

**Pre-Budget Scrutiny**  
**16 December 2020**

**NASUWT evidence to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee**

The NASUWT's submission to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee sets out the Union's views on the key issues which should be explored by the Committee in its Pre-budget Scrutiny. The NASUWT's evidence is informed directly by serving teacher and headteacher members and also by the work of its representative committees and consultative structures, made up of practising teachers and school leaders working in the education system.

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## **Public Sector Pay**

1. On 25 November 2020, the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020, outlining the UK Government's spending plans for 2021/22. Whilst the Spending Review focused on spending decisions for Government departments in England, the spending decisions will feed through to UK Government funding for Scotland through the Barnett formula. Under the Barnett formula, the Scottish Government will receive an additional £2.4 billion, with £1.1 billion of core funding and £1.3 billion in relation to COVID-19.
2. In the Spending Review, the Chancellor announced that teachers and most other public sector workers who earn £24,000 or more will have their pay rise for 2021/22 'paused'. If this policy were to be implemented in Scotland, no teachers would receive a pay increase in 2021/22.
3. The NASUWT considers the short-sighted decision to freeze teachers' pay to be out of step with public opinion and a slap in the face to the teaching profession, particularly at a time when teachers have been serving on the frontline, risking their own health to maintain education and support for children and young people. The Chancellor's claim that a public sector pay freeze is necessary because private sector wages fell by nearly 1% in the six months to September is no justification for imposing further real-terms cuts to the pay of teachers.
4. Teachers' pay in Scotland is devolved to the Scottish Government, and the current three-year teachers' pay award comes to an end on 31 March 2021. The NASUWT is currently working within the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) to develop a 2021 teachers' pay claim.
5. The Spending Review Settlement from the Westminster Government confirms that the three-year schools settlement announced by Sajid Javid (as then Chancellor) in Autumn 2019 will remain intact: this was to cover the costs of the 2021/22 pay award for the schools workforce, which is now being 'paused'. However, given that the three-year schools settlement is intact for England, the NASUWT would expect that this feeds through the Barnett formula into the Scotland Block Grant, so that local authorities in Scotland will be able to afford to meet a 2021/22 pay award in Scotland.
6. It is critical that the Scottish Parliament resists any attempts by HM Treasury or the Scottish Government to impose a teachers' pay freeze on Scottish teachers in 2021/22 and that the Education Committee secures a commitment from the Deputy First Minister that the Scottish Government will not collude with the Chancellor of the Exchequer's public sector pay freeze for 2021/22.

**NASUWT**  
**The Teachers' Union**

## **Key Principles**

7. The NASUWT has repeatedly advocated that the Scottish Government should adopt the following key school funding principles. School and education funding should:
  - provide equality of opportunity and equitable access for all learners, contribute to raising educational standards for all pupils and narrow the achievement gap;
  - mean that students or their families do not need to pay for their education;
  - not result in anomalies between schools where their needs and circumstances and the expectations upon them are the same;
  - reflect the additional costs related to pupil deprivation, socio-economic circumstances, geography, school location and setting;
  - ensure the provision of, and access to, high-quality education and related support services for all children and young people;
  - provide equality of entitlement for all learners to be taught by qualified teachers and for the recruitment, retention and development of qualified teachers;
  - be clear and transparent;
  - take account of local circumstances and needs, including if these change;
  - ensure that the global amount available for the funding of schools takes full account of education priorities and needs and promotes fairness, equity, inclusion and social cohesion;
  - ensure that changes to the funding for schools do not result in detriment to colleges or early years provisions;
  - be predicated on consultation with trade unions at national, local authority and individual school levels;
  - promote stability for schools to enable them to plan and organise their priorities in the longer term and minimise turbulence;
  - support the best use of resources, through strategic planning of local provision, institutional collaboration, economies of scale and the pooling of resources, to meet locally identified educational needs; and
  - ensure that schools in receipt of state funding should not be able to make a profit.

## **Teacher Pay**

8. The aspirations of the Government to achieve excellence and equity across school systems cannot be achieved without adequate funding. There are significant challenges to the recruitment and retention of teachers, including the pay levels of experienced teachers and excessive workload suffered by the profession.
9. Since the 2018-21 teachers' pay award was implemented in Scotland, the Westminster Government and the Welsh Government have taken action to make pay in England and Wales more competitive. The

Scottish Government must take this into account when implementing the 2021 teachers' pay award. The comparably poor pay of Scottish teachers, when compared internationally, is demonstrated by OECD research.

10. NASUWT research indicates that 71% of teachers in Scotland do not believe that teaching is currently competitive with other professions. Moreover, only 31% of teachers feel that they are paid at a level commensurate with their skills and experiences as a teacher.
11. The 2021 Budget will be made against the background of the coronavirus pandemic. During the pandemic, teachers are going far beyond the call of duty, as key workers, in their service to the children and young people they teach and to the communities they serve. Teachers and school leaders deserve to be recognised and rewarded for their dedication to maintaining education provision throughout this unprecedented period of disruption.
12. It would be devastating to the morale and motivation of the teaching profession if the Scottish Government was to announce a pay freeze to teachers for 2021/22 at the same time as teachers are preparing for an extremely demanding winter and spring, continuing to deliver high-quality education to children and young people in the face of the pandemic.

## **Workload**

13. The NASUWT's Big Question Survey indicates that 79% of teachers have identified workload as one of their five biggest concerns about their job, the second most highly identified category. The workload pressures on teachers before the pandemic were unsustainable, with inter alia special school provision in many local authority areas being stripped out, timetabled senior classes cancelled due to 'uneconomic numbers', and children and young people with very challenging behaviour in mainstream settings failing to receive the support they need. Increasing numbers of teachers reported a profound shortage of teachers in many subject areas, with cover and doubling-up of classes masking the teacher shortage. The reduction in the number of support staff in schools also militated against excellence and contributed to high teacher workload, one of the key drivers of teachers wanting to leave the profession.
14. Without doubt, the pandemic and the shifting sands of SQA and government advice have been significant additional workload drivers over the last year, creating the current workload crisis in the teaching profession.
15. A successful strategy to end the teacher workload crisis will inevitably need to be adequately resourced, not least because the schools workforce will need to be expanded to reduce class sizes and provide

teachers with more time to carry out duties other than direct class teaching. The NASUWT calls on the Scottish Government to commit to the funding necessary for this.

## **Equity and Equality**

16. Supporting children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) requires urgent renewed investment in tailored services and education settings to ensure there is equality of opportunity and choice for all.
17. Teachers report that many local authorities are unable to deliver their statutory duty to ensure equity irrespective of socio-economic disadvantage. There is no question that many pupils, for example, can only pursue senior courses of study because their families can afford to pay for textbooks and resources.
18. The Education and Skills Committee should press the Government on how best the budget will advance equalities and meet all duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Scotland Specific Equality Duties Regulations.
19. There remains a stark level of under-representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) teachers in comparison to the BME pupils that they teach. Equally, there are very few BME teachers in leadership positions. These are areas of concern for Scottish society as a whole. Schools, colleges and the wider education system have a central role to play in promoting racial equality.
20. The Scottish Government must show its commitment to equality and diversity through the education budget and give teachers and prospective teachers with protected characteristics the priority they deserve.

## **Conclusion**

21. Public services provide a vital social infrastructure, which means that investment in them benefits the whole of society. In addition to the improvements in services which result from high levels of investment, there are benefits to the wider economy of higher employment and wage levels in schools and other key services, as higher consumer spending would tend to be focused on Scotland's businesses.
22. The NASUWT would be happy to meet with the Committee to discuss all of these issues in more detail.