EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

2nd Meeting, 2019 (Session 5)

Wednesday 16 January 2019

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in the Robert Burns Room (CR1).

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee will decide whether to take agenda items 3 and 4 in private.

2. **Draft Budget 2019-20:** The Committee will take evidence from—

   John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills,

   Aileen McKechnie, Director of Advance Learning and Science, Scottish Government; and

   Andrew Bruce, Deputy Director, Learning Directorate, Scottish Government.

3. **Review of Evidence:** The Committee will consider the evidence it heard earlier.

4. **Work programme:** The Committee will consider its work programme.

Roz Thomson
Clerk to the Education and Skills Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
Tel: 85222
Email: Roz.Thomson@parliament.scot
The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Agenda item 2**

SPiCe briefing paper
Submissions pack

**Agenda item 4**

PRIVATE PAPER
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to brief the Education and Skills Committee on the Scottish Budget 2019-20 in advance of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills giving evidence to the Committee on 16 January 2019.

The budget was published on Wednesday 13 December 2018 and this paper will cover the changed approach to budget scrutiny, the overall context of the budget and a number of broad themes which the Committee has expressed an interest in previously. The purpose of the paper is not to provide an exhaustive account of the budget. Members are encouraged to contact SPICe should they have any further queries.

OVERALL CONTEXT

The overall Scottish Budget in 2019-20 is expected to be £42.54bn and will be an increase of 4.9% in cash terms and 3.0% in real terms compared to the current financial year. The discretionary parts of the Scottish budget are revenue and capital. The revenue budget will be £28.6bn which is an increase of 3.6% in cash terms and 1.8% in real terms. The capital budget is £5.1bn, a 14.8% cash increase and a 12.8% increase in real terms. An infographic showing the overall budget is included in Annexe A to this paper.

The planned discretionary Education and Skills portfolio budget will be £2.81bn. The overall budget for Education and Skills is higher, at £3.45bn, however this includes Annual Managed Expenditure (non-discretionary funding covering teachers’ pension payments and student loans for example), Non-Cash (e.g. depreciation), and financial transactions (borrowing from HM Treasury to support capital investment).

Tables 1a and 1b below show the overall spending in the Education and Skills portfolio in cash and real terms respectively.

Table 1a: Education and Skills Portfolio - Cash (£m)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
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<tr>
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<td>3,288.9</td>
<td>3,412.6</td>
<td>3,448.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fiscal Resource*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
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<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Transactions</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Funded AME</td>
<td>443.0</td>
<td>428.0</td>
<td>397.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Table 1b: Education and Skills Portfolio - Real terms (£m 2018-19 prices)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>of which</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Fiscal Resource*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>154.6</td>
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<td>92.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Transactions</td>
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<td>54.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK Funded AME</td>
<td>435.1</td>
<td>428.0</td>
<td>390.5</td>
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* In 2019-20, there is a change to the way that Scottish Government staffing budgets are presented and total operating costs are now included within portfolio budgets. In previous budgets, the Administration chapter set out the budget for the core Administration to support the Scottish Government and some Scottish Government staff were paid for from within individual portfolio budgets. In 2018-19 around £14m of the Administration budget supported staff working in Education and Skills. Source: Scottish Government Budget 2019-20 and HM Treasury deflators.

Resource funding is planned to increase by 1.3% in real terms between 2018-19 and 2019-20. However, if the £14m contained in the Administration budget in 2018-19 is included, the increase in real terms is 0.7%. Capital funding has reduced over the past three Scottish Government budgets and at the same time Financial Transactions, which are loans from HM Treasury to support capital investment, have increased. In 2019-20, £85.1m of the capital budget is planned to be distributed through the Scottish Funding Council to colleges and universities. All of the budget for Financial Transactions in 2019-20 is allocated to higher education institutions. The budget for higher and further education is examined in more detail later in this paper.

Most spending on school and early years education in Scotland is through local government (£5bn). There are a number of ring-fenced grants that are provided to local government to meet national priorities in education and these will be discussed under the Local Government and Communities header later in this paper. Capital funding allocations in Tables 1a and 1b of this paper do not include central government grants to local authorities for early learning and childcare.

**BUDGET SCRUTINY**

On Tuesday 8 May 2018, the Scottish Parliament voted to accept a new Written Agreement between the Finance and Constitution Committee and the Scottish Government, setting out the administrative arrangements for the annual budget process and other related budgetary matters.

A revised agreement between the Finance and Constitution Committee and the Scottish Government stated that budget scrutiny undertaken by the Parliament should have the following focuses:

- A full year approach: a broader process in which committees have the flexibility to incorporate budget scrutiny including public engagement into their work prior to the publication of firm and detailed spending proposals.
• A Continuous cycle: scrutiny should be continuous with an emphasis on developing an understanding of the impact of budgetary decisions over a number of years including budgetary trends.

• Output / outcome focused: scrutiny should also be evaluative with an emphasis on what budgets have achieved and aim to achieve over the long term, including scrutiny of equalities outcomes.

• Fiscal responsibility: scrutiny should have a long term outlook and focus more on prioritisation, addressing fiscal constraints and the impact of increasing demand for public services.

• Interdependent: scrutiny should focus more on the interdependent nature of many of the policies which the budget is seeking to deliver.

The role identified for subject committees’ in this process is to examine the priorities, overall spending and outcomes achieved within their remits. This paper reflects this role and, where possible, identifies outcomes or evaluations of policy. The most recent information available may refer to activity from several years ago.

To assist the Parliament in scrutinising the Scottish Government’s spending plans, the Scottish Government will publish additional documents throughout the year. The Scottish Government published its first Medium Term Financial Strategy on 31 May 2018. The MTFS identified six “key resource budget commitments” including ELC, Attainment and Higher Education1. Each of these three priorities are examined further later in this paper.

Prior to debates on Stage 1 of the Budget Bill, Parliament will debate Committee’s pre-budget reports, if they published one. Each committee convener is allocated time in this debate.

Pre-budget letter and responses

The Committee wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills on 7 November 2018 in advance of the publication of the budget. The Scottish Government’s response was included in the budget documentation published on 13 December 2018. The Cabinet Secretary also responded to the Committee directly on 20 December 2018.

The Committee’s letter and the Cabinet Secretary’s response are included in Paper 2.

The Committee’s letter explained the Committee’s agreed approach to budget scrutiny which is to assess the extent to which the Scottish Government’s spending is aligned to outcomes and to ensure that that the Scottish Government undertakes evaluations on the impact of its spending decisions, which in turn informs further budget decisions.

The Committee reiterated a number of specific spending and policy areas it had raised during the previous year’s budget process—

• Additional support needs, particularly on baseline data on the numbers of pupils with ASN and funding;

• Education Scotland and the routine in-year budget transfers;

1 The other three key resource commitments were Health, Police and Social Security.
• Evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund (Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding)

These themes are discussed in greater detail later in the paper.

THEME1: HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

As noted above, Higher Education is identified as a spending priority in the Scottish Government’s Medium Term Financial Strategy. The strategy notes the high esteem in which the sector is held internationally. It also identifies a number of policies in relation to Higher Education: widening access; tuition, free at the point of use; and better gender balance in STEM, teaching and other courses.

The Scottish Funding Council supports and funds both Scotland’s college and university sectors. Its overall budget increased very slightly (0.1%) in cash terms to £1,839.3m. This represented a reduction of 1.7% in real terms.

Tables 2a and 2b below show the revenue and capital budgets\(^2\) for colleges and universities.

**Table 2a: Colleges Net Resource and Net Capital allocations**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>521.7</td>
<td>557.7</td>
<td>26.6</td>
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<td>2015/16</td>
<td>530.3</td>
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<td>2016/17</td>
<td>530.3</td>
<td>550.2</td>
<td>27.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>551.3</td>
<td>561.3</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>588.2</td>
<td>588.2</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>606.5</td>
<td>595.8</td>
<td>47.6</td>
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**Table 2b: Universities Resource and Capital allocations**

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<tbody>
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<td>2018/19</td>
<td>1024.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>1025.3</td>
<td>1007.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) Figures taken from the budget documentation, which compares the current budget and previous years’ draft budgets. These do not include any subsequent Barnett consequentials added to budget lines.
Colleges

Grant-in-Aid funding to colleges is increasing in cash terms by 3.1% to £606.5m, a 1.3% real terms increase. This increase is to meet costs of national bargaining for college staff salaries. As with last year, colleges are expected to raise £190m in income and so the aggregate resource expenditure for the college sector is expected to be £796.5m in 2019/20. The 2019/20 capital budget for colleges shows a significant change on previous years falling to £49.6m from £78.7m in 2018/19. The level 4 document explains:

“The college capital expenditure line reduces by £29.1 million. In 2018-19, the college capital expenditure line received a £26.9 million uplift to enable the sector to address all of the very high priority backlog repairs identified in the 2017 Estate Condition Survey. The 2019-20 capital grant reverts to a more typical baseline for the college estate and also provides funding for completion of the new Forth Valley college.”

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive of Colleges Scotland, gave a qualified welcome to the budget. She said, “the 1.3% real terms revenue increase is to cover the costs of National Bargaining and means finances shall remain tight for colleges”. In terms of the capital allocation Ms Struthers said—

“£47.6 million in capital funding for the college estate, however £22 million of this is earmarked for Forth Valley College’s Falkirk campus rebuild, leaving £25.6 million for the college estate’s essential backlog and ongoing maintenance. The college sector’s requirement for capital is well in excess of the amount allocated, so there are challenges ahead for the college estate.”

The latest statistics available on outcomes for learners at colleges are from the academic year 2016/17 and are set out in the SFC’s College Performance Indicators 2016-17. This document sets out a number of key points:

- The sector exceeded its student number target for 2016-17 delivering 117,502 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) SFC funded student places which is 1,233 FTE more than the 116,269 FTE target.
- 50,086 full-time further education students enrolled on recognised qualifications, of which 65.3% successfully completed their course.
- Over a four year period 2013-14 to 2016-17, the number of full time FE student enrolments has reduced by 1,545.
- 33,873 full-time higher education students enrolled on recognised qualifications, of which 71.6% successfully completed their course.
- Over the four year period 2013-14 to 2016-17, the number of full time HE student enrolments has increased by 1,505.

Higher Education Institutions

In the 2016/17 draft budget, the Scottish Government stated—

“In terms of future funding levels, we will seek to ensure that over the period of the spending review to 2019-20, the allocation for higher education from the Scottish
Government’s budget will support the continued success of our world class, research-excellent and internationally competitive universities.”

