

Education and Skills Committee

Draft Budget 2018/19

7 December 2017

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to provide information to the Education and Skills Committee in advance of the publication of the 2018/19 budget and in response to the exchange of letters between the Committee and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.
2. It is warmly welcomed that the Committee, in recognition of the tight timeframe for scrutinising the budget, has adopted a proactive approach and sought clarification from the Cabinet Secretary on policy direction.

PRIORITISATION

3. The NASUWT supports the aspirations of the Government to achieve 'excellence' and 'equity' across school systems. However, these aspirations will not be achieved if this simply remains pious terminology. 'Excellence' involves funding the school system to raise educational standards, and 'equity' involves funding the school system to ensure improved educational outcomes for the poorest and most disadvantaged in society.

4. In January 2016, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework published its *National Benchmarking Overview Report 2014/15*. The Report makes it clear that education spending has suffered swingeing cuts since 2010, which include:
 - a reduction in real costs per primary pupil of 10.8%;
 - a reduction in real costs per secondary pupil of 4.1%;
 - in primary education, a 5.9% reduction in real gross expenditure in parallel with a 5.5% increase in pupil numbers; and
 - in secondary education, a 5.4% fall in pupil numbers, although the reduction in gross expenditure has been 9.3%.
5. The overall real-terms cut in education expenditure from 2010/11-2014/15 was 7%.
6. The Report makes it clear that, against this background of cuts in school spending, teachers have delivered year-on-year improvement in standards, including a 6.3% increase in pupils achieving 5+ awards at SCQF level since 2010/11, and a 4% increase in young people entering positive destinations upon leaving school. This is a tribute to the dedication and professionalism of the teaching profession, but these achievements have occurred at a cost to the work-life balance and wellbeing of teachers.
7. The education system, together with other key public services, has been subject to a stringent austerity policy since 2010. The success of Scottish Government initiatives, such as the National Improvement Framework, will be directly related to the replacement of austerity by a national programme of investment in the education system.
8. The NASUWT has previously brought to the attention of the Government the serious difficulties posed for school funding by national budget decisions. In 2014, the NASUWT wrote to the Government to state:

'Through a number of significant omissions and policy decisions by the Scottish Government, education in Scotland has been placed in an increasingly fragile position over a number of years because: (a) the education budget has not been ring-fenced, leaving individual authorities able to divert key resources from schools and providing limited accountability in relation to the overall education budget; (b) there is no real enforcement mechanism between central and local government in circumstances where an individual council signs up to an agreement and then reneges on these commitments after the funds have been handed over; and (c) an enforced council tax freeze for the eight consecutive years limits local authority options in raising additional revenue.'

9. The NASUWT believes that these issues remain to be resolved.

10. NASUWT members report a funding crisis in schools which the Government should not underestimate. Teachers report that the underfunding of schools has now led to the following extremely detrimental consequences:
 - allocations to subject departments in many schools are around half what they were five years ago;
 - seniors are being asked to buy books for their courses, or to print resources for the courses they are taking at home; in one school, in the last six years, no teacher has been able to go on a training course for which there is a charge;
 - class sizes continue to increase, with low-ability sets growing to the stage where pupils cannot receive the individual attention they need;
 - off-campus places for children and young people with the most challenging behaviour are impossible to get, other than for looked-after children;
 - special school provision in many local authorities has been stripped out;

- children and young people with very challenging behaviour in mainstream settings are failing to receive the support they need and discipline standards are plummeting in classes affected, which impacts on all pupils in these classes;
 - large capital purchases in schools, together with the replacement of obsolete or broken equipment in departments such as science, are not being funded;
 - practical science lessons are being cancelled because schools cannot afford chemicals and equipment; and
 - timetabled senior classes are being cancelled due to ‘uneconomic numbers’.
11. Teachers also report that education cuts are preventing many local authorities from delivering their statutory duty to ensure equity irrespective of socioeconomic disadvantage. There is no question that many pupils can only pursue senior courses of study because their families can afford to pay for textbooks and resources.
12. The NASUWT understands the extent to which investment in the economy is not entirely within the gift of the Government. However, investment in key public services which have been devolved to the Government is a policy option which the Government can and should adopt.
13. Public services provide a vital social infrastructure, which means that investment in them benefits the whole of society. In addition to the improvements in services which result from high levels of investment, there are benefits to the wider economy of higher employment and wage levels in schools and other key services, as higher consumer spending would tend to be focused on Scotland’s businesses. Newly devolved taxation powers give the Government the opportunity for a programme of investment in public services, including the school system and the schools workforce.

