

Education and Gaelic Committee
Tuesday 6 October 2026
6th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

Pre-budget scrutiny 2027-28

Introduction

1. The Committee will focus its pre-budget scrutiny 2027-28 on the following two themes:
 - Progress toward children's care system reform;
 - Class contact time within school education

Committee meeting

2. At this meeting the Committee will take evidence on both themes from the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic and the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise and supporting Scottish Government officials.

Supporting information

3. SPICe has provided background briefings on both pre-budget scrutiny themes. The briefing for the first theme can be found in the paper for the meeting on [15 September 2026](#) and the briefing for the second theme can be found in the paper for the meeting on [22 September 2026](#). A further SPICe briefing summarising the written and oral evidence received to date is attached at **Annexe A**.
4. A number of written submissions have been received to inform the Committee's pre-budget scrutiny and have been published on the [Committee's website](#).

Next steps

5. The Committee will consider a draft report at a future meeting.

Clerk to the Committee
October 2026

Annexe A



Pre-Budget scrutiny 2027-28

The Committee held pre-budget scrutiny evidence sessions in September looking at progress toward children's care system reform and class contact time. This briefing sets out themes and evidence arising from oral evidence and submissions received.

Progress toward children's care system reform

Background information about reform of the children's care system, together with context on Scotland's public finances, can be found in the [SPICe paper for the Committees' 15 September 2026 meeting](#).

Stakeholders highlighted the following areas in evidence to the Committee:

- Budgets and the potential impact of the public service reform agenda on delivering the Promise.
- The challenges and opportunities presented by whole family support.
- Workforce capacity issues and the need to address these.
- Difficulties in tracking progress made so far.
- Uncertainty around where accountability for achieving the Promise sits.

Further information on these areas is provided below.

Budget and public sector reform

The CELCIS, COSLA, Promise Scotland and National Social Work Agency written submissions highlighted the need for sustained investment in reform. Alongside this, they listed significant pressures potentially impacting on progress including a shortage of foster carers, suitable homes, workforce recruitment and retention issues and financial pressures across the public sector.

Several stakeholders highlighted concerns about whether there are sufficient resources to deliver on recent legislative and policy commitments. The Promise Scotland, the Oversight Board and CELCIS stressed that the implementation of the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) Act 2026 (the 2026 Act) needed to be properly sequenced and resourced. The CELCIS submission noted that the Bill's Financial Memorandum did not include costings for recruitment, training or other measures required to expand aftercare capacity.

Social Work Scotland's (SWS) submission said that the true costs of implementing various elements of the Promise were not "fully understood at a national level". It

went on to suggest the Promise Scotland or Oversight Board could usefully publish independent assessments of capacities required for various elements of change. The COSLA submission said that consideration was required around whether investment was aligned with ambition, workforce and its capacity to deliver the expected changes, prioritisation, planning and sequencing of change, and clarity of responsibility and accountability. At the Committee, COSLA spoke of the need to view the public sector as a whole, with a focus on enabling local spend.

Who Cares? Scotland's (WC?S) submission said the rollout of the 2026 Act must include funding for the right to independent advocacy. The Oversight Board report stated independent advocacy had to be available as soon as it was required and children must be able to rely on a "consistent trusted relationship".

Stakeholders including SWS raised concerns about the potential for the public service reform agenda to impact progress toward children's care system reform, with SWS and The Promise comparing the potential impact of this to the debate around the national care service. WC?S said there was a risk that public service reform could result in a lack of clarity around Promise responsibilities.

The Promise Scotland said public services wrapped around family and community had to be a key element of public service reform and "a tipping point" had been reached. COSLA's submission to the Committee said public service reform and keeping the Promise should be "viewed as mutually reinforcing agendas".

Multi-year funding and whole family support

There was widespread support among stakeholders for a move toward multi-year funding for whole family support services. The Promise Scotland submission noted Audit Scotland's finding that local authorities spent £1.2 billion on care and care-experience services in 2023-24, stating this illustrated the need to "spend differently, not simply to spend more", with a shift from crisis intervention toward preventative spend and support. It suggested local and national budget processes could drive reform, through multi-year funding, investment in prevention and measuring value across systems. Doing this would enable the Promise to become an example of "public service reform in action". The Oversight Board also called for a "massive" shift toward preventative spend.

