

From COSLA Children and Young People, and Resources Spokespersons



7th February 2023

Convenor of the Education, Children and Young People Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Via Email - ecyp.committee@parliament.scot

Dear Ms Webber,

At the Education, Children and Young People's Committee meeting on the 18th January, we understand that the Scottish Budget 2023/24 was considered. The discussion touched on teacher numbers and we wanted to take this opportunity to write to you with clear evidence that Local Government is committed to and has continued to invest in school staff, but also highlight the challenges faced in the financial year ahead.

Investment in school staff in 2022/23

We believe, at the core, there is a difference in the expectation between the Scottish Government and Local Government on the additionality that the £145.5m provides in terms of teaching and, importantly, support staff. One of the key challenges with this additional funding has been its iterative allocation, with different pots of funding being provided over a three-year period with a number of different stated policy intents.

We understand that the teacher census can be viewed as a useful snapshot of progress and it does demonstrate a substantial increase since 2019, with an additional 2,040 teacher in the system. However, it does not present the full picture, nor was it agreed that it would be used to monitor Local Government's use of the £145.5m. Instead we agreed, through the Scottish Government and COSLA's joint governance process for funding, that we would jointly design a simple collection exercise.

It is important to highlight the significant challenges facing some councils in recruiting teachers qualified in the required curriculum areas. Councils are also reporting difficulties in attracting candidates for particular subjects, and certain geographic areas including rurality.

In the period August to December 2022, there were a total of 1155 teaching jobs advertised on MyJobScotland across 27 Councils (the shared recruitment platform for Local Government and other public bodies). Of these, 630 were for permanent posts, 282 were fixed term and 243 were temporary. This resulted in 1120 candidates being

appointed (613 permanent appointments, 270 fixed term and 237 temporary). Overall there were 13,174 applications made.

As of 16th January 2023, there are 232 vacancies across 27 Councils in Scotland for teachers. This is made up of 142 permanent posts, 49 fixed term and 41 temporary, demonstrating that Councils continue to recruit actively and are seeking to fill posts on a permanent basis.

Information on Local Government expenditure on teachers from Local Financial Returns (LFR) and Projected Outturn Budget Estimate (POBE) clearly shows the significant amount of council budgets spent on teachers and highlights increasing spend year on year, for example a £181m increase between 19/20 and 20/21 – it should be noted that part of the increase will be as a result of pay awards:

All figures in £000s

	<u>19/20 LFR</u>	<u>20/21 LFR</u>	<u>21/22 PO</u>	<u>22/23 BE</u>
Pre-Primary Teaching Staff	49,813	51,564	48,418	49,041
Primary School Teaching Staff	1,363,482	1,452,276	1,496,406	1,497,590
Secondary School Teaching Staff	1,323,871	1,414,436	1,471,776	1,513,460
Total Teaching Staff spend	2,737,166	2,918,276	3,016,600	3,060,091
Increase year on year		+181,110	+98,324	+43,491

We wish to highlight that there is insufficient recognition that the £145.5m was also for a pupil support staff resource. From LFR and POBE, School Non-teaching staff expenditure has also shown an increase year on year, for example an increase of almost £79m between 19/20 and 21/21:

All figures in £000s

	<u>19/20 LFR</u>	<u>20/21 LFR</u>	<u>21/22 PO</u>	<u>22/23 BE</u>
Total School Non-Teaching Staff	1,227,360	1,305,982	1,352,313	1,380,168
		+78,622	+46,331	+27,855

When looking at these figures, it should be noted that there were significant additional COVID funding awarded on both 19/20 and 20/21 which will have been allocated across all LFR/POBE lines across all councils. However, it is clear that this has been an area of investment by Local Government, due to the value councils place on both teaching and non-teaching staff in improving outcomes for children and young people, enabled by both tranches of funding across 2020 onwards.

Scottish Budget 2023/4 and implications for education services

Education accounts for around 50% of council budgets (c£6bn). The figures above demonstrate that teachers account for a huge proportion of education budgets – around £3bn. Non-teaching staff account for a further £1.4bn.

Education budgets have been protected by Local Government in recent years and there has been an increase in education expenditure over the last 10 years. This means that the cuts that have been required as a result of real terms reduction in councils' core funding over the last decade have fallen disproportionately on other unprotected service areas, such as central services, culture and leisure, roads and planning. These areas have all seen cuts of at least 25% over the same period.

The recent Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) report on [Council and School Funding](#) also highlighted that councils' spending on early years childcare and schools has increased in real terms during the 2010s (with an estimated increase of around 19% between 2009/10 and 2021/22), whilst spending on other council services fell substantially over the same period: central administrative services (-55%), planning and development (-52%), housing (-38%), roads and transport (-29%), and culture (-29%).

COSLA's budget lobbying campaign, [Budget SOS](#), highlighted pressures of at least £1bn for Local Government in 2023/24 due to inflation, rising energy costs, pay and increased demand, unless more funding is provided. Although education has remained protected in recent years, '[Education SOS](#)' warned that if education services had to take their 'fair share' of these financial pressures, around £500m of savings would need to be found – equating to 8,500 fewer teachers, or 16,000 less pupil support staff.

The Deputy First Minister has stated that Local Government funding has increased by over £570m, however this is not all 'new' funding. The figure quoted is the change between finance circulars and includes funding that came to Local Government during financial year 2022/23, including for specific policy commitments such as Whole Family Wellbeing. It is also important to highlight that the only new teaching money made available in 2022/23 was £32.8m for the 2021/22 teachers pay deal.

COSLA's [Budget Reality](#) highlights that Local Government will see just a £71m cash increase in 2023/24, once policy commitments are taken into account – this means only £71m to deal with inflation and pay across the entire Local Government, nowhere near the £1bn required.

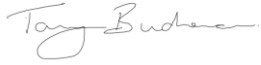
Local Government is under significant financial pressures as a result of inflation across pay, utilities, food and materials. This is hitting Local Government just as hard as it is hitting household budgets. Councils are having to make significant cuts to services in order to balance their budgets.

No one in Local Government is comfortable or wants to be in the position of considering reducing services, particularly those relating to supporting children and young people. However, the Scottish Budget as it stands requires councils to take exceedingly tough decisions.

We remain and are committed to ongoing discussion with the Scottish Government around their expectations for education services and how these can be met with the reduced funding envelope available to Local Government. Council Leaders have been clear that this must include including a discussion on funding flexibilities and the overall quantum of funding in the Local Government Settlement. Without this, there will be cuts that will impact everyone in our communities.

We hope this letter is helpful to the committee as it continues to consider the Scottish Budget 2023/24 and its implications on Education, Children and Young People.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Tony Buchanan in cursive script.

Cllr Tony Buchanan
Children and Young People Spokesperson

Handwritten signature of Katie Hagmann, consisting of a vertical line followed by a wavy horizontal line.

Cllr Katie Hagmann
Resources Spokesperson