



# Education Reform



## Early Years

The new programme restates the Scottish governments plan to expand “free” early learning and childcare to 1,140 hours a year by 2020. The programme also indicates there will also be free meals at nursery. There is no detail on the costing and indeed logistics of preparing and eating those meals in nurseries.

There is a commitment to delivering the Scottish Living Wage to all childcare workers by 2020. While this will be a welcome pay rise for many out with the public sector UNISON does not believe that this is far below the appropriate level of pay for the skills and qualifications required to deliver a high quality childcare service.

They are moving ahead with changes to the funding model. Details of “Funding Follows the Child” will be published by March 2018. UNISON is very concerned that this leads to an e-voucher system that will lead to and expansion of the lower paid private and voluntary sectors with a serious impact on funding available for public sector nurseries and the terms and conditions of the staff who work there.

While “funding follows the child” sounds quite innocuous voucher systems tend to lead to a two tier system where those that cannot afford to top up the voucher end up in much poorer settings than those who are better off.

There are also plans to “strengthen the early years experience and qualifications that teachers gain through initial teacher education” The Improvement Service is recruiting new staff to support the changes

The Scottish government programme lays out significant proposals for reform of both schools and early years. UNISON believes that education, including early years and childcare, should be both comprehensive and delivered free at the point of use by local authorities. This route offers democratic local accountability and efficiency through economies of scale.

Despite an OECD report calling on the Scottish government to avoid structural change and the substantial criticism of the plans in the initial consultation the Scottish government is proposing to move forward with its plans to create regional education bodies and move more responsibilities from authorities to both these bodies and to head teachers. Changing structures just focuses attention internally on the organisation itself rather than improving the actual the delivery of services. UNISON’s response is available [here](#).

### The key issue for school education is not governance but budget cuts.

The key issue for school education is not governance but budget cuts. Schools have had £300million in cuts over the last five years with more to come. UNISON believes that it is through investment in schools and the development of the whole education team that we will drive attainment and close the attainment gap.

There are significant plans to change funding. In the early years funding will “follow the child” which is code for vouchers and a new school funding formula. The two closely linked options being [consulted](#) on are

1. Devolving funding to head teachers with a charter setting out their responsibilities

2. devolving a proportion of funding to head teachers but building on the attainment funding model for allocations. The attainment fund currently uses free school meals entitlement to target funding on schools with lower income families.

Details of the plans are not yet clear and are already changing but the programme lays out the timetable for change as follows

**Summer 2017** Appointment of regional directors

**Autumn 2017** consultation on draft education bill begins

Education Governance Fair funding consultation closes **October 2017**

Developing Head Teachers’ Charter to enable inclusion in education bill by **June 2018**

Transferring functions from national bodies to start in **June 2017**

Scottish Education Council to be set up by **October 2017**, to be chaired by Deputy First Minister

Consulting on establishing an Education Workforce Council, taking over from general teaching council etc other education professionals as well as teachers will need to REGISTER To be included in the consultation of the Education Bill

Working with “wider school workforce” to introduce professional standards: work will start **Sept 2017**

#### Medium to longer term

Develop a recruitment campaign to attract head teachers **Spring 2018**

Set up a new system to identify and fast track potential heads by the **end of 2018**

Develop a new Executive Consultant Head and Cluster leader roles by **end of 2018**

Ensure that every school has a home to school link worker by the **end of 2019**

A single shared inspection model for early learning and childcare institutions by **end of 2018**

Develop a new approach to school funding, consultation is already under way. New proposals by **summer 2018**

The Scottish government review of non domestic rates, (NDR) chaired by Ken Barclay, has published its report. The review's remit was

*"To make recommendations that seek to enhance and reform the nondomestic rates ...system in Scotland to better support business growth and long term investment and reflect changing marketplaces, whilst still retaining the same level of income to deliver local services upon which businesses rely."*

The report recommends that there should be three yearly revaluations, UNISON has for some time supported this for both NDR and council tax. They also recommend reducing the large business supplement and helpfully question the effectiveness of the Small Business Bonus Scheme. UNISON has argued that the government has thrown huge sums of money at this scheme that could have gone into councils, with little evaluation of its merits.

Barclay also proposes that town centres and nurseries get new relief from business rates. It is reasonable to use tax reliefs to encourage particular policies and early years provision is a key element of tackling inequality. However, such support should come with at least some strings, like decent pay and conditions for staff.