The Promise Scotland and CELCIS submissions welcomed indications that WFWF would be aligned with the Fairer Futures Fund and other child poverty programmes. The Promise Scotland stated that the 2021 Programme for Government had committed to allocating 5 per cent of all community-based health and social care expenditure to preventative whole family approaches by 2030. The potential significance of this was highlighted. CSPSLN reported that while it was unclear whether this target was tracked, there was a move toward preventative spend at local level. CSPSLN said moving core funding to preventative spend was a challenge.

The Oversight Board's fourth report said whole family support needed to become a normal way of working, highlighting the significant role it could play in supporting looked after children at home. However, it stated concerns about the pace of

Scottish Government work to process funding applications and action change more generally.

Stakeholders including WCFS noted the difficulties created by short-term funding cycles, restrictive funding and reporting criteria. The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) was highlighted as an example of this, and stakeholders including CELCIS said that the investment delivered by the fund was less than the £500 million promised. CELCIS also said that WFWF “is often compensating for cuts in core services”.

The Promise Scotland said that the WFWF could have had more impact. Loosening control of the system and trusting families and communities – for example by giving money directly to families – was suggested. The need to provide clarity on WFWF funding arrangements past March 2027 when the current cycle ends was noted.

The Children's Services Planning Strategic Leads Network (CSPSLN) said progress around early family support had been positive, with a positive impact on social work teams. It suggested this could be built on by bringing funding streams together and providing longer-term certainty. CSPSLN also said that partnership working with areas such as housing had been seen to deliver value for money.

CELCIS stated that funded support to help local areas with implementation of new approaches had shown success, and this could be continued. CELCIS also noted leaders currently did not have time and space to develop ideas.

The Oversight Board gave an example in Glasgow where a seven-year contract for weekend family support had been agreed, relieving pressure on social work staff. CELCIS spoke of a need to move away from focusing on resources needed to remove a child toward considering support needed to care for a child at home.

Workforce

Stakeholders including the Oversight Board, SWS, CELCIS and COSLA highlighted workforce skills and capacity as a critical issue for successful delivery of the Promise. SWS stated workers were currently reporting “moral distress” at letting families down. NSW’s submission emphasised the role of social work, stating:

“The ambitions of The Promise rely on a suitably qualified, experienced and sustainable social work workforce.”

The Committee heard a Memorandum of Understanding “around a real collective focus on workforce” between NSW, SWS and COSLA had been in place since June. However, other stakeholders stated a workforce plan was overdue. SWS said plans to increase workforce capacity “needed to happen in 2021” and that now in 2026 the workforce was “in exactly the same position, if not worse”. SWS called for “systematic above-inflation investment in the workforce”. COSLA described workforce challenges as a significant risk to delivery of the Promise, while CELCIS described the children's services workforce as “in crisis” due to financial pressures and capacity challenges.

SWS stated concern that the focus of public sector reform was reduction of the public sector workforce at a time of a recruitment and retention crisis amongst the workforce required to deliver the Promise. COSLA stated concern about the damage cutting back-office staff could do to frontline services.

SWS's submission described the introduction of new duties to a system with no capacity, leading to distress, disillusionment and a growing feeling amongst the workforce of "being set up to fail".

CELCIS's submission highlighted the high vacancy rate in children and families social work, stating a plan to grow and sustain the workforce was needed, and this must take the expansion of aftercare into account. COSLA stated that while workforce planning, recruitment and retention was progressing, improvement would take time. WCFS highlighted the importance that care-experienced people placed on having social workers, stating members told the organisation social work made them feel safe.

SWS and CELCIS highlighted the [Children's Legislative Review](#) currently underway. CELCIS stated this was looking at how the legislative landscape might be made easier to navigate.

Measuring progress

Stakeholders generally reported that progress had been made, but implementation remained uneven. The Promise Scotland's written submission highlighted progress, including reform of the children's hearings system, legislation ending the placement of under 18s in young offenders' institutions and extending eligibility to apply for assessments for aftercare support. However, the submission reported that overall progress is uneven, with a "substantial gap" between commitments and what is experienced by children and families.

Evidence relating to implementation gaps between policy and practice, data and monitoring, and planning and delivery are explored under the headings below.

Implementation gaps

The Oversight Board's fourth report stated the "next 6 to 18 months will determine" whether the Promise can be kept by 2030. It called for the Scottish Government's updated implementation strategy to provide further clarity about what changes are to be made, who is responsible for making them and how change will be measured. Stakeholders identified an implementation gap between legislation, policy and practice. CELCIS' submission stated more needed to be done to ensure consistent application of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). It said a focus on upholding rights, workforce planning, support for collaborative leadership and multi-agency working, accurate financial monitoring and improved use of data were all important factors for supporting reform. However, CELCIS stated these had not been consistently sequenced or funded. Planning for the extension of aftercare also required a clearer understanding of the newly eligible population.

