publicly funded schools	13.6	13.6	13.6	13.3	13.2	13.2	13.2
Total based in schools	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.6	13.4	13.5	13.5
Primary	16.4	16.1	15.9	15.4	15.1	15.3	15.3
Secondary	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.5	12.4	12.4	12.5
Special	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7

It is worth noting that the ‘Pupil to Teacher Ratio’ (PTR) has decreased and stabilised within the Primary sector between 2017 and 2023 in Scotland, whilst the Pupil-to-Teacher ratio has slowly and consistently increased across the secondary sector over the same period. It would be reasonable to believe that an increase in Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio in secondary schools has led to larger class sizes in the secondary sector. It is unfortunate that there are no Scottish Government figures to allow scrutiny in this area.

It is worth noting that dividing the number of pupils per sector by the number of teachers (FTE) per sector to determine a “PTR” for that sector is a simplistic tool that disguises variations in class sizes. It does not take into account the amount of instruction time for students compared to the length of a teacher’s working day, nor how much time teachers spend teaching.

²⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-schools-in-scotland-2023/pages/classes-and-pupils/>

²⁶ https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EAG_PERS_RATIO

²⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-schools-in-scotland-2023/pages/headline-school-and-early-learning-and-childcare-elc-statistics/>

A national PTR ratio does not accurately capture the average class size in schools. The PTR for the primary sector is currently 15.3 but the average class size for P4-7 is 25.7. There is anecdotal evidence – possibly worthy of an EIS survey question – that significant numbers of classes in many schools have more than 30 pupils.

The OECD states²⁸ that “Smaller classes are often perceived as allowing teachers to focus more on the needs of individual students and reducing the amount of class time needed to deal with disruptions. They contribute to a better learning environment for the students, and to improved working conditions for teachers and staff.”

“Overall, evidence on the effects of reduced class size on student performance is weak. Also, there is no consensus on what the best ratio of students to teachers should be at different students’ ages, but there is wide agreement that younger children need more time and interaction with teachers for a quality education, supporting a lower ratio of students per teacher in early education. There is also some evidence showing that smaller classes may benefit students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Research also indicates a positive association of smaller class sizes and higher teacher satisfaction.”

Therefore, whilst international research has not defined an ideal class size, it has clearly shown that smaller classes have positive effects on teachers’ wellbeing and morale – which given their high workloads and stress levels – can only have a positive impact on their teaching and therefrom the educational experiences and outcomes for young people.

The EIS aims to reduce all class sizes to a maximum of 20 pupils per class. This is slightly better than the OECD average figure as Scotland is a rich country and should aim to be better than the international OECD norm.

²⁸ <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies/#!node=41720&filter=all>

Work Intensification and Inflexibility

It is generally accepted that teaching has high work intensity, teaching and maintaining pupil behaviour for extended periods of time every workday requires large amounts of focus, expertise and skill.

Francis Green, a professor of work and education at UCL has written²⁹:

“The most striking aspect of job quality revealed by the SES data is teachers’ high work intensity and high work intensification. Compared to other professional workers and all other occupations, teachers work more intensively during their work hours, and their work intensity has risen to unprecedented levels. The issue is highlighted by the following stark statistic: nine out of ten teachers in 2017 “strongly agreed” with the statement that their job “required (them) to work very hard”. That compares with only a half of workers in other professional jobs, and with 44 per cent for the whole population; over time it compares with only 54 per cent of teachers back in 1992.”

Teaching is a job that has limited flexibility and autonomy in certain ways; a teacher's timetable is fixed and unlike other professionals, a teacher cannot take a change of task by walking out of the classroom and doing a different professional task. Many people would find it difficult to manage pupil behaviour in classes, especially for 22.5 hours a week. EIS survey evidence and Scottish Government BISSR evidence show that pupil behaviour is becoming more of a concerning issue in schools. The causes of this are outwith this briefing, but social media is often cited as a factor.