Resource funding for Higher Education is essentially the same, in cash terms, as in 2018/19 at £1,025.2m. There was an increase of £0.3m which is explained as a small movement of resource that had previously been within the administration budget. Higher Education capital funding reduced from £41.2m in the 2018/19 budget to £37.5m in 2019/20. This reduction is due to the Glasgow School of Art loan support ending. The capital expenditure of HEIs will be augmented through additional funds under “Financial Transactions” which has risen from £40.0m in 2018/19 to £55.0m in 2019/20 – this money will be used for projects related to low carbon and energy saving, estates development and innovation.

Planned funding to support student fees and loan advances remains stable in cash terms since the last budget at £301.6m and £550.0m respectively.

Universities Scotland has asked for a real terms increase of 2% in revenue funding and responding to the budget, Professor Andrea Nolan, Convener of Universities Scotland, said:

“It’s very difficult to learn that funding for universities is going to drop in real terms by 1.79 per cent. This returns universities to a series of real terms cuts that the Government stopped last year. We understand the Scottish Government is managing a challenging set of public finances. However, we’d hoped last year’s decision was the start of a slow climb back to sustainable funding. That’s clearly not the case.”

In relation to the capital settlement, Professor Andrea Nolan noted that Financial Transactions, which are loans, are planned to become a greater part in the capital funding available to universities. Professor Nolan said:

“Loans are now the main means of financial support that universities receive from the Scottish Government for their estate and infrastructure. Loans are a helpful addition but cannot be a replacement for core funding and there is, ultimately, a limit to universities’ ability to borrow.”

Universities Scotland’s submission to the Committee said—

“The latest planned cut adds to a pattern of real terms cuts to university funding since 2014/15. We believe the resource budget available to universities, through the SFC, has declined by 12% in real-terms since 2014-15, which has been compounded by cuts to the SAAS fee element of funding.

“This means there is now £130 million less in real terms in the SFC resource budget to invest in universities teaching and supporting students, pioneering research or driving innovation in 2019/20 than there was in 2014-15.”

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3 Financial Transactions are a form of capital budget allocated by HM Treasury to the Scottish Government which can only be used for the provision of loans or equity investment beyond the public sector and cannot be used to fund public services. Financial Transactions facilities have to be repaid to HM Treasury in future years.
The submission also called on the Scottish Government to pass on “consequential funding from the UK Government’s increased investment in England in research and innovation (worth an estimated £18 million”).

Mary Senior from UCU Scotland said “this is a deeply disappointing budget for Scottish higher education. Today's real terms cut to the sector's funding will ultimately hit students the hardest”.

In terms of teaching and learning, the latest data on the performance of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland in Scotland is from 2016/17. The SFC’s Higher Education Students and Qualifiers at Scottish Institutions 2016-17 sets out a number of key points:

- The total number of students at HEIs increased by 6,370 (+2.7%) between 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- The number of Scottish domiciled first degree entrants has increased by 1.2% between 2015-16 and 2016-17. In the same time period the number of Scottish domiciled postgraduate entrants increased by 7.8%.
- Between 2015-16 and 2016-17 there was an increase in the numbers of qualifiers at HEIs of 3,935 (+5.6%). The largest increase in qualifiers between 2015-16 and 2016-17 was at taught postgraduate level in HEIs, where the number of qualifiers increased by 3,290 (+14.3%). The number of research postgraduate qualifiers increased by 260 (+9.3%) in this year, and the number of first degree qualifiers at HEIs increased by 510 (+1.4%).
- In 2016-17, 27,060 Scottish domiciled students achieved a first degree and 11,895 achieved a postgraduate qualification. This is an increase of 1.5% and 12.1% respectively.

In response to the September publication of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2019 in which the number of Scottish Universities in the top 200 fell from five to four, Alistair Sim Director of Universities Scotland said—

“A clear pattern is emerging between the level of resource available to higher education sectors by country and the trajectory of that country within global league tables. This year we’ve seen Japan overtake the UK as the second most-represented nation in the rankings for the first time. We’ve also seen Scotland’s number of universities in the top 200 drop from five to four. We need sustainable investment if we’re going to keep Scotland’s critical advantage as a place to study, research and do business.”

Widening Access

Both colleges and universities provide higher education and therefore both sectors contribute to the Scottish Government’s goals in relation to widening access to higher education.

The SFC’s most recent report on Widening Access on the 2016-17 academic year summarised the performance of both sectors—

“More than 20% of entrants to FE and HE college courses at this level are from the most deprived 20%, and the percentage has been increasing over the time period shown. However, the proportion across both levels and both modes of study at
university are lower. In 2016-17, the proportion from the most deprived 20% at full-time first degree level was 14.6%, a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from 2015-16. [There is also] reduction in the proportion of students from the most deprived 20% at full-time sub-degree level. The percentage decreased from 15.6% to 10.5% between 2003-04 and 2016-17 [There was also] a reduction in the proportion of students from the most deprived 20% at full-time sub-degree level. The percentage decreased from 15.6% to 10.5% between 2003-04 and 2016-17 [in HEIs]"

The Committee may wish to explore—

- Whether and how the funding settlement reflects a long-term strategy for the college and university sectors.

- Whether the revenue budget for universities is sufficient to meet the Scottish Government’s aim to “support the continued success of our world class, research-excellent and internationally competitive universities”.

- How a flat cash settlement for universities will impact either on the number of Scottish/EU domiciled students accessing university or the average level of the teaching grant to universities.

- Whether the Cabinet Secretary agrees with Universities Scotland’s analysis that there is likely to be £18m of additional Barnett consequentials as a result of increased research spending in England and whether this would be passed on to higher education in Scotland.

- What the demand is for capital funding within the university and college sectors and how this matches the funding allocation. How Scottish Government funded capital projects are assessed and whether the assessment for capital funding through Financial Transactions is similar.

- Whether and how budget allocations across the college and universities sectors reflect the Scottish Government's widening access agenda and if the profile of spending is changing over time to reflect the outcomes achieved across the two sectors.

THEME 2: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The Committee’s pre-budget letter to the Cabinet Secretary re-iterated areas of interest of the Committee. In relation to ASN, the Committee—

- Identified additional support for learning as a funding priority and raised the possibility of ring-fencing funds for ASL;

- Sought a definition of a positive destination for an individual with additional support needs; and

- Sought acknowledgement that the collection of data on children and young people with additional support needs is inconsistent and the subsequent difficulties in measuring outcomes, such as positive destinations, for young people with ASN;

The budget document stated—
“We have continued to provide national funding of £10.5 million to support learning provision for children and young people with complex additional support needs. This funding is used to enhance support to children and young people who learn in the grant-aided special school sector in Scotland.”

The Cabinet Secretary’s letter of 20 December 2018 noted that the majority of funding for children and young people with ASN is through local authorities which have a legal duty to support children and young people with ASN. He stated that the Local Government Finance Returns for 2016-17 shows that local authorities spending on education and ASN increased in real terms between 2015-16 and 2016-17.

The Cabinet Secretary also stated—

“We have committed to continuing our funding for the provision of support to children and young people with complex additional support needs at £10.5 million. We will also continue our support of £800k to organisations which provide vital information and advice services to parents and carers, training and support for those working with pupils who have sensory impairment; and services to support inclusive digital technology.”

The Cabinet Secretary argued that the data on school leaver destinations are robust. He said that “the variation at local authority level [of the data on the numbers of children with ASN] reflects local differences in the way additional needs met across local authorities, within the framework of the legislation.”. The Cabinet Secretary provided the Committee with the following definition of a positive destination—

“a young person who is in Further Education, Higher Education, Training, Employment, Voluntary Work or who has an activity agreement in place”

The Cabinet Secretary noted that in 2016/17, the percentage of secondary and special school leavers from publicly funded schools in Scotland who achieved a positive destination was 88.2%. This compares to 95.2% for leavers with no additional support need. The profile of the destinations between leavers with ASN and others was different however. Figure 1 below shows the percentages of leavers by the types of positive destinations in 2016/17.
There is also considerable variation in the percentage of leavers with positive destinations depending on the identified additional support need. The lowest percentage was for leavers with interrupted learning; 74.6% of this group achieved a positive destination. The highest percentage of leavers with ASN achieving a positive destination was 94.7% which was achieved by young people with English as an additional language.

Another measure of outcomes for young people with ASN is the highest qualification achieved when leaving school. In 2016/17, 65.2% of young people with an identified additional support need left school with at least one SCQF level 5 qualification or better; the figure for those without an identified additional support need was 92.0%.

The Committee undertook an evidence session on statistics for additional support needs support staff on 28 November 2018 and plans to undertake further scrutiny on this topic in February.

The Committee may wish to explore—

- Whether the funding on additional support needs at a local level is sufficient to ensure the best possible outcomes for children with additional support needs.

- The levels of attainment and achievement of positive destinations for this group the Cabinet Secretary would consider to be a benchmark for success of Scottish Government policies in relation to ASN. How are these targets differentiated for different types and levels of additional support need.

- How and whether the Scottish Government prioritises young people with additional support needs throughout their learner journey at different institutions, given young people with additional support needs’ learner journeys are different to others’ (e.g. more likely to enter further education from school).
THEME 3: EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE

Early Learning and Childcare

In November 2014, the Scottish Government announced that the number of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) hours is set to increase to 1,140 a year by 2020 (30 hours over 38 weeks). As part of this expansion, it is estimated that an additional 11,000 (headcount) staff will be required, alongside substantial growth in ELC capacity by public, private and third sector providers.

ELC was identified as a key resource commitment by the Scottish Government in its Medium Term Financial Strategy. According to the 2019-20 budget, ELC funding is designed to support: the creation of additional capacity in ELC settings; the growth of the ELC workforce and the provision of additional training opportunities for existing staff.

The ELC Expansion Grant for 2019-20 totals £437.2m. This is split between £262.2m of revenue funding and £175m of capital funding. This is an increase of £235m on the 2018-19 grant amount of £202.2m (£52.2m revenue; £150m capital).

The 2019-20 budget also includes:

- £40.5m of ELC programme spend to support ELC expansion initiatives such as the additional graduate guarantee; investment in outdoor learning and support for funded providers (£24.1m of this is provided as a ring-fenced grant to local authorities);
- £0.5m of ELC Realising Change Funding.

Multi-Year Funding Settlement for Local Authorities

In October 2017, the Scottish Government announced that the funding for ELC would increase to £840 million a year by 2021-22. COSLA responded that the amounts allocated fell short of the financial requirements set out by local authorities in their local ELC delivery plans.