In the main there are sensible recommendations to improve the administration of the system, through better information, transparency and speeding up appeals and repayments. Making the failure to provide information a civil rather than a criminal matter is less obviously a good thing, although wider powers to get information are. Big companies have obviously lobbied for consistency, but this should remain a local system – not another new quango. [Briefing 88](#) and this [e-brief](#) have more detail

## A NATION WITH AMBITION

THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMME FOR SCOTLAND

2017-18



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot



## Key Points In The Programme

### Climate Change

Probably the strongest element of the programme covers measures to tackle climate change. The phasing out of new petrol and diesel cars by 2032, investment in low emission vehicles, drink deposit schemes, active travel and low carbon infrastructure will be widely welcomed. The establishment of a Just Transition Commission is particularly welcome as is a public body bid for ScotRail.

### Local Government Reform

Last year's programme made reference to local government reform and that has now been developed into 'a comprehensive review of how local decisions are made and how local democracy is working'. There will also be more support for Community Choices and participatory budgeting.

## Just Transition Commission

There will be a Planning Bill to implement the reforms already consulted on, which will have implications for members. They will 'urgently' respond to the Barclay report on business rates. There is a major emphasis on

growing the economy, including a welcome commitment to a Scottish National Investment Bank. A 'Strategic Board' will provide an oversight of economic development agencies including SDS.

## Scottish National Investment Bank

### Health and Social Care

The programme confirms current strategies on prevention and a shift from acute to community services. New commitments include extending free personal care to the u65's (Frank's Law) and confirmation of the NHS Safe Staffing Bill. There will be a 'soft opt-out' for organ and tissue donation.

### Social Security and Poverty

The programme mostly confirms the current plans to establish a social security agency and process measures in the Child Poverty Bill. There is a new commitment to provide free sanitary products in schools and colleges as well as Basic Income Scheme pilot projects.

Success will of course depend on providing the resources needed to meet Scotland's deep rooted challenges.

## Less Talk More Action



The Scottish government is consulting on introducing a Socio-Economic Duty. UNISON is a leading human rights defender in day-to-day workplace situations. UNISON has also brought various direct challenges to the UK government in the Supreme Court and European Court of Justice through individual cases and judicial review. UNISON speaks with a degree of authority on the difficulties of tackling disadvantage and promoting human rights in the UK.

As we know from our work, many fundamental rights are remote and inaccessible to ordinary people, particularly people living with poverty and economic disadvantage. The new Socio-Economic Duty (SED) must be robust and enforceable if it is to offer practical benefit to people facing poverty and disadvantage. Scotland needs to empower excluded communities. The SED presents that opportunity but the proposed implementation will be ineffective.

While we strongly welcome the Scottish government's commitment to legislate for a socio-economic duty for public bodies we have concerns over the proposed retention of the duty as defined by the UK government in 2010. The 2010 measures were inadequate then and they are simply unlawful now.

- The powers focus on the consequences of poverty, not the causes.

- The definition of public bodies is too narrow.
- The focus on "strategic decision making" is too remote to have any practical impact on the causes of poverty, although it may ameliorate the health, crime and housing consequences of poverty.
- The obligations placed on public bodies are weak and ineffective.
- The proposal creates no meaningful or enforceable socio-economic rights for people in poverty; and,
- There are no adequate powers of enforcement and no effective remedy for individuals.

Scotland has had enough hot air from public bodies about inclusion and equality. We need effective public sector duties. And efficacy requires public law remedies that enable incompetent decisions to be challenged BEFORE they create waves of private individual litigation. UNISON's full response to the consultation is available [here](#)

## Don't Cut Taxes for the Rich

UNISON Scotland has argued strongly against this tax reduction from when it was first proposed. As we said in our June 2016 response to the consultation on a Scottish replacement to Air Passenger Duty, we start

"from the position that the Scottish government should be defending public services and working for social justice by opposing austerity and tackling inequalities.

"Climate change action is essential and should support these goals. Instead, this policy proposal would benefit the wealthiest, while increasing aviation emissions. A lose, lose proposal for Scottish public services and for protecting our world for future generations."

Nothing has changed in favour of this regressive tax cut since then. Quite the opposite. The world has seen continuing record temperatures and major climate impacts, including the recent

devastating hurricanes and floods, with many lives lost. Climate change is real and happening now and in America many can see the folly of President Trump's withdrawal from the United Nations Paris Agreement.

Scotland's Climate Act and new Climate Bill and climate policies are important. The 2009 Act, passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament, aimed to be world leading. The Scottish government claimed earlier this month that it maintains its aims to be a world leader on climate change, supporting the Paris Agreement.

Yet, as the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland submission (which we support) says:

"Using a tax reduction to deliberately increase aviation gives the impression that the Scottish Government is not serious about tackling climate change."

UNISON's full response is available [here](#)

If you would like more information on any of the articles in this newsletter or have information you would like to share in the next issue please contact: [Kay Sillars](#) in the Bargaining and Campaigns team on 0141 342 2819 [k.sillars@unison.co.uk](mailto:k.sillars@unison.co.uk)



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