Several stakeholders stated that an implementation gap was created by the

existence of multiple small funding streams. COSLA stated that timescales and reporting requirements had a negative impact on developing good work.

Data and monitoring

WC?S said mental health and education remained priorities for care-experienced people and described a “data vacuum” caused by insufficient investment in data capture. The Oversight Board similarly called for better use of existing data, including using it to identify missed opportunities for intervention. CELCIS noted their upcoming Bright Spots data publications on wellbeing and placements.

CSPSLN noted the challenges of collating data around how loved and valued care-experienced people feel, noting the system was not good at collating this information. CSPSLN and others highlighted the need to ensure data collection was proportionate. NSWA, CSPSLN and others highlighted that care-experienced people should feel loved and valued when they read their records.

Planning and delivery

Coordination of change, monitoring of progress and clarity in relation to funding streams were highlighted as issues by stakeholders including SWS and CELCIS. COSLA’s submission said progress at local level would vary according to community needs. SWS’s submission said “we are less than half-way” toward keeping the Promise and capacity of the care system had not increased since 2020. It went on to highlight the [statement from Chief Social Work officers](#) declaring an emergency in relation to providing suitable placements for children.

SWS suggested the Scottish Government could give more power to organisations such as The Promise Scotland and the Oversight Board. Reflecting stakeholder contributions to implementation and delivery plans was also suggested.

Stakeholders discussed challenges associated with monitoring progress. The Promise Scotland said an overall project plan may have limited use. It noted that separate plans in areas such as reform of the children’s hearings system were in place. SWS highlighted other elements, such as the extension of aftercare support, should also have a programme for delivery but currently do not.

The Promise Scotland explained progress is monitored through Plan 24-30 and its thematic route maps, the Promise Stories of Progress and reports from the Oversight Board. Stakeholders questioned the adequacy of the route maps. COSLA’s submission said that the Promise route maps were “not yet functioning as a shared planning framework to support local delivery”. WC?S’s submission to the Committee said that many Promise route maps did not go beyond 2027, and the plans had not been updated since the passage of the 2026 Act. SWS called for “clear and costed assessments” of required actions and capacity alongside the route maps. The Oversight Board said the Stories of Progress could improve how it reflects the voices of care experienced people.

SWS supported [Audit Scotland’s conclusion](#) that insufficient attention had been given to delivery and resourcing and called for an implementation plan and resource

assessment to be brought before Parliament.

Accountability

The Oversight Board's fourth report said MSPs had the responsibility of ensuring the Promise is kept. WC?S's submission to the Committee urged the Scottish Government to be "bolder and braver in keeping the Promise" and asked MSPs across the Parliament to work together to ensure it is delivered. The report said that where support needed by a child and/or their family was unavailable or delayed "someone must be responsible for acting on that problem".

CELCIS' written submission highlighted the role of strategic leaders across Children's Services Planning Partnerships (CSPPs), stating:

"...it is strategic leaders across Children's Services Planning Partnerships (CSPPs) who have the pivotal role in driving and sustaining whole-system reform and ensuring that practitioners have the structure, permissions and resources they need to deliver support, as well as fostering collaboration across services."

The Promise Scotland's written submission said that roles and responsibilities relating to its organisation, the Oversight Board and the Independent Strategic Advisor have been made clearer in response to uncertainties identified in Audit Scotland's report.

The NSWA's written submission recognised its important role in "understanding system readiness and workforce implications" in partnership with other organisations. NSWA told the Committee that it is "incumbent on all of us individually as leaders" to ensure work led toward delivery of the Promise.

During discussions on accountability, WC?S said it was not clear which organisations care-experienced people could hold accountable where they were not feeling the impact of the Promise. The Oversight Board's report stated that while care-experienced people's views were being sought, clarity around action taken because of views being shared was needed.

The Promise Scotland said that responsibility for the Promise did not fall to one person or organisation but was spread across different organisations and areas of the public sector. The Oversight Board said it would be "impossible" for one person or organisation to have overall responsibility.

Reducing Class Contact Time

Background information on plans to reduce class contact time is set out in the [briefing paper for the Committee meeting on 22 September 2026](#).

The Committee heard from ADES and COSLA on this topic on 22 September and from teaching unions on 29 September. The Committee has received written evidence from ADES, COSLA, EIS, NASUWT and School Leaders Scotland.