A new, multi-year, funding package for ELC was agreed between the Scottish Government and COSLA in April 2018. Under the agreement local authorities are set to receive recurring revenue funding of £567 million per annum by 2021-22. The agreement is based upon refreshed finance templates submitted by local authorities in March 2018.

Table 3: Local Authority Revenue Allocations for ELC, 2018-19 to 2021-22.

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<td>£508m</td>
<td>£567m</td>
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In a statement to Parliament on 1 May 2018, the Minister for Childcare and Early Years, Maree Todd, said that this agreement: “will bring annual public spend on early learning and childcare to £990 million.” (Official Report 1 May 2018, Col. 13).

The Scottish Government has stated that this multi-year funding agreement will enable local authorities to pay a sustainable hourly rate to all providers of ELC, including payment of the Living Wage to staff delivering funded ELC.
Revenue funding for ELC is divided between ‘new’ and ‘recurring’ funding. Recurring funding refers to the baseline funding introduced in 2017/18. For example, in 2018/19, of the £70.3m of revenue funding allocated to authorities, £52.2m was new and £24.1 recurring.

Local authority funding for the 600 hours of funded ELC has not been ring-fenced. Funding provided to local authorities for 1140 hours expansion since 2017-18 has been allocated as a ring-fenced specific grant. Annex E of the ‘Local government finance circular: settlement for 2019-2020’, states that an estimated £286.3m has been ring-fenced for ELC.

In a letter to local authorities on 1 May 2018, the Scottish Government stated that:

“This funding is allocated as a specific grant to ensure that it is protected for investment in early learning and childcare. Authorities will be required to report to the Scottish Government on how this funding has been applied. The intention is for this to be light touch, integrated with an agreed annual review of revenue funding, and we will consult with COSLA and the ELC Finance Working Group on these arrangements.”

In addition to revenue funding, authorities have been allocated £476 million of capital funding to support expansion from 2017-18 to 2021-22. This amount falls short of the estimated £747 million an Audit Scotland assessment of local authority ELC delivery plans considered would be required for detailed infrastructure changes (Audit Scotland 2018, 39).

**Table 4: Local Authority Capital Allocations for ELC, 2017-18 to 2020-21.**

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<tr>
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<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
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<th>2020-21</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>£30m</td>
<td>£150m</td>
<td>£175m</td>
<td>£121m</td>
<td>£476m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This capital funding is to allow for either refurbishment or extension of current ELC facilities or building new capacity to help deliver the ELC expansion. There has been considerable discussion as to whether local authorities are using this capital funding to support private or third sector ELC providers in refurbishing or expanding their own facilities.

The Scottish Government has stated that it is for individual authorities to seek advice from their own legal and financial teams as to whether capital funding can be used to support private/third sector providers.

**The Committee may wish to explore—**

- How local authorities will be held accountable to ensure that funding to support the expansion of ELC is spent for this purpose. What other mechanisms are there to ensure that local authorities expenditure is effective.

- The process by which the new multi-year funding agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA was agreed, and how the yearly amounts were determined.
• What indicators are the Scottish Government using to evaluate the ELC expansion. How the outcomes of improved child development and increased parental employment/study will be measured.

• The difference in the amount of capital funding allocated to local authorities for refurbishment/extensions, and the Audit Scotland estimate.

• Other avenues of Scottish Government support for private and third sector partner providers seeking to refurbish or extend their premises in order to deliver the expansion.

THEME 4: ATTAINMENT SCOTLAND FUND

The Medium Term Financial Strategy identifies Attainment as a key priority for the Scottish Government. It says—

“Our top priorities are to raise attainment and close the attainment gap; promote health and wellbeing; and improve skills and employability. Ensuring the best start in life for every child, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic background, contributes to each of these four high-level priorities. Everyone will benefit in future if we invest in our young people now.”

The Attainment Scotland Fund is a £750m fund over the course of this Parliament to support schools and local authorities to contribute to closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Up to the current financial year, the ASF has had three strands: Challenge Authorities; a Schools Programme; and the Pupil Equity Fund. The first two strands provide support to nine local authorities and an additional 74 schools with the highest levels of deprivation. PEF is distributed directly to headteachers and is allocated on the basis of the number of pupils in P1-S3 known to be eligible for free school meals.

This year, the Scottish Government announced an additional strand, the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund. The Scottish Government has allocated £8.2m in the current financial year and £12.25m for each of the subsequent financial years to 2020-21. The Scottish Government states—

“This funding will be distributed to local authorities, and directed by Chief Social Work and Education Officers, in conjunction with key planning partners to target this funding. The voices of care experienced children and young people will be integral to this process … The funding will benefit a wide group, with care experienced children and young people from birth to the age of 26, being eligible for the fund.”

PEF began in 2017/18 and £120m has been allocated each year since then. The Challenge Authority and Schools Programmes began earlier, in 2015/16 (that year falls outwith the ASF and is not included in the £750m figure).

Table 5 below shows budget allocations and, for the years available, the outturns for the Challenge Authority and Schools Programmes. The data shows a trend of reducing underspend.
### Table 5: ASF Allocation and Outturn (excluding PEF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Allocation</th>
<th>Outturn</th>
<th>% underspend</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The evaluation of the first two years of the ASF highlights difficulties in recruitment as one reason why there were underspends in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The different threads of the ASF, are accounted for in different ways. Funding for challenge authorities and the schools programme is allocated for specific projects or activities following successful bids. PEF is issued directly to the local authority to be passed to the headteachers to spend at a school level.

This difference in approach is reflected in how the budget lines are held at the Scottish Government: the funding for challenge authorities and the schools programme is held within the Education Directorate; PEF is a ringfenced grant within the local government finance settlement.

The Scottish Government produced statistics on the school level spend of PEF in 2017-18. This showed that 40% of PEF monies allocated to local authority schools were carried over into 2018-19; Scottish Government data at local authority level is included in Annexe B. It should be noted that the funds were provided to local authorities at the start of the academic year of 2017-18 and schools may have planned spending over the academic year rather than the financial year.

The ASF must be used for additional purposes. That is, it cannot be used to replace activities that would have been funded through core local authority funding.

The Scottish Government published an interim review of the ASF in March 2018. This covered the first two years of operation and therefore did not cover the introduction of PEF or the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund. It found that “progress and experiences across the range of stakeholders were for the most part positive” and that literacy and health and wellbeing interventions were prioritised but there was less evidence of interventions on numeracy. In terms of improving attainment—

“Initial indications of progress at a small scale are positive and hint towards a shift in the right direction. Strong foundations appeared to be built with respect to the administration and delivery of the fund.”

The interim review also found, among other things, that stakeholders found challenges in the bureaucracy and timescales of the process and recruitment. The next assessment of the ASF will examine how PEF is being spend and its impact; the Cabinet Secretary’s submission to the Committee stated that the assessment will also examine how local authorities’ use of core funding to support the aim of closing the poverty related attainment
Further more, the Cabinet Secretary explained that Education Scotland and Audit Scotland to examine the progress made by the nine Challenge Authorities in improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. In terms of the impacts different funding streams, the Cabinet Secretary stated—

“Disentangling the impact of separate funding streams, alongside the impact of core funding is outwith the scope of the evaluation, and would unnecessarily serve to increase bureaucracy and the burdens placed on schools.”

In September 2018, the Scottish Government published results from a survey of local authorities across Scotland regarding the ASF’s governance, sustainability, Pupil Equity Fund planning and support, and unintended consequences of the fund. The survey found that local authorities were positive overall in how the ASF was working and the relationships with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and their attainment advisors. As a result of the fund, some local authorities reported a greater focus on deprivation and collaborative working. In terms of PEF, local authorities identified the following areas as working well: support for headteachers; a focus on monitoring impact of chosen interventions, plans and/or outcomes; collaboration and sharing learning; and the guidance. Staffing, procurement and the lack of lead-in time to plan were identified as barriers to success. In terms of the sustainability of improvements beyond the end of the ASF, the Scottish Government reported—

“Overall, there was a positive outlook in terms of sustainability, amongst both challenge and non-challenge authorities. Out of the 22 respondents, 13 believed improvements to be sustainable, three did not and six were unsure […]

“One challenge authority stated that they were linking key aspects of SAC projects with core authority provision and another challenge authority said they were working on an exit strategy. Another authority stated that while they had been very focused on building sustainability, “the withdrawal of such funding will undoubtedly have a negative impact”.

The 2018 National Improvement Plan identified a number of measures in how it will measure the attainment gap. These measures include indicators of: health and wellbeing; literacy, numeracy; school leaver attainment; and participation. The 2019 National Improvement Plan reported on progress on these measures, it said—

“Of the 11 key measures, 9 are showing a narrowing of the gap; albeit due to a mixed underlying picture and to varying extents. For the other 2 key measures, one will not have any new data to compare until 2019, and the other cannot be compared directly as there has been a change in the data that has been collected.”

(p14)

The Committee received a submission from Save the Children which focused on the ASF. Save the Children asked that the Committee explore the impact of interventions and how this can improve teaching and learning and inform future spending.

The Committee may wish to explore—

- What the reasons are for the underspend of the Challenge Authority and Schools Programmes and what progress has been made since 2017-18 in this regard.
• Whether the Scottish Government is concerned that 40% of PEF monies were carried over from 2017-18 and if the issues identified by local authorities regarding staffing, procurement and the lack of planning and lead-in time are being addressed by the Scottish Government.

• Whether the different methods of funding and accountability structures of PEF and the other streams of the ASF impact on the effectiveness of interventions.

• How the interim assessment of the ASF, published in March 2018, has impacted on spending decisions in the current budget.

• How the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund will be evaluated.

THEME 5: EDUCATION SCOTLAND AND OTHER KEY PUBLIC BODIES

Education Scotland’s budget will increase from £20.0m in 2018/19 to £22.5m in 2019/20. There is no cash increase to the salary costs of the agency. The £2.5m increase is in the “Other” budget line. The level 4 budget figures documents state—

“The 2019-20 budget includes more resources to deliver a revitalised and refreshed Education Scotland that can be effective in its enhanced remit for national, system wide improvement in learning and the associated educational leadership. Resources will be focused on tackling the equity and excellence agenda, making a significant contribution to the development of regional delivery and implementation of Regional Improvement Collaboratives. Additional resource will also support the strengthening our inspection function.”