14. If austerity in education funding is not replaced by a meaningful programme of investment in the school system, and the schools workforce, it will jeopardise the success of, inter alia, the National Improvement Framework, irrespective of the changes made by the Government when distributing its funding to schools.

TEACHERS' TERMS AND CONDITIONS

15. Work to continue to raise standards and narrow achievement gaps in schools depends critically on ensuring that teachers and school leaders have working conditions which enable them to concentrate on their core responsibilities for teaching and leading teaching and learning.
16. Teachers' pay in Scotland is not commensurate with those of other graduate professions and this discrepancy has been exacerbated by average pay increases, such as one in 2014, where the average increase for graduates in other professions was 3.3% whilst in teaching it was 1%.
17. Since 2014, the situation in respect of teachers' pay has been particularly dire. In 2016, the teachers' pay increase was largely wiped out by increases in National Insurance and teachers have not received a pay increase since then. Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation has now reached 4% and the 2017 teachers' pay award, which was due in April this year, has not even been paid at all. There has been a real-terms drop in salary for teachers in Scotland of over 15% since 2010.
18. One of the major problems in securing a sustainable improvement to teachers' working conditions is that the provisions of the SNCT Handbook have no statutory basis. Consequently, employers and schools feel able to vary those provisions and ignore the guidance, as there is no legal imperative for them to do otherwise.

19. Putting the provisions on a statutory basis would ensure that all teachers received their full contractual entitlements and Ministers could be assured that any changes recommended to conditions of service, to alleviate workload burdens, would be implemented and make a positive difference to teachers' working lives. Pending legislative change, the provisions could be incorporated in statutory guidance.
20. Furthermore, the current negotiating machinery for teachers' pay and conditions of service is demonstrating increasingly that it is not working in the interests of the profession. It has failed to prevent deterioration in working conditions. The current negotiating machinery requires urgent reform, including the introduction of an independent teachers' review body to make evidence based recommendations on teachers' pay.
21. The decrease in interest among young people in teaching as a career is likely to be exacerbated in the next few years. Pupils who are now choosing their university career paths have spent their whole secondary education as witnesses to the implementation of ideologically driven austerity policies and have witnessed the increase in workload that their teachers have had to endure, at the same time as their pay has been cut. Pupils have also personally witnessed the failings of the implementation of the Presumption of Mainstream, at the same time as support services have been cut and teacher numbers reduced. In addition, these pupils have painful first-hand experience of the often chaotic implementation of the new qualifications. These factors alone are unlikely to make teaching an attractive proposition to the next generation of would-be educators.
22. Increasing numbers of teachers report the profound shortage of teachers in many subject areas, with cover and doubling-up of classes masking the teacher shortage. However, pupils are not being taught by a subject specialist under these circumstances and the guiding

principle for many schools becomes only to avoid the embarrassment of pupils being sent home.

23. It belies a profound misunderstanding of the importance of the teaching workforce that there is no mention in the Cabinet Secretary's response of any investment in the workforce: no reference to terms and conditions; no reference to pay; no reference to investment in teacher numbers; no reference to investment in training. Teachers require and deserve greater priority: investing in the workforce is the best way to ensure excellence in schools.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS (ASN)

24. It is noted that the '*[t]he Committee agreed that it would highlight ASN provision as a funding priority and ask how you will prioritise ASN provision in the coming financial year*'.
25. The NASUWT supports the ambition contained within Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) for all children with ASN to receive a high-quality education. However, the educational setting must be appropriate and the placement properly resourced to meet the needs of each child.
26. The Union undertook an ASNSurvey which examined teachers' experiences in relation to the Presumption of Mainstream agenda. More than 300 teachers responded over a period of four weeks in September and October of 2016. Most respondents were class teachers in local authority schools and 98.5% taught classes with pupils who had an identified ASN. The key findings of this survey were:
 - 31% of teachers did not receive internal support for classes with ASN pupils;
 - 68% of teachers said that they did not receive external support for classes with ASN pupils;