Some of the themes of the written and oral evidence include:

- Discussion on the rationale for reducing class contact time
- Outcomes and evaluation
- Workforce planning
- Workload and bureaucracy
- Risks
- Funding and modelling

Rationale for reducing class contact time

Across the written evidence and oral sessions, there was agreement that a reduction in contact time will free up time for teachers to engage in preparation, planning, assessment and professional activity.

A number of respondents suggested that the reduction in contact time was in line with OECD recommendations of reviews of the Scottish education system. ADES cited the 2015 report, *Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective*. The 2015 OECD report did not explicitly recommend reduced classroom contact time but did highlight the range of tasks a teacher is expected to undertake outwith classroom teaching, such as designing and developing curriculum locally; engaging in collaborative planning; moderation and assessment; and CPD. ADES' submission said "OECD emphasised that high-performing systems invest in collaborative professionalism". Its submission said:

"Reducing class contact time is intended to provide teachers with additional time for preparation, planning, assessment, professional learning, collegiate activities, and wider school and system improvement work."

The EIS and NASUWT's submissions noted that Scottish teachers have comparatively high levels of class contact time compared to other countries. EIS cited recommendations in the OECD's 2021 review of CfE, 'Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, Into the Future' for additional dedicated time for curriculum planning, assessment and moderation.

NASUWT's submission argued that the commitment reflects a recognition that teachers need more time "to plan, prepare and assess pupils' work" and said that "teachers' working conditions are children's learning conditions". Workload, bureaucracy, assessment requirements and ASN pressures were identified as significant pressures on teachers' time.

School Leaders Scotland (SLS) supported the principle of RCCT, arguing that reduced workload should create more time for high-quality learning and teaching and improve teacher wellbeing. EIS' said:

"The delivery of quality education goes beyond what takes place in the classroom. In order to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people, teachers must plan and prepare teaching, learning and assessment activities. In practice this covers a wide range of activities from sourcing appropriate resources, planning differentiated lessons, reflecting on learners' engagement

and outcomes, assessing progress and providing individualised feedback, using a variety of different tools.”

EIS’ submission also said that additional non-contact time will help teachers to support the range of additional needs in their classrooms. I.e. by planning differentiated lessons, implementing inclusive practices and monitoring and evaluating progress. It also said that it would allow teachers more time to engage with parents and partner agencies to support pupils.

In evidence on 29 September 2026, the teaching unions reiterated these themes. EIS highlighted evidence linking teachers’ working conditions to pupils’ learning conditions and argued that additional planning time could support broader learning experiences and Curriculum for Excellence ambitions. NASUWT noted the increasing complexity of pupil needs and argued that teachers should be trusted to determine how best to use the time.

The agreement reached at the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) was to expand the non-contact time currently badged “preparation and correction” to 9 hours (assuming a 35 hour week and 21 hours contact time). This would be renamed “professional time”. Stuart Bain from COSLA and Sheena Devlin from ADES indicated that earlier in the negotiations COSLA had wished that some of the additional time be put to different purposes, such as time to work collegially and support system-wide improvement. (22 September 2026, Col 5 and Col 7) Last week SLS said it would have preferred additional time for more collaboration and collegiate work, but is nevertheless content with the outcome.

Demonstrating benefits for learners

While there was broad support among teacher organisations for the principle of RCCT, a notable theme from ADES, COSLA and the two oral evidence sessions was around how RCCT and the additional investment required would improve outcomes for learners.

In its submission ADES suggested that there is an absence of clear success measures. In oral evidence, Sheena Devlin from ADES reiterated that, for an investment of this scale, there were currently “no clear metrics” through which success could be evaluated and reported. (22 September 2026, col 1) Talking about the reduction in class contact time following the 2001 McCrone agreement, she said that this has had “a really positive impact on staff by providing them with time for planning, preparation and correction, and also with that collegiate time” she was “not aware of any reports that have been undertaken over that time that have said that it led to a significant improvement in outcomes for children and young people”. (22 September 2026, cols 7-8) COSLA’s submission similarly noted:

“At this time, we do not know the value this policy will bring to children and young people in terms of their wellbeing and learning”

During the 29 September session, EIS argued that outcomes should be considered in terms of richer learning, greater individualisation and improved teacher capacity to support pupils. NASUWT suggested that educational benefits would be difficult to

isolate because education is itself a preventative and positive social good. SLS argued that the likely benefits were real but might be difficult to quantify.