The Committee raised the issue of Education Scotland’s budget regularly being subject to in-year revisions. The budget document includes a response to the Committee’s letter and in relation to in-year funding it stated—

“With regards to Education Scotland’s budget, this is set at the start of each financial year on the basis of known and agreed spend. We have budget and planning discussions with Education Scotland throughout the year, and it is therefore common for further funding to be transferred to Education Scotland in response to changing circumstances. Where those become part of Education Scotland’s core functions going forward, they would be considered in future annual budget discussions. This flexibility, where further funding can be transferred during a school or financial year, is important to supporting our partnership approach with local government, as it enables us to inject further available funding to wherever it is most needed to support our education reforms, both to Education Scotland and to other partners such as the Regional Improvement Collaboratives.”

The Scottish Government grant to the SQA remains stable in cash terms.

Skills Development Scotland’s budget has increased to £214.7m, a cash increase of 11.1% (9.1% in real terms). The additional funding is to support the continuing expansion of foundation and modern apprenticeships.

The Committee may wish to explore—
• How the performance of Education Scotland is being measured and how the move towards regional delivery will be assessed.

• Whether the flexibility of in-year funding for Education Scotland outweighs the potential benefits of a stable funding package and clear strategic direction.

• How the strategic priorities of the Scottish Government are reflected in the allocations and changes to the budgets of Education Scotland, SQA, and SDS.

THEME 6: LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT

While the local government settlement is not the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, the majority of funding for school education, and a number of other services relevant to the work of the Committee (e.g. children’s services) are funded through local authorities.

The total allocation to local government in the 2019-20 Budget is £10,779.9 million. This is mostly made up of General Revenue Grant (GRG) and Non-Domestic Rates Income (NDRI), with smaller amounts for General Capital Grant and Specific (or ring-fenced) Revenue and Capital grants. This represents a 2.5% increase in cash terms, or a 0.7% increase in real terms.

Once Revenue funding within other portfolios (but still from the Scottish Government to local authorities) is included, the total is £11,071.2 million, a cash increase of 3.8% (£405.1 million), or 2% (£210.5 million) in real terms. This £210 million real terms figure was used by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and fair Work as the headline Local Government figure in his Budget speech.

However, when looking specifically at the non-ringfenced Revenue funding available for councils to deliver services (GRG+NDRI) this falls by 1.7% (£157.2 million) in cash terms, or 3.4% (£319.1 million) in real terms between 2018-19 and 2019-20.

The table in Annexe C shows local general grant government funding, non-domestic rates income, funding from other portfolios, and specific grant funding.

Further analysis by colleagues in SPICe of the proposed local government settlement can be found in the December 2018 briefing Local Government Finance: Budget 2019-20 and provisional allocations to local authorities. Figure 2, below, shows the relative changes in revenue budgets for the Scottish Government and local government. Local Government figures are based on "Total Revenue" outturn figures from the Local Government Finance Circulars (6/2013 and 8/2018) Annex A, and include ring-fenced grants and NDRI. Scottish Government figures are based on the Scottish Government's Fiscal Resource Budget Limit plus NDRI. 2013-14 is used as a baseline for comparability purposes because the how police and fire services were funded was changed at that time. The graph does not represent year-on-year changes.
Specific Grant Funding

Specific Grant funding is “ringfenced” and cannot be used for other purposes. In terms of revenue, the Budget identifies £120.0m for pupil equity funding (no change on 2018/19), £4.5m on Gaelic (no change), and £262.2m for early years and childcare (discussed earlier). ELC expansion also accounts for £175.0m of capital funding (up £25.0m).

Revenue Funding within other Portfolios

There are a number of funding streams that are currently held within other portfolios that will be added to the local government settlement during 2019-20. This includes a further £24.1m of funding for ELC; this funding is not new and is the same as 2018/19. The £24.1m was referred to as “recurring” funding for ELC in a letter from the Scottish Government to local authorities in May 2018.4

Other funds included under “Revenue Funding within other Portfolios” include: 1 + 2 languages (£3m, no change from 2018/19); School Clothing Grant (£6m, no change); BSL (£0.2m, down £0.2m); and Youth Justice – Whole System approach (£0.8m, no change).

In addition, £120.0m is listed as funding for Health and Social Care and Mental Health, which includes £12.0m for investment in school counselling services. This funding is from the Health and Sport portfolio.

Local Government Funding outwith the finance circular

Over and above the money that will be included within the Local Government Finance (Scotland) Order 2019 there are a number of funding streams attached to particular portfolio policy initiatives. This includes the Attainment Scotland Fund (£62.0m, up £3m), and revenue support for the Schools for the Future programme (£60.9m, up £8m).

4 See appendix 1 (p15) of a paper to the Scottish Borders Council.
Discretionary budget

Members will be aware that funding for PEF and through the Attainment Scotland Fund must provide additionality and cannot be used to replace activity that would have been funded by local authorities through their discretionary budgets. Equally, funding for the expansion of early years and childcare is for additional services. Local authorities’ discretionary budgets includes (among other things) monies for: schools; supporting children with additional support needs; and music tuition and this is planned to reduce in cash terms.

A major cost in education is the wages of teachers. Negotiations with unions are continuing on the pay settlement for the current financial year. Specific amounts of money are allocated within the GRG to support policy outcomes (e.g. pupil/teacher ratios). The Local Government finance circular which set out local authorities’ provisional allocations for 2019-20 stated—

“[The Scottish Government will] continue to commit an overall funding package of £88 million in the local government finance settlement to support both maintaining the pupil teacher ratio at a national level and ensuring that places are provided for all probationers who require one under the teacher induction scheme. It is recognised that discussions on teachers’ pay are on-going through the tri-partite Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers and any additional allocation to fund a negotiated agreement will require to be agreed.”

Local authority budgets is a topic that has arisen in a number of areas of the Committee’s work. The Committee took evidence from COSLA as part of the inquiry into music tuition on 5 December 2018. Lauren Bruce, Chief Officer of Local Government Finance at COSLA said—

“Since 2011-12, because of initiative funding, core budgets have reduced from 98 per cent of the funding that local government receives through the block grant to 88 per cent of that funding. Because of ring fencing of various parts of the budget, including the part for teacher numbers, and the cost of delivering health and social care and so on, the savings that local authorities must make from core budgets can be taken from only 42 per cent of the budget that comes to them. When we talk about core budgets, we are talking about services such as music tuition. The impact of reductions on those core budgets is significant and it becomes more significant every year. In addition, the impact becomes more significant the more ring-fenced pots of money and initiative funding we have.” (OR 5 December 2018, cols 17 & 18)

In terms of demand, the latest pupil number projections, published in 2016, forecasted that the number of pupils would increase by around half a percent in both 2019 and 2020.

The Committee may wish to explore—

- What work has been undertaken to assess the potential impact of the reduction in local authorities’ discretionary revenue budgets on attainment and tackling the poverty related attainment gap.
- Whether the benefits of ring-fenced funding supporting additional policies and interventions will outweigh potential negative impacts on young people of a reduced discretionary budget for local authorities. How this will be
assessed and whether the Cabinet Secretary would seek to adjust the balance of ring-fenced and non-ring-fenced budgets in light of any assessment.

- How the teachers’ pay settlement and any back-dated pay will be funded.

Ned Sharratt & Kate Wane
SPICe Research
10 January 2018

Note: Committee briefing papers are provided by SPICe for the use of Scottish Parliament committees and clerking staff. They provide focused information or respond to specific questions or areas of interest to committees and are not intended to offer comprehensive coverage of a subject area.

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP www.parliament.scot
Scottish Government Budget 2019-20

This infographic provides headline figures from the budget and outlines changes from 2018-19 in cash and real terms.
# Pupil Equity Funding - School Level Spend 2017/18: Local Authority Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>2017/18 PEF Allocation</th>
<th>2017/18 Actual PEF Expenditure</th>
<th>2017/18 PEF Carry Forward</th>
<th>% Spend</th>
<th>% Carry Forward</th>
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<td>Aberdeen City</td>
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<td>£2,022,572</td>
<td>£723,028</td>
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<td>Dundee City</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>£72,212,449</strong></td>
<td><strong>£47,887,141</strong></td>
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### Local Government Funding 2019-20

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<tr>
<th>Local Government (funding in £m)</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2019-20 (cash)</th>
<th>Cash change</th>
<th>Cash change %</th>
<th>2019-20 (real)</th>
<th>Real change</th>
<th>Real change %</th>
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<td><strong>Local Government Spending Plans (Table 6.10)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Revenue Grant (GRG)</td>
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<td>6,359.30</td>
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<td>Non-Domestic Rates (NDRI)</td>
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<td>2,853.00</td>
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<td>8.20%</td>
<td>2,802.80</td>
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<td>Support for Capital</td>
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<td>703.8</td>
<td>105.4</td>
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<td>Specific Resource Grants (SRG)</td>
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<td>76.70%</td>
<td>475.1</td>
<td>201.4</td>
<td>73.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Capital Grants</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>380.2</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>36.80%</td>
<td>373.5</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>34.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Advice and Policy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Level 2</strong></td>
<td>10,519.60</td>
<td>10,782.90</td>
<td>263.3</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>10,593.30</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRG+NDRI</strong></td>
<td>9,369.50</td>
<td>9,212.30</td>
<td>-157.2</td>
<td>-1.70%</td>
<td>9,050.40</td>
<td>-319.1</td>
<td>-3.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRG, NDRI and SRG</strong></td>
<td>9,643.20</td>
<td>9,695.90</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>9,525.50</td>
<td>-117.7</td>
<td>-1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Capital</strong></td>
<td>876.4</td>
<td>1,084.00</td>
<td>207.6</td>
<td>23.70%</td>
<td>1,064.90</td>
<td>188.5</td>
<td>21.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue funding in other portfolios (Table 6.14)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total revenue within other portfolios</td>
<td>146.5</td>
<td>291.3</td>
<td>144.8</td>
<td>98.80%</td>
<td>286.2</td>
<td>139.7</td>
<td>95.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Circular</td>
<td>10,666.10</td>
<td>11,071.20</td>
<td>405.1</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td>10,876.60</td>
<td>210.5</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding outwith core settlement (Table 6.15)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>153.8</td>
<td>161.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
<td>158.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>287.3</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>36.80%</td>
<td>282.2</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>34.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total funding outwith core</td>
<td>363.8</td>
<td>448.7</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>23.30%</td>
<td>440.8</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>21.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall SG funding for LG</strong></td>
<td>11,029.90</td>
<td>11,519.90</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>11,317.40</td>
<td>287.5</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Real terms in 2018-19 prices.
1. The purpose of the evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills is to scrutinise the Scottish Government’s proposed spending plans for 2019-20 within the Education and Skills portfolio. The session could also focus on themes raised by the Committee as part of its pre-budget scrutiny.

2. This pack contains correspondence between the Committee and the Scottish Government along with submissions regarding the Draft Budget 2019-20.

