

Scottish budget statement by Finance Secretary Derek Mackay

Below is the statement given by Scotland's Finance Secretary, Derek Mackay, on the Scottish Government's budget plans for the year ahead. Check against delivery.

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Author:

School Funding

I recently met with a number of constituents to discuss school funding. Following the meeting, I took the points raised up on behalf of those attending. I have now received the enclosed reply from the School's Minister:



2017-0055907POGibb

Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards

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Rt Hon John Redwood MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

7 December 2017

Dear John

Thank you for your letters of 25 October and 21 November, addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, enclosing correspondence from your constituent,

regarding school funding. Your email was passed to this Department and I am replying as the Minister of State for School Standards.

The Government is determined to create a country that works for everyone. We are delivering on our promise to reform the unfair, opaque and outdated school and high needs funding systems, and introduce national funding formulae. This historic reform means that, for the first time, school and high needs funding will be distributed according to a formula based on the individual needs and characteristics of every school in the country. Resources will, therefore, be directed to where they are needed most, providing transparency and predictability for schools and local areas.

The introduction of the national funding formulae is supported by significant extra investment. The Government is investing an extra £1.3 billion in schools and high needs over the period 2018-19 and 2019-20, over and above the budget set at the Spending Review in 2015. Core funding for schools and high needs will rise from almost £41 billion in 2017-18 to £42.4 billion in 2018-19 and £43.5 billion in 2019-20. This will allow us to maintain school and high needs funding in real terms per pupil for the next two years.

We have undertaken wide ranging consultations which have allowed us to hear from, and carefully consider, over 26,000 individual respondents and representative organisations. As a consequence of the proposals in our consultation, and supported by our significant additional investment, the national funding formula will:

- Increase the basic amount of funding that every pupil will attract.

- Recognise the challenges of the very lowest funded school, by introducing a minimum per pupil funding level. In 2019-20, all secondary schools will attract at least £4,800 per pupil, and all primary schools will attract at least £3,500 per pupil. In 2018-19, secondary schools will attract at least £4,600, and primary schools £3,300.
- Provide a cash increase in respect of every school and every local authority area from April 2018. Final decisions on local distribution will be taken by local authorities, but every school will attract at least 0.5 per cent more per pupil in 2018-19, and 1 per cent more in 2019-20, compared to its baseline.
- Provide significantly larger increases in respect of previously underfunded schools, of up to 3 per cent per pupil in 2018-19 and a further 3 per cent per pupil in 2019-20. The minimum per pupil funding level will not be subject to this gains cap, and so will deliver faster gains in respect of the very lowest funded schools. In Wokingham, schools will gain 2.3 per cent in 2018-19 and 4.4 per cent in 2019-20 as the national funding formula is implemented.
- Protect the funding directed towards additional needs and distribute it more fairly, in line with the best available evidence.
- Provide a £110,000 lump sum for every school. For the smallest, most remote schools, a further £26 million will be distributed through dedicated sparsity funding.

We have published detailed data tables setting out the impact of the formula for each school and local authority in the country, which can be found at: tinyurl.com/v8gf39ee. Full details of the school and high needs national funding formulae are available at: tinyurl.com/yatr93an.

To provide stability for schools through the transition to the national funding formula, local authorities will continue to set their own local formulae which will determine individual schools' budgets in their areas in 2018-19 and 2019-20, in consultation with local schools. The school level allocations we have published are notional allocations only – final school budgets will continue to be determined by local authorities. Schools will be notified of their budgets for 2018-19 ahead of the financial year.

The independent Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) is clear that with our new investment the schools budget will now be maintained in real terms per pupil from this year to 2019-20. This means that the budget for schools will increase to meet both the expected increase in pupil numbers, and inflationary pressures.

The schoolcuts campaign claims that schools' costs are rising faster than their income, and is extremely misleading. It is based on a flawed calculation that takes school budgets in 2015-16, and then calculates the cost pressures on school budgets over four years. However, the website is not clear that this is what it is doing, and it does not reflect that most of these pressures have already been absorbed by schools, at the same time as standards have continued to rise. Schoolcuts has quoted the IFS as saying that schools will face real terms cuts of 4.6 per cent between 2015 and 2019. The IFS is clear that this figure relates to previous years. In line with the Public Account Committee's recommendations, we will be publishing our own estimate of the cost pressures on schools in due course.

With best wishes.

Tom Mearns
Neil

[Barry Gardiner responds to failure to reach agreement at the WTO Ministerial Conference](#)

Barry

Gardiner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade, commenting on the failure to

come to an agreement at the 11th Ministerial Conference of the WTO, said:

"We deeply regret that the Buenos Aires ministerial conference ended without a substantial agreement.