- 75% of teachers believed that their pupils did not receive the support they were entitled to under GIRFEC;
 - 76% of teachers said that the level of support for ASN had declined in the past two years; and
 - 91% of teachers did not believe the support they received for ASN was adequate.
27. Whilst the NASUWT supports the principle of the Presumption of Mainstream, it is clear, as our survey demonstrates, that pupils with ASN are being placed in schools which are either inappropriate for their needs or are unable to provide adequate support.
28. Teachers and schools will always strive to do their best for every child they teach, but it is unacceptable for them to be expected to meet the needs of pupils without the necessary resources. Members' experiences completely contradict the recommendations for reducing excessive teacher workload.
29. The entitlement of pupils with ASN to have all their barriers to educational progress removed must never be compromised. Every child, irrespective of needs, background or circumstances, deserves an education that enables them to reach their full potential.
30. Supporting children and young people with ASN requires renewed investment in tailored services and education settings to ensure there is equality of opportunity and choice for all.
31. The NASUWT has consistently argued that by not providing a child with ASN with the appropriate level of support, or the correct educational learning environment, there is not only a negative impact on their learning, but also a negative impact on the other pupils in the class.

32. The provision of education to children and young people with ASN is currently creaking under the strain of inadequate resourcing. The NASUWT is committed to the full inclusion of children and young people with ASN in the education system, but in far too many cases the Presumption of Mainstream policy has become a euphemism for cuts in high-quality, specialist ASN provision, including specific ASN staff such as educational psychologists.
33. In addition, the reduction in the numbers of support staff in schools, which the Government's figures show as falling by 18% since 2007, do not only jeopardise educational standards, but also result in teachers being diverted away from their professional pedagogical role into support-staff duties and activities, such as supervisory functions and clerical and administrative tasks. The reduction in the number of support staff in schools militates against excellence and also contributes to high teacher workload, one of the key drivers of teachers wanting to leave the profession.
34. NASUWT members report that classroom assistants have been removed wholesale from secondary schools during the 2017/18 school year in at least one local authority, with a consequential impact on standards and also teacher workload.
35. Teachers report that the failures of the school system in providing adequately for vulnerable children and young people, and worsening provision for pupils with ASN, are stoking up problems for society in the future, when these children and young people will become adults. Provision for violent, autistic or mentally ill pupils is at crisis point.
36. Stating in the response that '*the ultimate responsibility for delivering additional support for learning does sit with local authorities*' in this context can only be viewed as a cynical attempt at passing the buck.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

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37. The NASUWT is disappointed to note that there is no clarity within Government policy as to how the distinction between early learning and childcare is to be made. This is a critical question which must be addressed if quality is to be assured.
38. The NASUWT believes that parents have a right to access good-quality childcare that involves the engagement of children in stimulating activities from which they can develop their social, physical and cognitive skills and knowledge. However, there are many experiences and outcomes for three and four year olds, developed through the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), which are best secured through the systematic planning and assessment associated with the skills and expertise of qualified teachers, which critically depend upon regular and predictable attendance by children in early learning settings.
39. There must be a commitment to ensuring that qualified teachers are provided with the opportunity to provide the full range of educational experiences, as intended through the CfE. This will of course have a cost implication.

Structures

40. A new Education Workforce Council is proposed. The Union is concerned that the report of the recommendations from the ICEA, following its second meeting in Edinburgh from 27-28 February 2017, in this regard is being ignored: *'The Council advised against becoming too focussed on changing the structure of the education system when, arguably, the more important aspects are the culture and capacity within the system'*.