One other aspect that is worth noting is that the post-pandemic world of work has evolved for many graduate professionals – with more working from home and greater use of online meetings. A recent research report³⁰ from the NEU has shown that teachers have not benefited from such changes:

- *“The job quality of teaching professionals has barely changed since the pandemic and has, in some respects, worsened.*
- *The job quality of comparable occupations has improved. Working conditions in schools have therefore worsened in relative terms.*
- *Teaching is both a rewarding and demanding job, but the findings of this report suggest that it is becoming even more demanding. Without change, it will be difficult to tackle the acute recruitment and retention crisis facing the sector.”*

The report’s Principal Investigator Professor Alan Felstead³¹ (Cardiff University), said:

‘This study is unique in that it tracks how the jobs of teachers have changed since the pandemic. It highlights how working in schools has become relatively less attractive compared to other professions – not just in terms of pay – but in terms of work intensity and access to flexible work arrangements. The fear of inspection makes the situation even worse’.

²⁹ <https://francisgreenspersonalwebpage.com/2020/12/24/teachers-under-pressure/>

³⁰ <https://neu.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/NEU3043%20Job%20quality%20research%20report%20v7.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news/2023/jul/high-work-intensity-makes-teachers-jobs-more-demanding-post-pandemic>

Teachers have sought to use SNCT 'Working Time Agreements' to moderate workload and to empower teachers with their annual workload. Members report, however, that whilst a good WTA in a school can moderate workload, there is simply too much work within a 22.5-hour teaching week for WTAs to moderate to an acceptable level.

The EIS has argued that increasing teacher agency by empowering teachers to make more decisions regarding their work would assist in reducing workload. This would also be consistent with the ethos of the Curriculum for Excellence. The Scottish Government has adopted the principle of the "empowered system"³² in which all educational stakeholders are empowered – the EIS believes that more work is required in this area if it is to deliver tangible results for teachers.

It is a matter of record that there has been significant change in the Scottish education system in recent years; the new Curriculum for Excellence, a refreshed curriculum narrative, new national qualifications, changed SQA specifications, e-learning, professional update, GIRFEC, DYW, etc. The outputs from the Muir Review, Hayward Review, Morgan Review, Withers Review, National Conversation, etc are still to be implemented. This constant change is disruptive and generates additional workload. The EIS recognises that the education system in Scotland does need to evolve, and that some changes are needed, but the change needs to be better planned, led by practitioners (i.e. bottom up) and adequately resourced.

Previous efforts have been made to reduce bureaucracy in education, and the EIS would welcome further work in this area.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

In the last EIS all-member Survey (2023), only 18% of members said they were likely or very likely to recommend teaching as a good profession.

The EIS National Branch Survey on violence and aggression in late 2023 found that;

"Almost 80% of branches reported (79%) that "members of the branch" considered leaving teaching as a result of the violence and aggression."

In England (UK), it was reported through TALIS 2018 that teachers are, on average, 39 years old, which is lower than the average age of teachers across OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS (44 years old)³³.

The EIS 2023 Member Survey data asked members: "Do you plan to stay in teaching for the next 5 years?" Only 51% of the 15,000 respondents responded "yes" with 16% a "no" and 33% a don't know. Those who indicated that they were planning to leave teaching in the next 5 years were then asked to give their main reasons. 'Workload being too high' was reported by over half of respondents, and it was the most common reason³⁴.

The number of teachers has dropped marginally in Scotland in recent years, whilst they are growing in England³⁵.

³² <https://education.gov.scot/resources/an-empowered-system/>

³³ https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TALIS2018_CN_ENG.pdf

³⁴ <https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/Research/2023MemberSurvey.pdf>

³⁵ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>

The ITE intake targets have been met in Scotland for primary PGDE but missed for secondary PGDE in recent years³⁶. There are significant recruitment problems in many secondary PGDE subjects.

Furthermore, the last published “Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group” meeting in October 2022 stated that:

“the total number of teachers needed to meet the PfG/SGP agreement commitments is 57,100 by 2025”

This is understood to be the number of teachers that would need to be employed to meet the 3,500 additional teachers that the Scottish Government pledged in its manifesto and put into its Programme for Government³⁷ in 2021/22. The 3,500 extra teachers was also in the agreement³⁸ between the Scottish Green Party and the Scottish Government:

“[Therefore, we will] support the recruitment of at least 3,500 additional teachers and 500 classroom assistants over and above the 1,400 teachers recruited during the pandemic. This will mean that by the end of the parliament there will be almost 5,000 more teachers in our schools than before the pandemic.”