Pre-budget scrutiny

- **Annexe A**: Letter from the Convener to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.
- **Annexe B**: Response from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to the Convener.

Draft Budget documents

3. The Scottish Government’s proposed spending and tax plans for 2019-20 are available in full [here](#).

4. The Committee has also received submissions from three organisations in respect of the Draft Budget 2019–20.

- **Annexe C**: EIS
- **Annexe D**: Save the Children
- **Annexe E**: Universities Scotland

Additional Submissions

5. The Committee have received an additional submission from the Scottish Government and a submission from the Universities and College Union.

- **Annexe F**: Scottish Government additional submission
- **Annexe G**: UCU
Dear John

Budget scrutiny

The Committee has considered its approach to budget scrutiny under the revised process. It has agreed a number of specific measures to ensure that, embedded in its work, is an assessment of the extent to which spending is aligned to outcomes and that proper evaluation of the impact of spend occurs to inform further funding decisions.

For each of its future inquiries the Committee intends to write to the relevant minister seeking detail of relevant funding streams linked to the policy objectives that the Committee is scrutinising. It may also undertake further scrutiny later in the parliamentary session of specific public bodies, including revisiting the recommendations it made in its work on the role and performance of SDS, SFC, SQA and Education Scotland in 2017. Finally, it will continue to pursue themes in its future work on school education relating to the importance of accurate data and detailed evaluation work, to inform future spending decisions.

On this last point, while the Committee has not undertaken extensive pre-budget scrutiny for the coming financial year, the Committee would like to reiterate to you the priorities it set out in its budget scrutiny for 2018/19 in relation to school education. These are reproduced below.

Additional support needs – baseline data and funding

“The Committee appreciates the figures you provided on increasing numbers of young people with additional support needs achieving positive destinations but would seek a specific definition of what you consider to be a positive destination. The Committee also seeks an acknowledgement that if the baseline data on the incidence of additional support needs is inconsistent across authorities then it is not possible to be definitive as to the
The proportion of young people with additional support needs who achieve positive destinations.

The Committee notes that there is no ring-fenced funding allocated to local authorities in relation to additional support for learning. The effective implementation of additional support for learning policy is reliant on effective funding, hence the Committee highlighted ASL as a funding priority in its inquiry and in its letter on the 2018/9 budget in October.

The Committee wishes to highlight the Scottish Children’s Services Coalition recommendation that a dedicated additional support needs attainment fund for local authorities should be set up. Given the Government has increased the total amount of ring-fenced funding for local authorities in this draft budget, the Committee believes that ring-fencing should be considered for ASL.”

**Education reforms – in-year transfers**

“Given the changes required of Education Scotland [as part of education reforms], and the extent to which (according to the most recent staff survey) the organisation struggles to manage change, the Committee would seek clarity as to why funding for Education Scotland is not higher at the start of the financial year. The Committee invites you to recognise the benefits of providing a larger proportion of Education Scotland’s funding at the start of the financial year to aid planning processes.”

**Attainment funding - evaluation**

“the Committee was keen to understand how you will assess whether [PEF] is used to fund new initiatives aimed at reducing the attainment gap, as opposed to being used as a new funding stream for existing functions within schools. The Committee also sought to understand how you will use the learning and evaluation from the way funds have been used so far to inform future funding allocations…

“The Committee explored the ways in which the Scottish Government intends to monitor the use of pupil equity funding to ensure it is used in accordance with the principle of additionality. Examples were raised in evidence of new initiatives and posts created as a direct result of Pupil Equity Funding; however, the Committee is also aware of reports of Pupil Equity Funding being used for existing services. In this regard, you noted that you have previously intervened where you consider it is not being used as intended and would continue to do so…The Committee is in a position where it cannot identify the extent to which PEF funding could be being used to replace previous funding.”

The Committee has continued its scrutiny of these issues over the last year, and considers that the issues highlighted above remain pertinent. Attached in the appendix are a number of extracts of the Committee’s work in these areas that substantiate the points made above. Also in the appendix are details of annual audit reports highlighted to the Committee by the Auditor General at the business planning day which also reflects the points above on the level of change required of Education Scotland in its role implementing certain education reforms, and the issue of in-year funding transfers.

I should be grateful if you could set out the latest position from the Government on the issues raised above, including:

- Progress to produce more reliable baseline data on additional support needs;
• Progress to revise the practice of substantial in-year funding transfers for public bodies including Education Scotland; and
• Progress on the evaluation of PEF spend.

On this last point, the Committee would be particularly interested to learn whether the evaluation work undertaken on PEF enables the Government to interpret the recent figures on PEF spend at school and local authority level, including underspends in this financial year of up to 56% at local authority level. The Committee would be interested in what the Government considers are the reasons behind these underspends and therefore for this funding being carried over into the next financial year.

Yours sincerely

Clare Adamson MSP
Convener
Relevant Committee work on these issues

ASN

The Committee made a number of recommendations linked to funding in its inquiry report in March 2017. For example, that:

- a financial review of what funding local authorities are currently providing to support those with additional support needs would be beneficial to inform both future Government and local authority funding allocations for this policy (recommendation 17 of its report); and

- the starting point for assessing how to effectively resource additional support for learning is accurate data on the prevalence of additional support needs across all local authorities (recommendations 15 and 16).

Pupil Equity Funding

The Committee has undertaken relevant work as part of its inquiry into poverty and attainment in relation to Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). An extract of the report is below:

Para 30 - An effective evaluation must reflect how attainment is improving, why and where the challenges, including funding levels, remain.

32 - The Committee recommends that as part of the next stage of this evaluation, the Scottish Government assess the extent to which PEF is used for additional purposes rather than for purposes that would be considered to be candidates to be covered from core funding.

33 - In addition, the Committee recommends that the Scottish Government widens the evaluation to assess the separate impacts on the poverty-related attainment gap of programmes and interventions that are totally or primarily funded by: the Pupil Equity Fund; other aspects of the Attainment Scotland Fund; or schools’ core budgets.

Education reforms / Education Scotland

In its Report on the Performance and Role of Public Bodies in 2017 the Committee made the following recommendation:

37. The Committee considers that when setting out on a programme of reform, clear outcome-based baseline data should be collected to allow measurement of the effectiveness of the reform as it is rolled out. The Committee is keen that this lesson be learnt for any future reform. The Committee regrets that the opportunity for this to be done for Curriculum for Excellence has now passed. The Committee urges Education Scotland and the Scottish Government to consider what can be done to address the consequences of this.
Annual audit reports

Education Scotland’s annual audit report highlights that it will need significant additional resources to deliver the commitments in the Scottish Government’s *Education Governance: Next steps* agenda. Education Scotland estimates that it will need 109 additional staff at a net cost of £3.5 million in 2018/19 and then £6.64 million per year in subsequent years.

The auditors of SQA, SDS and Education Scotland have drawn attention to risks around the funding model for the bodies. They each receive a proportion of their funding at the start of the year and need to set their annual budgets without certainty on their final funding allocations, which are confirmed in-year. SQA’s budget for 2018/19 assumes funding of £31.925 million from the Scottish Government. Its initial allocation from the Scottish Government was £11.017 million, with the remainder anticipated through in-year allocations.
Response from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Clare Adamson MSP
T3.40
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH19 1SP

20 December 2018

Dear Clare

I would like to respond to your letter of 7 November 2018 regarding the Committee’s pre-budget scrutiny of the Scottish Budget 2019-20.

The Education and Skills Portfolio is at the heart of delivering excellence and equity within Education in Scotland. Within a challenging financial climate, the Scottish Government is firm in its resolve to deliver a world class education system which meets the needs of all our young people. This is why the education portfolio will receive a real terms increase in investment in 2019-20.

I note and welcome further scrutiny later in the parliamentary session of specific public bodies, including SDS, SFC, SQA and Education Scotland, as detailed in your letter.

Please find attached the Scottish Government’s position in response to the comments raised in your letter.

JOHN SWINNEY
• The Committee seek a specific definition of what you consider to be a positive destination

Table L3.1 of the Attainment and Leavers Destinations Supplementary Data 2016/17 sets out the information on initial destinations for young people with additional support needs. This is available from:

https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/leavedestla/follleavedestat/AttainmentLeavers1617

A positive destination is considered to be a young person who is in Further Education, Higher Education, Training, Employment, Voluntary Work or who has an activity agreement in place. In 2016/17 88.2% of young people with additional support needs in Scotland had a positive destination post school.

• Committee seeks an acknowledgement that if the baseline data on the incidence of additional support needs is inconsistent across authorities then it is not possible to be definitive as to the proportion of young people with additional support needs who achieve positive destinations.

Scottish Government data on school leaver destinations are robust, published as National Statistics and follow the Code of Practice for Statistics. Data on outcomes and ASN status are matched on an individual basis by Scottish Candidate Number. The variation at local authority level reflects local differences in the way additional needs met across local authorities, within the framework of the legislation.

• The Committee notes that there is no ring-fenced funding allocated to local authorities in relation to additional support for learning. The effective implementation of additional support for learning policy is reliant on effective funding, hence the Committee highlighted ASL as a funding priority in its inquiry and in its letter on the 2018/9 budget in October.

I note the Committee’s concern about the funding of additional support for learning. The Additional Support for Learning Act requires that education authorities identify, provide for, and review the additional support needs of their pupils. Decisions about prioritisation and budgets, including those for the provision of services for pupils with additional support needs, are a matter for individual councils, balancing their need to meet statutory duties, local priorities and local circumstances. Reflecting this, the Local Government Financial Statistics for 2016-17 showed that local authorities spent £5.07 billion on education in Scotland. This has gone up from £4.95 billion in 2015-16 a 0.3% increase in real terms (2.5% in cash terms). Of that, £610 million was on additional support for learning – this has gone up from £584 million in 2015-16 a 2.3% increase in real terms (4.5% in cash terms). I can confirm that as part of the 2019/20 we have committed to continuing our funding for the provision of support to children and young people with complex additional support needs at £10.5 million. We will also continue our support of £800k to organisations which provide vital information and advice services to parents and carers, training and support for those working with pupils who have sensory impairment; and services to support inclusive digital technology.
Committee recommendations on ASN in March 2017 report

- a financial review of what funding local authorities are currently providing to support those with additional support needs would be beneficial to inform both future Government and local authority funding allocations for this policy (recommendation 17 of its report)

As noted to the Committee previously, although the money provided to the local authorities is allocated using a needs-based formula, there is no measurement of how much a local authority should spend on individual services, such as education. The vast majority of the funding provided is in the form of a block grant. It is then the responsibility of each local authority to allocate the total financial resources available to it, including funding for education, on the basis of local needs and priorities having first fulfilled its statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities including the Scottish Governments key strategic objectives and manifesto commitments.