41. The creation of an Education Workforce Council to replace the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) seems unnecessary and an opportunity to dilute standards for entry to the profession. The GTCS should remain as the independent body with responsibility for regulating the profession, creating and maintaining the Teacher's Standards, including those for leadership, accrediting professional learning and managing student placements, and the Teacher Induction Scheme.
42. The GTCS is practitioner-led and funded almost entirely by subscriptions from registrants. Registration is compulsory for all teachers in state schools to ensure they are appropriately qualified, and this should continue. The GTCS has been a gold standard registration body and while the Government professes to be committed to teacher professionalism, this is at odds with the overnight removal of the GTCS.
43. The GTCS must maintain its role in terms of regulating entry to the profession, particularly at a point in Scottish Education where there is a significant teacher shortage to address.
44. It should be noted that disbanding the GTCS will not automatically lead to savings. For example, in Wales, the Welsh Government disbanded the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) and created the Education Workforce Council, which ended up being more expensive.

PREVENTATIVE SPENDING

45. The NASUWT believes the following principles are key:
 - the centrality of the workforce and teacher professionalism in raising standards and narrowing achievement gaps;
 - the need to ensure that teachers and school leaders have working conditions which enable them to focus on their core professional

functions so that they are recognised and rewarded as highly skilled professionals; and

- ensuring that reform of governance does not undermine workplace downward pressure on teacher and school leader workload.

46. In many areas, schools rely on the goodwill of teachers to cover shortages, in some cases beyond the cover agreement of the employer. This cannot continue and better approaches need to be identified, and funded, to address the issue.
47. The NASUWT believes that it is essential to end the discrimination in relation to supply teachers' pay and conditions introduced in 2011. There is no doubt that the creation of a two-tier workforce has led to huge difficulty in covering teacher shortages.
48. The best way to support raising attainment is to give teachers the time and space to teach and be leaders of learning in their classrooms. The workforce requires appropriate pay and terms and conditions and investment in staffing: equity will necessitate increased funding for the school system to ensure improved educational outcomes for the poorest and most disadvantaged in society.

VALUE FOR MONEY, EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES

49. It is noted that '*[t]he Committee is particularly interested in what the impact of pupil equity funding has been, how this impact is being evaluated and how this will inform future rounds of funding*'. At a recent NASUWT Primary Teachers Seminar, many attendees were not only unaware of how their PEF was being spent, but had also not been consulted or involved in those discussions. Where PEF funding had been disclosed to staff, some were concerned that it had not been put to the best use. Identifying an appropriate accountability function is essential.

50. As part of local authority accountability, it is important to recognise that Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles have quite sharp boundaries, meaning that two children in almost the same circumstances will be in different boundaries. The Scottish Government must therefore be careful about relying heavily on the data collected and both understand and be open about its limitations.

CLIMATE CHANGE

51. Raising education standards hinges on bringing downward pressure on teacher workload and tackling excessive bureaucracy so that teachers can focus on teaching. The NASUWT was pleased to be involved in the Tackling Bureaucracy Workload Group which produced key recommendations to reduce bureaucracy. However, as we warned would be the case, because none of these are statutory, in most cases they have been ignored by employers and schools. Reduction in bureaucracy will likely simultaneously meet the aims of supporting a workforce on its knees and help reduce climate change, by reducing paper output as one example.
52. The Union also recommends that in future, in addition to questions on sustainability, the Education and Skills Committee should address questions of how best the budget and indeed any education reform will advance equalities. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard, under the Equality Act, to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

53. As one example, there is already a stark level of under-representation of BME teachers in comparison to the BME pupils that they teach. The Scottish Government's teacher census shows that the proportion of both primary and secondary teachers from a minority ethnic group declined between 2014 and 2016.
54. Just as important is the lack of BME teachers in leadership positions and we must condemn the almost complete absence of BME teachers employed as headteachers in Scotland's schools. It is extremely concerning that in our education system BME teachers are being systematically denied the opportunity to progress and to lead. And what is even more shocking is that this is in the context of there being a national crisis in terms of recruiting sufficient numbers of headteachers.
55. In order to address these issues, equalities considerations must be mainstreamed within all decision-making processes.
56. The NASUWT would be happy to meet with you and Committee colleagues to discuss all of these issues in more detail.

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