

## School Funding Still in Crisis – A Briefing

NAHT represents more than 29,000 school leaders in early years, primary, secondary and special schools, making us the largest association for school leaders in the UK. We represent, advise and train school leaders in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We use our voice at the highest levels of government to influence policy for the benefit of leaders and learners everywhere.

### What's the problem with school funding?

The funding crisis in schools has been created by **real terms cuts** to school budgets. The independent [National Audit Office](#) estimated that this will represent an 8% loss by 2020. The total Department for Education (DfE) budget has risen, but only to keep up with rising pupil numbers. Actual real terms funding per pupil has fallen sharply since April 2015 due to a number of big increases in costs:

- **National Insurance and Pensions:** Increases in the cost of employers' contributions of over 5.5% in April 2015 have had a big impact on schools.
- **£600 million of cuts to the Education Services Grant:** The ESG was used by local authorities and academies to fund school services, such as HR and facilities management. These services are still needed so the cost has been shifted to individual schools and academies, putting further pressure on school budgets.
- **Pay:** The cost of annual pay awards for teaching and support staff, however minimal, have been unfunded in school budgets.
- **The Apprenticeship Levy:** The levy came into effect in April 2017. Only 1% of employers have to pay this but nearly all maintained schools and most academies will have to pay an extra 0.5% on their payroll costs.

The Department for Education has now conceded that there is not enough money for schools. In July the Secretary of State reprioritised the DfE's budget to commit an additional £1.3bn: £416m in 2018-19 and £884m in 2019-20. Whilst welcome, this is below the £2bn a year that we know schools need just to return to 2015/16 funding levels.

As things stand 88% of schools will still face real terms cuts by 2019/20. The [schoolcuts](#) website uses the government's own data to show the impact of cuts at a school, constituency and local authority level.

### What impact is this having?

NAHT's ['Breaking Point'](#) survey found that 72% of school leaders were clear that their budgets would be totally unsustainable by 2019. Examples of the impact that this is having include:

**One secondary school leader from East Sussex** reported: "Our playing fields are now unsuitable for sport. I cannot afford to get the grass cut regularly. We will consider whether we can afford to keep the community bus running. The school has had to start using primary school furniture in order to fit more pupils into fewer classrooms because some areas of the school are not fit to use and there is no money to pay for repairs."

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**A primary head teacher from Manchester** commented: “Looking to the future we would have to make all of our Teaching Assistants redundant, other than those that are funded for High Needs children on Educational Healthcare Plans. 90% of my children never hear a bedtime story, never see an adult read for pleasure and have never visited the local library. We used to be able to make up for some of these disadvantages, now that is no longer the case.”

**A school leader in Carlisle** revealed: “My own children go to the school where I’m the head. I was faced with a situation where I had to make the teaching assistant in my own son’s class redundant because of the cuts to my budget. At the end of last year, I had to let the caretaker go. Now I do his job as well as my own. I came in over the summer holidays to repaint the classrooms myself.”

**A head of a primary school in Stockport** said: “The financial status of schools now has the potential to have a disastrous effect on the life chances for children now and for years to come. We are losing over 30% of our Newly Qualified Teachers within five years of starting. We have had a turnover of 50% of our head teachers in Stockport in the same time scale. We are in crisis now. We need financial support now.”

## What needs to happen?

There is overwhelming evidence that school funding is still in crisis. Schools need at least an extra £2bn a year to avoid having to cut staff, cut classes or limit what they teach. The DfE has done their best but if we are to have any chance of protecting our world class education system it is now time for the Treasury to step up.

## How can you support us?

**The funding crisis is happening now.** Please contact some of your local schools to find out how they are being affected.

**On 24<sup>th</sup> October, there will be a lobby in Westminster.** Please make time to meet your constituents and listen to their concerns.

**The Autumn Budget is the last chance for money to make it to schools this year.** Please write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ask him to announce more money for schools.

[www.naht.org.uk/school-funding-in-crisis](http://www.naht.org.uk/school-funding-in-crisis)

## Contact

For further information, please contact [policy@naht.org.uk](mailto:policy@naht.org.uk)

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