Scotland’s local authorities are independent of corporate bodies and they are responsible for determining how they deliver local services and as democratically elected bodies, they are accountable to their electorates, not Scottish Ministers, for their decisions.

- The starting point for assessing how to effectively resource additional support for learning is accurate data on the prevalence of additional support needs across all local authorities (recommendations 15 and 16).

The Advisory Group for Additional Support for Learning is in the process of considering an alternative reporting framework focussed on the outcomes of children and young people with additional support needs. This is being developed in partnership with the Association of Directors of Education. One element of the revised reporting framework proposed includes the satisfaction of pupils and parents with the support that they receive. The Scottish Government will continue to collect, publish and monitor the statistical information and will include this information in any reporting.

- Given the changes required of Education Scotland [as part of education reforms], and the extent to which (according to the most recent staff survey) the organisation struggles to manage change, the Committee would seek clarity as to why funding for Education Scotland is not higher at the start of the financial year. The Committee invites you to recognise the benefits of providing a larger proportion of Education Scotland’s funding at the start of the financial year to aid planning processes

Education Scotland works with the Scottish Government to ensure they have the resources required to deliver a revitalised and refreshed Education Scotland that can be effective in its enhanced remit for national, system wide improvement in learning and the associated educational leadership.

The additional £2.5m in the draft budget to Education Scotland ’s funding for 2019/20 will support the delivery of its role and functions, focussing on tackling the equity and excellence agenda including:

1. strengthening the inspection function;
2. providing a lead role in national support for professional learning and leadership development;
3. enhancing support for curriculum design and development, and effective learning, teaching and assessment for practitioners; and
4. making a significant contribution to the development of regional delivery and implementation of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RIC).

- the Committee was keen to understand how you will assess whether [PEF] is used to fund new initiatives aimed at reducing the attainment gap, as opposed to being used as a new funding stream for existing functions within schools. The Committee also sought to understand how you will use the learning and evaluation from the way funds have been used so far to inform future funding allocations…

The national operational guidance makes clear that plans for the use of Pupil Equity Funding must be grounded in evidence of what is known to be effective at closing the poverty related attainment gap. As I have previously made clear, where evidence comes to light that funding is being used as an alternative funding stream for activity that was already taking place or to existing functions I will take action. The national operational guidance will be reviewed by the Scottish Government with representatives of COSLA, ADES, the Association of Headteachers and Deputies, and School Leaders Scotland, to ensure it is as clear as possible for schools, and leads to the right outcomes for pupils.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge is a long term policy, and I have committed to investing £750 million over the course of this parliament. The interim evaluation provides clear evidence the Challenge is beginning to make a difference – the fund has been identified as a driver for change and cohesion. There is confidence in sustainability of improvements beyond the funding increased over time. This is linked to a belief that the fund had created significant change in practice and culture. The Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2017/18 data, The Teacher Census, National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2019 and NIF Interactive Evidence Report were all published on 11th December. Whilst it is too early to draw direct conclusions from the CfE levels data, it is encouraging that is shows a slight narrowing of the attainment gap. We will continue to use findings from the evaluation and from evidence collected by Education Scotland to ensure we share examples of what is known to work, and to refine the policy as appropriate.

- The Committee explored the ways in which the Scottish Government intends to monitor the use of pupil equity funding to ensure it is used in accordance with the principle of additionality. Examples were raised in evidence of new initiatives and posts created as a direct result of Pupil Equity Funding; however, the Committee is also aware of reports of Pupil Equity Funding being used for existing services. In this regard, you noted that you have previously intervened where you consider it is not being used as intended and would continue to do so…The Committee is in a position where it cannot identify the extent to which PEF funding could be being used to replace previous funding.”

As the Committee note, I have taken action where evidence has come to light that Pupil Equity Funding is being used to replace previous funding, and I will do so in the future if the situation arises again. In setting up Pupil Equity Funding I was keen not to increase the
bureaucratic burden on teachers, so they can focus their energies on doing things that will make a difference to the pupils in their care. The Scottish Government will continue to monitor spend. Further, Education Scotland are taking forward with Audit Scotland to implement a programme of inspections focusing on the nine local authorities who are designated as Challenge Authorities within the Scottish Attainment Challenge and report on the progress made by local authorities in improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Attainment Advisors are also looking at a sample of school level improvement plans and reports as part of their duties, to see how PEF is being used across schools. We also gather evidence of progress towards raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap through Education Scotland’s school inspection programmes. This will provide further evidence of the activity taking place.

Committee recommendations in relation to Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

- The Committee has undertaken relevant work as part of its inquiry into poverty and attainment in relation to Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). An extract of the report is below:

  Para 30 - An effective evaluation must reflect how attainment is improving, why and where the challenges, including funding levels, remain.

  32 - The Committee recommends that as part of the next stage of this evaluation, the Scottish Government assess the extent to which PEF is used for additional purposes rather than for purposes that would be considered to be candidates to be covered from core funding.

  33 - In addition, the Committee recommends that the Scottish Government widens the evaluation to assess the separate impacts on the poverty-related attainment gap of programmes and interventions that are totally or primarily funded by: the Pupil Equity Fund; other aspects of the Attainment Scotland Fund; or schools’ core budgets.

Over 96% of schools are receiving PEF in 2018/19. The evaluation of The Attainment Scotland Fund necessarily focuses on those that have received targeted funding. However, we are considering any impact of the fund on the larger core funding. Our evaluation questions for Years 3 and 4 have been expanded to consider how local authorities are using their core funding towards equitable outcomes. It is important for schools to consider how they use all their resources to reduce the impact of deprivation. With this in mind, as part of the evaluation on the Attainment Scotland Fund, we are asking local authorities (as detailed above) about their use of core funding. PEF is part of the whole proposition to close the attainment gap.

Further, the Scottish Government is clear that PEF must be used to deliver activities, interventions and resources that are clearly additional to those which were already planned. This is part of the terms of the grant that were agreed to by LAs.

Disentangling the impact of separate funding streams, alongside the impact of core funding is outwith the scope of the evaluation, and would unnecessarily serve to increase bureaucracy and the burdens placed on schools.
However, the evaluation does allow us to compare PEF only schools with those within the Challenge Authority, particularly with regard to the implementation of the fund.

- The auditors of SQA, SDS and Education Scotland have drawn attention to risks around the funding model for the bodies. They each receive a proportion of their funding at the start of the year and need to set their annual budgets without certainty on their final funding allocations, which are confirmed in-year. SQA’s budget for 2018/19 assumes funding of £31.925 million from the Scottish Government. Its initial allocation from the Scottish Government was £11.017 million, with the remainder anticipated through in-year allocations.

Education Scotland have been working closely with the Scottish Government to ensure their extended remit to deliver excellence and equity in education at a local, regional and national level is appropriately funded. As noted above, in 2019-20 we are providing Education Scotland with £2.5 million of additional resources to enable the national agency to deliver its enhanced remit for national, system wide improvement in learning and the associated educational leadership.

This flexibility – where further funding can be transferred during a school or financial year – is important to supporting our partnership approach with local government, as it enables us to inject further available funding to wherever it is most needed to support our education reforms, both to Education Scotland and to other partners such as the Regional Improvement Collaboratives.

With regards to SQA’s budget, this is set at the start of each financial year on the basis of extensive and detailed costings of the activity required to meet its statutory functions and its non-statutory functions. The Scottish Government has budget and planning discussions with SQA throughout the year to monitor and manage their budget requirements effectively.

Around 68% of SQA’s total budget comes from charges levied on customers and from other income including commercial income from activity carried out in the rest of the UK and internationally. The remaining 32% of its budget comes from the Scottish Government for the development and delivery of the revised national qualifications; and to meet SQA’s accommodation costs.
Introduction

1. The Educational Institute of Scotland, Scotland’s largest education union, welcomes this opportunity to provide a written response to the consultation initiated by the Scottish Parliament’s Education & Skills Committee.

2. It is difficult to find clear and transparent data to follow and comment on public expenditure in Scotland in general, and on schools in particular. It is unfortunate that Audit Scotland has not done an update on its Schools 2014 Report\(^1\).

3. Notwithstanding the challenge around data, the EIS has concerns regarding ongoing spending on education across all of Scotland’s 32 Local Authorities, based on feedback from our members and local associations who deal on a daily basis with the impact of spending reductions.

The Need for Increased Investment in Education

4. The Audit Scotland Schools 2014 Report stated that “In 2012/13, councils spent £4.8 billion on education, of which £4 billion was provided through the block grant.” It is clear, therefore, that Scottish Government sets the limit for the vast majority of school funding.

5. The EIS has repeatedly rejected the policy of austerity in public finances i.e. fiscal consolidation with public spending cuts. This means that the EIS believes that there should be greater public spending.

6. The EIS recognises that UK public sector spending decisions significantly affect the expenditure available to Scottish Government regarding public spending in Scotland. The EIS has previously called on the Scottish Government to use the increased revenue raising powers at its disposal and welcomes the use of some of these powers in the 2018-19 budget to increase public revenues and thus increase public spending. The EIS believes that the Scottish Government should further explore its options around using its existing and new fiscal powers to support public sector provision.

7. A recent SPICe Spotlight\(^2\) Briefing states: “The amount allocated to Fiscal Resource (which funds day-to-day spend on public services) will grow in real terms by 1.8% in 2019-20 on the current year.” The draft budget\(^3\) states: “If this year’s budget consequentials for investment in the NHS are excluded – which given our commitment to pass these on in full to Scottish health and social care services, is reasonable – our 2019-20 resource block grant is £340 million or 1.3 per cent less in real terms than it was in 2018-19.” This suggests that if the budget consequentials are included then the Scottish Government’s revenue from the UK

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\(^1\) [http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2014/nr_140619_school_education.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2014/nr_140619_school_education.pdf)


Government has increased in real terms. This is welcome news and hopefully heralds the end of the austerity period of public finances.

8. A Local Government Benchmarking Framework Report on the Public Finance' website (which is associated with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), looks into Education spending between 2010-11 and 2016-17. This was published in January 2018.

9. According to the Report, “The benchmarking framework now has seven years of trend data, covering 2010/11 to 2016/17. Across the seven-year period for which we present data, total revenue funding for councils has fallen by 7.6% in real terms from £10.5 billion to £9.7 billion.”

10. According to the Report (referring to 2016-17): “Despite real reductions in the education budget of 3.8% since 2010/11, the number of preschool and primary places in Scotland has increased by over 30,000.”