"Some countries are less willing to play by the rules based system than others. The Trump administration has shown its true colours. They are taking an America first stance in trade, as we saw with the Bombardier case.

"Liam Fox needs to reassess his hopes for a transatlantic trade deal with the US. The USA is only interested in bilateral deals in which they can dictate the terms. He must show leadership in the multilateral rules based system in addressing unresolved issues such as food stock piling and fisheries subsidies."

Press release: Don't throw plastic or other items at Matlock raft racers

With this year's annual Matlock Boxing Day Raft Race given the go-ahead once again, the Environment Agency is urging the thousands of spectators expected to turn out to watch the popular event to leave their flour-filled plastic bags and other objects at home.

In previous years, spectators have thrown eggs, flour, plastic or paper bags, and other products at the raft racers from various points along the 3.5 mile course of the race on the River Derwent, which poses a real threat to the environment and wildlife.

Paul Reeves, Environment Officer at the Environment Agency, said:

We realise the Matlock Raft Race is an important social event for the area, which attracts a large number of local residents as well as visitors from further afield, has a positive impact on the local economy, and raises funds for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

However, we are appealing to spectators to consider the environment by not throwing flour-filled plastic bags or other objects at the raft racers and into the water this year.

If plastic or paper bags enter the watercourse, they pose a real threat to wildlife both locally and further afield. Last year there were sightings of water birds trying to eat floating flour-filled bags, and the deadly impact of plastics on river and sea life is well known and currently in the news.

Councillor Lewis Rose OBE, Leader of Derbyshire Dales District Council, said:

The Boxing Day raft race has become something of a tradition here in the Derbyshire Dales and long may it continue. However, we absolutely support the Environment Agency's plea to spectators to refrain from activities that threaten the environment and wildlife,

as well as littering our waterways and streets.

Kath Stapley, Living Rivers Officer, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, added:

On behalf of the 60 partner organisations which make up the Derbyshire Derwent Catchment Partnership, we're asking people to spare a thought for the wildlife in and around the River Derwent.

We're constantly working to improve the rivers in the catchment, from Howden Moor above Ladybower Reservoir, down into Derby, but we can only make a difference with support from members of the public. If plastics and other items are thrown into the river at Matlock, they may travel out of sight, but will inevitably affect the watercourse and wildlife downstream in Belper, Duffield, Derby and even down into the River Trent.

[News story: Defence Minister reveals new RAF Squadron at Qatar event](#)

[Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson was in Doha last weekend](#), where he agreed a package of training and co-operation between the British and Qatari Air Forces which will see them working together more regularly as part of the multi-billion pound deal to supply the country with 24 Typhoon aircraft.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin expanded on that agreement at a State of Qatar National Day reception in London today. She revealed that a new UK-based Typhoon joint squadron will be called No. 12 squadron, and that it will temporarily integrate Qatari personnel, including pilots and ground-crew based at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

Qatar proudly becomes the ninth nation to buy the world's leading multi-role combat aircraft.

The formation of a joint squadron means our RAF will take the lead in providing training and support to the Qatari Emiri Air Force as it brings the Typhoon into service.

The Qataris will not be a permanent part of the squadron, but will be integrated ahead of the delivery of the Typhoon aircraft. The move will provide the country with valuable joint frontline experience on an RAF

Typhoon Squadron and speed up their preparation for when their own jets are delivered.

The UK and Qatar already share a close defence relationship, with a joint-exercise between the Royal Air Force and Qatar Air force just last week seeing Typhoon aircraft fly over the Arabian Peninsula. Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin visited the country at the end of last month, where she met the pilots taking part in the exercise.

The two countries share mutual interests in countering violent extremism, and ensuring stability in the region, and this formation will further reinforce those ties by helping to prevent terrorism from spreading and protecting the prosperity and security of the UK at home. The new 12 squadron is currently operating Tornados, and will transition to the future Typhoon force.

The biggest export deal for the Typhoon project in a decade, valued at around £6 billion and sustaining thousands of UK jobs, Qatar is the ninth country to purchase the Typhoon. This year also saw the first delivered to Oman, whilst the MOD is leading the offer to replace Belgium's F-16s with the jets and continues to discuss the prospect of a second batch of sales to Saudi Arabia, as it continues to bang the drum for Britain's world-leading aerospace industry around the world.

Notes to editors

- Qatar National Day is on Monday 18 December. Today's reception at The Savoy Hotel on The Strand was hosted to celebrate the occasion.