In Scotland, there is a recruitment issue with many secondary school subjects and there is also a general teacher recruitment issue³⁹ in some parts of Scotland.

The EIS has campaigned for the Scottish Government to deliver on its pledge of 3,500 extra teachers by the end of this parliament. We facilitated thousands of emails to be sent from members to SNP MSPs calling on them to honour their manifesto.

The EIS believes that workload is a factor that affects both retention and recruitment of the teacher workforce. In terms of retention, many older experienced teachers have left the profession in recent years. The Scottish Government’s School Census has reported that the age profile of teachers has changed and is now younger:

“The average (mean) age of school teachers was 41 in 2023, compared to 42 in 2013, so the teacher workforce was, on average, younger in 2023 than in 2013. Figure 9 shows that the age profile of teachers has changed over the past 10 years. There is no longer a peak at age 55-60 and instead the age profile shows more teachers in their twenties, thirties and forties than previously. In 2023, half of teachers were aged between 28 and 44.”

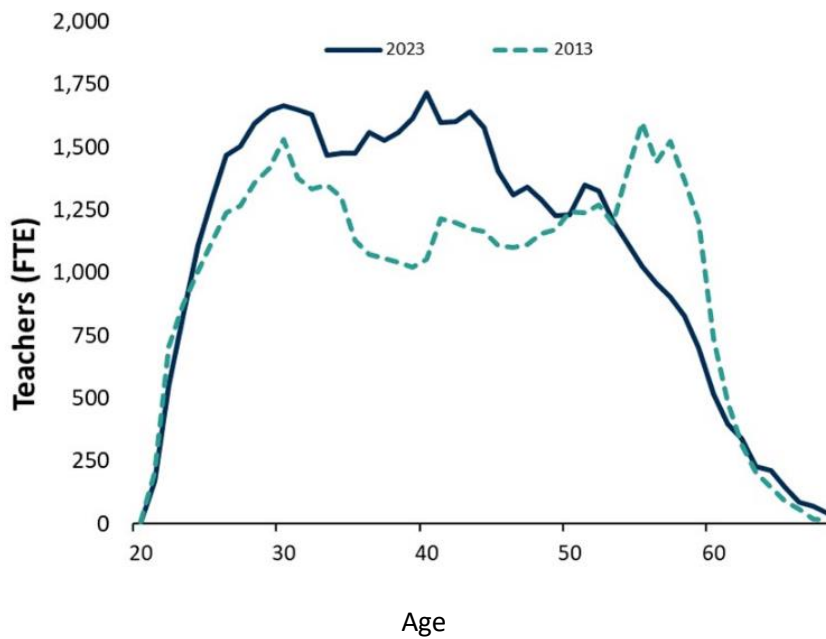
The Scottish Government’s “Figure 9” is shown below:

³⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/teacher-workforce-planning-advisory-group-initial-teacher-education-intake-figures-2022/>

³⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/09/fairer-greener-scotland-programme-government-2021-22/documents/fairer-greener-scotland-programme-government-2021-22/fairer-greener-scotland-programme-government-2021-22/govscot%3Adocument/fairer-greener-scotland-programme-government-2021-22.pdf>

³⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-and-scottish-green-party-shared-policy-programme/pages/public-services-recovery-and-reform/>

³⁹ <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/education/6276007/reaching-crisis-point-aberdeenshire-teacher-shortages/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThere's%20a%20teacher%20shortage%20across,Because%20it's%20clearly%20not%20working.%E2%80%9D>



Summary

According to teachers, the three most significant issues facing Scottish education in schools are Pupil Behaviour, ASN and Workload.

Addressing these issues is fundamental to getting it right for every child. Delivering improved pupil behaviour, improved ASN support and less workload will improve teaching and learning for all pupils, and at the same time, achievement, attainment and pupil wellbeing. It will also have a positive effect on teachers' wellbeing and help create a sustainable and resilient workforce. Addressing these issues will also provide Scotland with the quality of education that pupils in Scotland deserve, and will better enable them to thrive as adults within society and the world of work in a knowledge based economy.