11. The Report also considers the change in real terms funding per pupil group between 2010-11 and 2016-17, and notes:

“In the past 12 months, there have been small reductions in real spend per primary and secondary pupil (0.2% and 0.4% respectively), with expenditure trends largely reflecting pupil number changes. Since 2010/11, real spend per primary and secondary pupil has fallen by 9.6% and 2.9%.”

12. Given the fact that local authorities receive a block grant from the Scottish Government and that education spending by local authorities is not ring fenced, it is difficult to use Scottish Government budgets to track education spending.

13. The SPICe Spotlight Briefing states: “The core local government revenue settlement – General Resource Grant and Non-Domestic Rates Income combined (see Table 6.10 in the Budget) – falls in real terms by £319 million (-3.4%).”

14. A separate SPICe Briefing states; “In real terms, the local government Revenue settlement as a proportion of the Scottish Government Revenue budget decreased by 1.9 percentage points between 2013-14 and 2017-18.” It is clear to the EIS that local authorities have borne the brunt of the Scottish Government funding decisions, and that education funding has been adversely affected as a result.

15. The EIS recognises that ongoing additional funding has been made available to schools and local authorities through the Pupil Equity Fund initiative of £120m per FY, and that 2019-20 will be the second year of that three year programme. Whilst this resource is welcome it is not universal, it is focussed on a specific policy objective of addressing the impact of poverty (which the EIS shares) and it is clearly an additional spending stream. Without the PEF initiative funding, the EIS believes that the core education budget for many local authorities would have been cut. The perceived reliance of ‘initiative funding’ to cover real terms reductions in core funding.

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is a matter of concern for the EIS. Core funding is effectively being substituted by targeted funding.

16. There is considerable anecdotal evidence that schools and pupil support services are experiencing funding levels that are continuing to have a detrimental impact on the working lives of teachers and others working in school education. This anecdotal evidence suggests fewer support workers in classes, less ASN support, fewer educational psychologists, fewer Quality Improvement Officers and fewer school resources resulting in more anecdotes of teachers buying basic materials such as pencils, glues etc themselves.

17. According to Government figures\(^6\), the overall pupil teacher ratio was 13.2 in 2007, 13.4 in 2011 and 13.6 in 2018. The pupil teacher ratio in primary schools is broadly flat in recent years (including 2018) at 16.1. The pupil teacher ratio for secondary schools has risen marginally from 12.1 to 12.2 between 2012 and 2018. The pupil teacher ratio for special schools has risen from 3.4 in 2012 to 3.6 in 2018.

18. The number of ELC teachers (early learning & childcare aka nursery teachers) has dropped from 1630 in 2009 to 821\(^7\) in 2018. This is despite the Government policy of improving early years education, and its increases in such funding stated in the draft budget.

19. Any changes in education funding needs to be considered in the context of pupil numbers. Scottish Government figures\(^8\) give a headcount of 693,251 for 2018, which is the sixth consecutive year of increase since 2011’s low of 670,481. Teacher numbers have also increased since 2011, and there are currently (2018) 51,959 teachers.

20. There has been an increase of just under 1,000 teachers between 2016 (prior to the PEF initiative beginning) and 2018, with an increase of around 10,000 pupils. It is worth noting that the annual PEF initiative funding of £120m is equivalent to the salaries plus oncosts\(^9\) of around 2,500 experienced teachers. Whatever the number of PEF funded teachers within the education system, it should be noted that their funding would only last a maximum of three years under the PEF initiative.

21. The Scottish Government has previously acknowledged that it has maintained a public sector pay cap in order to maintain staffing\(^10\). Teachers, like most of the public sector, have been subject to sustained sub-inflationary pay rises that has led to a cut in real terms value of an experienced teacher’s pay of over 20% in the value of a top of the scale unpromoted school teacher since 2008 (using RPI). There are recruitment challenges in some areas (such as STEM), with some Universities being unable to fill post graduate teacher training courses.

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\(^7\) [http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/TrendTeacherNumbers](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/TrendTeacherNumbers)


\(^9\) Teacher of annual salary of £36,000 plus 1/3 oncosts (£12,000).

\(^10\) “The pay cap, while never desirable, was necessary to protect jobs and services.” [https://www.snp.org/first_minister_nicola_sturgeon_scottish_programme_for_government](https://www.snp.org/first_minister_nicola_sturgeon_scottish_programme_for_government)
22. Pay is undoubtedly an issue across the public sector and specifically a factor in relation to the status of teaching as a profession. This has been shown by over 20,000 teachers sending postcards to the DFM in June 2018, around 30,000 teachers and supporters marching through the streets of Glasgow in October 2018 and a 74% turnout in a consultative ballot\textsuperscript{11} to reject a pay offer – with 98% rejecting.

23. The draft budget does not set out any additional investment in teachers’ pay. Whilst the increased funding for pre-5 education services is welcome, the budget ignores the pay concerns of the teaching profession.

24. The draft budget, states: “\textit{Education continues to be this Government’s defining mission and we remain determined to improve the life chances of the children and young people of Scotland and change lives for the better.}” The First Minister has previously stated\textsuperscript{12} that education is the Government’s priority and that it should be judged on its education record.

25. The draft budget, according to the SPICe Spotlight briefing uses the Barnett consequentials arising from additional UK (England) NHS spending, and further additional money to fund the NHS in Scotland. The briefing goes on to state: “\textit{By passing on the Barnett consequentials to Health, other Budget areas will continue to feel the squeeze. Although the overall budget settlement is better than previously thought, with Health now comprising an increasing share of the Budget, other areas inevitably see their share of the budgetary cake fall.}”

26. The Government claims of education being the defining mission of its term does not seem to be reflecting in its spending decisions.

The 2018-19 budget included around £270m\textsuperscript{13} additional spending on supporting business and the economy. The EIS is disappointed that the Scottish Government has decided to spend additional funds reducing business tax rates in the 2019-20 draft budget.

27. The BBC\textsuperscript{14} reported: “\textit{Another big ask (by business) was not to implement an idea proposed by the Barclay Review of business rates - that an extra levy should be charged on out-of-town and online retailers. The retailers have seen that off.}

\textit{Lots of small businesses have retained their zero rating on business rates, and Mr Mackay went further on two fronts; raising next year’s bills by less than inflation, and linking them after that to the Consumer Price Index, a relatively low measure of price increases.}

\textsuperscript{11} https://www.eis.org.uk/Ballot/Reject
\textsuperscript{12} https://www.scotsman.com/news/education/nicola-sturgeon-judge-me-on-education-record-1-3861506
\textsuperscript{13} https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-budget-draft-budget-2018-19/pages/12/
Signal number four: the continued starter rate for income tax has been raised with inflation, while business rates are going up by less than inflation - both measures letting Mr Mackay boast that Scotland is the lowest taxed part of the UK - albeit on some measures of his choosing, and by a small margin.”

28. The EIS supports the STUC analysis\(^\text{15}\) that “The STUC remains sceptical about the efficacy of rates relief to business as a method of stimulating the economy, and the loss of revenue to the Scottish Budget of these measures is considerable.” Put simply, the EIS believes this funding should have been invested in public services rather than subsiding private businesses.

Summary

29. The EIS believes that the Government needs to invest more in schools and significantly increase the core budget to schools in order to fund permanent posts. The increased investment should deliver a fairer salary to teachers and more resources so that all pupils can thrive in our education system, and further progress made in closing the poverty attainment gap.

30. The EIS believes that the Scottish Government should further explore ways to increase public revenues in Scotland to deliver increased spending on its stated policy objectives and public services in general.

Save the Children

Save the Children has a long-standing commitment to support efforts to address the poverty-related early learning gap. We work directly with families and the services that support them; delivering innovative, evidence-based programmes, and influencing wider systems change through demonstrating effective practice. Our comments here focus specifically on the operation of Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding, which the Committee has taken a keen and welcome interest in scrutinising.

Scrutiny of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding must consider not only the level and use of funding, but the impact of the funded interventions, and the learning which can be drawn and shared from them to improve practice.

Save the Children believes that providing additional resources for schools to support children in poverty to succeed can be one part of the solution to address the educational achievement gap. We have therefore welcomed the provision of targeted funding to help close the poverty related attainment gap via the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding, and we want to see it embedded, improved and built upon. There are three key components to this:

- These targeted resources must be additional to existing school funding, and while decisions on how to use the funding should be at the discretion of headteachers, schools should be able to access support and guidance on evidence-based approaches to supporting children experiencing poverty and closing the attainment gap.

- Levels of funding should be sufficient and sustained to enable schools to introduce the necessary package of additional support for pupils experiencing poverty that will make a significant difference to their education.

- Strong monitoring and evaluation must exist to ensure best value for money, to help to build the national evidence base of what works, and to share best practice across Scotland.

We urge the Committee to press the Scottish Government for further details of its plans to evaluate the impact of Pupil Equity Funding, including which interventions have shown the greatest impact on children’s learning outcomes, and to ensure the learning is shared with all relevant educational stakeholders to best inform future spending.

The Committee has consistently highlighted a specific interest in the impact of Pupil Equity Funding, how this is being evaluated and how it will inform future rounds of funding. We agree that there needs to be robust evaluation of the programmes and interventions funded by Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding to ensure that funding is being used appropriately to support efforts to close the gap, to help build the evidence-base in Scotland of what works and to ensure that learning can be shared across the country to inform future plans.
We urge Scottish Government to ensure that schools can access the data, evidence, guidance and support they need to understand which children and young people would most benefit from targeted support, what approaches might be the most effective in their setting, and how best to monitor and evaluate impact. Local authorities, Attainment Advisors, Education Scotland and new Regional Improvement Collaboratives all have a role to play here.

The Scottish Government has made clear that plans for the use of these funds “must be grounded in evidence of what is known to be effective at closing the poverty-related attainment gap”16. This focus on evidence-based practice is very welcome, but the funding is also an opportunity to further develop the evidence base of what works, allowing schools to use the existing evidence base of approaches and interventions likely to be effective to innovate and adapt practice to suit their particular circumstances and needs. Capturing the learning from funded initiatives and interventions, ensuring that schools are adequately monitoring and evaluating impact, and collating and sharing best practice should form a key element of the funding. New Regional Improvement Collaboratives may be in a good position to support this, and this should form a core part of their role.

We note that Education Scotland and Audit Scotland are implementing a programme of inspections focusing on the nine designated Challenge Authorities to report on progress in improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap, and that Attainment Advisors are looking at a sample of school level improvement plans and reports to see how PEF is being used across schools. These should help to draw out some learning from the funded interventions.