EIS and NASUWT said that there was a link between teacher wellbeing and pupil outcomes. EIS referenced work by the OECD which showed a “clear link between teacher wellbeing and the educational outcomes of young people”¹. The EIS submission said:

“The EIS is clear that significant steps to address unsustainable workload, such as reducing weekly class contact time, are imperative for both teachers and young people as learners.”

Reducing workload and bureaucracy remain fundamental issues

Issues and commentary around the level of workload faced by teachers has been a longstanding issue in school education in Scotland (and elsewhere).

The EIS and SLS framed RCCT as a measure to reduce workload. However, witnesses suggested that the measure would not be a “panacea” for this issue. NASUWT’s submission identified “data and assessment requirements, admin and clerical tasks and pastoral care” as the significant contributors to excessive workload. The unions reiterated these points at the oral session on 29 September 2026.

EIS cited research it had commissioned which found teachers spend an average of more than 11 hours per week beyond their contractual hours undertaking tasks that should be completed within preparation and correction time.

COSLA also noted that there would be a reduction in workload as a result of RCCT. (22 September 2026, Col 5) Sheena Devlin from ADES argued that the situation is more complex and workload has structural causes with a variety of factors that vary depending on the circumstance. She said:

“Every job has an expected workload, but, when that workload strays into being unacceptable or intolerable, work must be done to understand what the causes are and how to address those. I feel that the system has not done enough to truly understand that.

“I cannot sit here and say that I think a further reduction in non-class-contact time will necessarily be the solution and will reduce workload. I do not think that there is a linear cause-and-effect connection between those two things. Unless you really understand the causes of workload—which are not necessarily uniform and can differ from area to area—and tackle them by using local negotiations and agreements to help manage workload, I am not sure that you can say that implementing the policy will, over time, create a significant and sustainable reduction in workload.” (22 September 2026, Col 8)

¹ An example of the OECD’s work in this area is [OECD Teaching Compass ,Concept Note Section 6: Teacher Well-being for Thriving Professionals \(2025\)](#)

Implementation challenges and risks

Witnesses identified a number of challenges and risks to the successful implementation of RCCT. The submission from SLS, in particular, sets out these risks clearly.

The implementation of RCCT is due to be phased with implementation in the primary sector from August 2027 and implementation in the secondary sector in August 2029.

COSLA's submission set out the processes local government have been put in place to implement RCCT. This includes a Local Government RCCT Steering Group which will "support planning, modelling and national coordination across councils". COSLA is part of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT). COSLA's submission stated:

"All negotiations on implementation will take place within the SNCT. This will include any changes required to terms and conditions. An SNCT Implementation Group has been established with the first meeting taking place on 23 September 2026. The group will develop a SNCT delivery plan setting out key milestones and steps for implementation of reduced class contact time, in line with the agreed phased delivery schedule."

Sufficiency of teachers

A consistent concern across submissions and evidence sessions was whether there are sufficient teachers across the country, including in small rural schools, and across all secondary subjects.

ADES stated that workforce availability is "one of the key factors influencing the successful delivery" of RCCT and warned that shortages are already acute in a number of secondary subjects, including Mathematics, Home Economics and CDT. ADES also said, "some authorities face greater challenges in attracting and retaining teachers, particularly in rural and remote communities." COSLA similarly warned that implementation timescales had been agreed through negotiation rather than deliverability assessments and described shortages in mathematics, English and sciences as a major challenge.

EIS' submission said that implementation would require substantial workforce expansion across the country. SLS' submission noted challenges for small schools, rural schools and subjects where schools have one-teacher departments. Its submission said:

"There is a great deal of concern among SLS members about the deliverability of RCCT for secondary schools, even with an implementation date of August 2029. Whilst the necessary changes to the structure of the school day and to school timetables will undoubtedly present challenges, these are not insurmountable. The much larger issue is the availability of appropriately qualified teaching staff."

NASUWT raised concerns about weaknesses in workforce planning and called for a transparent national workforce planning system. The [Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group](#) (TWPAG) is a Scottish Government convened group that “considers workforce criteria including student intake numbers for Initial Teacher Education courses and projected pupil populations and changes in teacher numbers, as part of an annual modelling process, on future teacher workforce requirements, and make recommendations for the next academic year on student intake targets to support future teacher supply.” A member of the Scottish Council of Deans of Education (representing the colleges of education in Scottish universities) is the joint chair of this group. The SCDE’s submission called for intake targets on initial teacher education courses to be set for longer than the current single-year. The SCDE’s submission said that it could not comment on wider issues such as how teachers are distributed across geographical areas or secondary subjects. COSLA is also a member of TWPAG. Its submission said:

“Teacher training recruitment targets have not been met in most subjects, with particular pressures in maths, English and the sciences. This is already affecting Initial Teacher Education (ITE) arrangements and probationer placements in local authorities. Councils have no control over how many student teachers enter university, choose secondary subject pathways, or decide where to train, work and live.”

