

POST BUDGET STATEMENT Worth Less?

November 2018

We represent every type of school and academy ranging from grammars and rural primaries to state secondary and special schools. As an influential group of responsible headteachers we are actively considering a wide variety of actions to highlight the unsustainable financial pressures schools are facing.



Funding cuts have been continuous over several years. Many schools have lost at least 10% of their budgets in real terms and this can represent hundreds of thousands of pounds. Many schools in 'shire authorities come from a position of historically very low funding. For all schools though, doing 'more with less' is one thing but delivering on every conceivable area of each pupil's education and well-being - whilst being stripped of reasonable resources - is quite another.

Heads remain determined to do what's right by every child in every school but we are being placed in an impossible situation. We have spent years making our contribution to a challenging period of austerity but enough is enough. If we continue to be funded inadequately then our schools will become a pale shadow of what parents expect.

- Children across the country deserve support in every lesson in every subject. Funding cuts are increasing class sizes. Every day, all across the country, more children are being left without the individual support they need and deserve.
- Children deserve qualified and experienced teachers in their classrooms. Funding cuts are driving workload up and teachers are leaving the profession like never before. England's schools are being stripped of expertise and children robbed of specialist subject teaching. Classrooms are already being denied adequate levels pupil support as the numbers of classroom assistants is rapidly reduced.
- Our young people need access, through our schools, to mental health and well-being support. Funding cuts are stripping schools of this capacity. Schools are ending support contracts and making support workers redundant. Today, to some, it may seem like a saving on public expenditure. Tomorrow, it could be their child who joins an 18 month waiting list for a mental health support because the school counsellor isn't there anymore.
- A quality education includes the creative arts. In schools, across the country, music, art and drama are being removed from the timetable. Schools can't sustain smaller classes for these subjects. One third of GCSE provision in these subjects has already been removed, nationally. Funding cuts are destroying these vital opportunities.
- Parents expect and deserve our schools to provide access to opportunities beyond the classroom. These activities cost money to provide. Funding cuts are already removing out of hours provision – such as Duke of Edinburgh award schemes – from our schools. It's not good enough that these chances are open only to those who can pay.

Our headteachers universally welcome any extra money from the Budget but it is too little too late.

Across our network we are most concerned about vulnerable pupils with SEND and other challenges in their lives and how to meet their needs going forward. In light of this Worth Less? can confirm that:

1. Children come first: we will no longer have the capacity to co-operate with any Government initiatives that don't meet the fundamental needs of pupils.
2. Children come first, and our special needs pupils are top of the list : we will go over the heads of ministers and writing direct to 600 plus MPs (excluding ministers) saying - 'yes or no' should there be emergency funding for SEND and the High Needs Block? We will publish each response. Any nil response will be considered as a 'no'.
3. Children come first: schools are already charging for extra-curricular activities / after school clubs and asking for parental donations to prop up our budgets. This dire situation will get even worse unless real terms cuts are reversed.
4. Children come first: our schools can no longer meet welfare needs routinely. We will refer parents directly back to relevant support services such as social care, CAMHS and the police as and when schools do not have the capacity to resolve 'gaps' in LA provision that they are increasingly having to routinely cover at present.
5. Children come first: we may have to set deficit budgets rather than denude our capacity any more. Some schools already have.

On behalf of Worth Less?

Blackpool	East Sussex	Liverpool	Solihull	Walsall
Bolton	Essex	Norfolk	Somerset	Warrington
Brighton and Hove	Gloucestershire	Northamptonshire	Southampton	West Berkshire
Buckinghamshire	Greenwich	Oxfordshire	Southend-on-Sea	West Sussex
Cambridgeshire	Hampshire	Peterborough	Staffordshire	Westminster
Cornwall	Havering	Poole	Stoke-on-Trent	Wigan
Cumbria	Hertfordshire	Portsmouth	Suffolk	Wiltshire
Derbyshire	Hillingdon	Richmond	Surrey	Wokingham
Devon	Kent	Richmond upon Thames	Sutton	Wolverhampton
Dorset	Kingston upon Thames	Rotherham	Thurrock	Worcestershire
Dudley	Lancashire	Slough	Tower Hamlets	