The National Improvement Framework continues to highlight parental engagement as a core driver of improvement, and there is clear evidence of the positive impact of strong parental engagement on children’s learning outcomes. However, the evidence of what works to strengthen parental engagement is less well developed, which is why it’s vital that all interventions are closely monitored and evaluated – to help build the evidence base and share best practice. Learning Together: the national action plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home, also noted that feedback from headteachers suggests that parental engagement and family learning featured strongly as a benefit of PEF, and commits the Scottish Government to “develop plans to assess the impact of the range of parental engagement and family learning programmes as supported by the Attainment Scotland Fund, by the end of 2019”17.

These commitments to inspection, monitoring and evaluating impact are very welcome and we urge the Committee to press the Scottish Government and relevant agencies to ensure the findings relating to supporting parental engagement and strengthening learning at home, as core drivers of the poverty-related attainment gap, are shared and inform future developments, funding and practice.

Further information
We hope the Committee finds this information useful to its consideration of the Draft Budget 2019-20 and would be happy to provide any further information that might be helpful.

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16 Letter from DFM to Convener re: Draft Budget, 20 December 2018
17 Scottish Government (2018), Learning Together: the national action plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home, p19-20
Universities Scotland

Summary

- The draft budget for 2019/20 sees a planned cut of 1.79% to universities core teaching and research budgets.
- Looking at the pattern of university funding since 2014/15 we estimate that universities have seen a 12 per cent real terms decline in their resource funding through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) since then, which equates to approximately £130 million less available to university teaching and research in 2019/20 than five years ago.
- There are other funding opportunities that the Scottish Government could deliver to universities if the budget proves intractable. Firstly, the consequential funding from the UK Government’s increased investment in England in research and innovation (worth an estimated £18 million) could be passed onto Scottish universities early in 2019. Secondly, the Scottish Government could give an early and clear commitment to keep the level of resource it currently invests in undergraduate student places occupied by EU-domiciled students in the higher education sector after the UK leaves the EU (worth an estimated £90 million annually). We ask the Committee to give its support to both of these funding opportunities for higher education.

Analysis of the budget outcome for higher education

- The draft Scottish Government Budget for 2019-2020 delivers a 1.79% real-terms cut to the higher education sector’s resource budget which covers teaching and research. This is in contrast to a 1.8% above inflation increase in the Scottish budget’s resource expenditure, according to analysis by SPICe.18
- The draft revenue settlement for 2019/20 is £1,025.3 million.19
- The latest planned cut adds to a pattern of real terms cuts to university funding since 2014/15. We believe the resource budget available to universities, through the SFC, has declined by 12% in real-terms since 2014-15, which has been compounded by cuts to the SAAS fee element of funding.20
- This means there is now £130 million less in real terms in the SFC resource budget to invest in universities teaching and supporting students, pioneering research or driving innovation in 2019/20 than there was in 2014-15.21
- We recognise that public finances are difficult and there are many competing demands on the Scottish budget. However, Scotland’s universities need sustainable levels of funding to do what they do, and to ensure we do it well.
- Our ask of the 2019/20 Scottish budget was to see our teaching and Research grant increase by 2% in real terms. This would have cost £33.5 million. We estimate that it would cost £18m to keep university budgets flat in real terms in 2019/20.

19 This figure includes a minor attribution of civil service costs of £X which will not be available for allocation to universities.
20 This measurement tracks HE funding allocated via the Scottish Funding Council.
21 In addition to which, the SAAS fee element of teaching funding has fallen every year in real terms, which we estimate equates to a further real terms cut since 2014-15 of around £20m, totalling a loss of £150m since 2014/15.
Cost pressures facing higher education

Like every other recipient of public investment, universities are facing steeply increasing costs.

- We estimate that employer contributions to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) will cost £15 million every year.
- UCEA estimates the unfunded additional costs to employers of the Teachers’ Pension Scheme (Scotland) to be £8 million.
- These are additional pressures on pay and other costs including utilities.

Funding opportunities

We would welcome a Scottish Budget outcome that reflects our case for real-terms growth in funding for higher education. We are also looking to the Scottish Government to realise other, very important, funding opportunities. We ask the Committee to give its full support to these two funding opportunities:

1. Separate to the budget as announced, there will be approximately £18 million of consequential funding available, generated by increased investment to universities in England under the Industrial Strategy by the UK Government. We ask for that consequential funding to be ring-fenced and allocated through the SFC’s funding streams, to support universities to compete for and deliver additional business-led research and innovation projects.

2. Assuming the UK does leave the EU, it will be very important that the level of resource currently invested in undergraduate student places occupied by EU-domiciled students does not leave the higher education sector as we look beyond 2019/20. Currently the Scottish Government funds the higher education of EU undergraduates on the same basis as Scottish-domiciled students and has said it will do so for 2019/20 EU student entrants. Additionally, the Scottish Government’s Medium Term Financial Strategy\(^\text{22}\) assumes funding for the current number of funded places up to 2022/23 but, assuming a negotiated exit, this could change from the start of the academic year in 2020 or 2021. This resource is currently worth circa £90 million to the Scottish higher education sector; a level of resource that would be devastating if it were to be removed from institutions. This sits within the Scottish Government’s remit to decide and a commitment now, to retain this resource in the higher education sector, would provide very welcome planning certainty. This resource will be vital to for the stability of certain courses, institutions and for opportunities for Scottish domiciled learners including progress towards achievement of widening access targets without displacement of other well-qualified learners.

In the highly unwelcome event of a no-deal Brexit we will additionally need urgent exploration with the Scottish and UK Governments of how to mitigate the consequences of the loss of EU funding including research funding, funding for student mobility, and EU structural funding for infrastructure and skills development.

Capital funding available to universities

- The draft budget saw a reduction in university capital funding from £41.3 million last year to £37.5 million in 2019/20.
- This funding allocation is more than £200 million short of the cost of maintaining university estates every year.\(^\text{23}\)
- Financial transactions are loans and must be paid back. They are a useful additional measure but are in no way a replacement for sustainable funding. Cuts to revenue funding simply make the repayment of loans even more challenging. We have now reached a position where Government backed loans, not grants, are the main means of financial support made available to universities by the Scottish Government to support and manage their estates.
- Pressure on estates funding can increase the pressure on other university budgets for teaching and research.

\(^{23}\) As estimated in a consultancy report to the Scottish Funding Council
14 January 2019

Dear Clare

Further to my letter dated 20 December, I thought it would be helpful to provide some additional information in response to the Committee’s question regarding the reasons for the underspends in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) in 2017-18. My earlier response set out the various methods by which the use of PEF is being evaluated and monitored, and these, along with regular discussions with local authorities and schools help us to understand some of the reasons behind the level of underspend in the first year of the funding.

The most important point was that PEF was introduced at the start of a new financial year, two thirds of the way through the school year. As a new funding stream, it is understandable that schools exercised a degree of caution in the first year, spending time to ensure they would invest PEF in activities which would make the biggest impact on children affected by poverty. Schools were expected to consult with staff, parents and pupils to develop their improvement plans, and in many cases the biggest planned investment was in staff, who they often could not start employing before August.

I recognise that the recruitment of staff in the first year of PEF was a challenge, particularly in some areas of the country. However, last month’s teacher census statistics showed an increase since last year of nearly 296 FTE teaching posts funded by the Attainment Scotland Fund, of which the majority were funded through PEF. We will continue to monitor PEF spending each year at local authority and school level, and would expect a smaller carry-over of funding in the coming year. Importantly, we have made it clear to schools and authorities that any PEF that has not been spent at individual school level in the previous financial year can be carried forward and remains available for the head teacher to spend on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.

I hope you find this information helpful.

JOHN SWINNEY
Dear Clare

I'd like to wish you a happy new year, however, I cannot see the next few years being happy ones for the university sector given the proposals in last month's draft Scottish budget. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance proposes to make real terms cuts to both the higher education capital and revenue budgets. These cuts are likely to have damaging consequences for students and staff in the sector, and makes it more difficult for universities to deliver for Scotland's economy and wider society.

The Scottish Government's stated priority is education, rightly so given its ability to empower individuals, enhance communities, and drive our economy. This taken, it seems contradictory for the draft budget to be proposing further real terms cuts to universities in the coming financial year. The University and College Union would like to ask for your support for the higher education sector during the passage of the budget bill and for the future, to challenge these cuts and to ensure that the sector is adequately funded.

It is worth mentioning that higher education is already a sector which is under financial strain. UCU is challenging jobs cuts at Edinburgh's Queen Margaret University right now, with the employer proposing to cut ten per cent of its workforce. We know that job losses are on the agenda at the University of the West of Scotland, which follow on the heels of staff reductions at Heriot Watt in 2017-18. Workloads are spiralling with staff-student ratios increasing which does nothing to support our widening access ambitions. Scotland has a higher proportion of higher education institutions in deficit than the rest of the UK, and the 2016 Audit Scotland report on higher education institutions underlined the disparate nature of universities' finances in Scotland. We are clear that education should be a priority, and should be funded effectively, and certainly not subject to continued cuts and salami-slicing of the two main teaching and research grants on an annual basis. Further cuts, like the ones proposed in the draft Scottish budget, do threaten the quality of our system in Scotland, and will have an impact upon students and staff.

Universities Scotland has estimated that the amount universities will have to spend on teaching and research as a result the draft budget will be £130million less in real terms than the comparable sum in 2014/15. In itself this creates problems for universities, but together with the uncertainty of Brexit, and the UK Treasury changes to the Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme, Scottish universities are facing an almost perfect storm of reduced funding at a time of increasing costs outwith their control. The Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme changes, which emanate from UK Treasury directions, will increase the employer contributions for post-92 universities (where academic staff are members of this scheme), by an estimated £8million a year. For pre-92 universities, the changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme will also mean increased employer contributions to
maintain a viable pension scheme. These increasing costs at a time when funding from the Scottish Government is reducing is deeply worrying.

The draft budget will, in the coming weeks, go through the Parliament's budget scrutiny process, and we know that we are in challenging financial times. However, higher education should not be an easy target for an administration looking for budget cuts at any time, given the sector's importance to the economy, society and the nation's wellbeing. Given the financial challenges, and uncertainty the sector is currently facing, we are urging you to support us to do what you can to change the budget proposals as they affect universities.

UCU is aware that similar concerns on the budget’s impact on higher education are shared by Universities Scotland and the National Union of Students, and we would urge you to join with us to support our universities.

We would be happy to meet with you to outline our concerns further if that would be helpful. In the meantime, please be in touch if you have any queries about this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Senior
UCU Scotland official