In evidence on 29 September, all three witnesses from EIS, NASUWT and SLS rejected suggestions for increased salary for teaching positions in hard to fill subjects.

Curriculum offer being workforce driven

SLS’ identified that a risk that RCCT could lead to narrower curriculum choices if teacher shortages persist. It said:

“Members anticipate a range of possible consequences if additional capacity is not available: narrower curriculum choice, reduced provision in smaller/shortage subjects, more combined or split classes, greater use of non-specialists, increased dependence on supply staff, and additional teaching/cover by senior leaders.”

At last week's evidence session, SLS said that this risk is not a reason to reduce contact time; but there will need to be work done to address these issues.

Continuity of learning

ADES highlighted that primary pupils would continue to receive 25 hours of learning, but only 21 hours from their class teacher, creating a requirement for additional staffing and potentially increasing transitions between adults.

ADES’ submission said:

“It will be essential that careful consideration and planning is undertaken at a school level around how the 4 hours are used e.g. Use of specialists (PE, French, Music) and/or the way the time is provided e.g. 2.5 hours and 1.5 hours. Consideration needs to be given to ensuring coherence in the overall curricular experience for pupils, and that staff are not only delivering the curriculum in silos. ... Consideration will need to be given to specific pupils and the planning required to meet their needs. Continuity of experience for learners needs to be considered as part of the discussions for refreshed professional time.”

The theme reappeared during the 29 September evidence session, where all three organisations linked successful implementation to sufficient staffing and careful planning for ASN and vulnerable learners. SLS suggested RCCT could help support pupils affected by poverty, while NASUWT highlighted the value of additional time for engagement with social work and third-sector partners.

Funding

Across all submissions there was a clear position that RCCT needs to be fully funded. EIS emphasised that the joint agreement included a commitment that “the Scottish Government will provide the full funding required”.

ADES’ submission stressed that long-term implementation would require stable, recurring funding to support workforce planning and recruitment. Its submission also said:

“The financial implications of implementation are not linked directly to pupil numbers. Rather, they are determined by local staffing models, school structures and workforce requirements.”

COSLA’s submission set out progress in modelling costs of the policy:

“COSLA had previously estimated the annual cost of this policy as up to £250-310m per year. The agreement to phase implementation is expected to reduce the cost to a degree but it will still require significant investment in the teaching workforce, which risks the opportunity cost of resourcing other services.

“With considerable support from ADES, modelling across all local authorities has now been undertaken to assess requirements for both the primary and secondary sectors, in line with the agreed implementation timescales. The Scottish Government modelling is currently being tested against the recently conducted ADES model and local knowledge of known requirements.

“At this point in time COSLA and the Scottish Government are working constructively to jointly establish the costs of implementation to agree the funding envelope required to deliver RCCT. Work has not yet begun around establishing whether the necessary supply of teachers will be available to support delivery of the policy to the agreed timetable.”

In evidence, Stuart Bain from COSLA said that modelling work is continuing and that the new model takes better account of smaller schools.

The EIS submission noted the details of the modelling work provided to the Committee above were more detailed than had been shared with SNCT. During the 29 September session, EIS called for substantially increased investment in school education.

SLS' submission highlighted concern from some of its members that "funding for RCCT could displace other staffing or support, including ASN provision". Sheena Devlin from ADES told the Committee that if the funds were not to be spent on RCCT, she would prefer resource to be directed to ASN and the ASN workforce; supporting the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, and family learning and family support. (22 September 2026, cols 29-30)

The Government has committed to providing £40 million in the current financial year to support with preparatory activity. COSLA's submission explained that to date £7.5 million has been released to councils and this will be used for:

- Impact assessments – EQIA, CRWIA, Island Communities Impact Assessment and duties under the Education Act, UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act, including ASN
- Workforce planning, timetabling
- Delivery mitigation options development/implementation
- Finance, HR etc
- Any other preparatory work the council may require.

Lynne Currie and Ned Sharratt, SPICe Research
30/09/2026

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