



13 February 2017

Headteachers' Statement of Concern: Hammersmith & Fulham

We write reluctantly but urgently to call on policy makers, including the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education, to act now to support schools before the funding and recruitment crises send education into a further downward spiral.

It is our collective concern that the continued trajectory of funding reductions will have a negative impact on generations of young people, and our whole community.

Headteachers are extremely concerned by the insufficient funding within the education sector and the significant impact the teacher recruitment crisis is having on schools. No Headteacher has anything but the intention to make all children in their school succeed. No school, no teacher and no school leader want to let their children fail.

However, the situation faced by local schools means that we will soon be at the point where leaders are forced to make drastic decisions that will significantly impact on young people's lives and education.

Headteachers and schools are in the middle of a perfect storm. To put it simply, schools have, amongst many others, faced the following challenges:

1. A National Funding Formula that proposes a 3% cut across all schools in Hammersmith & Fulham
2. Increasing costs in terms of staffing because of:
 - a. Unfunded rising salary costs which we have little control over, including years of unfunded inflationary pay awards (approximately 1% year on year).
 - b. An increase in National Insurance from April 2015 adding further increases of approximately 2% to salary costs; this would amount to approximately £93,000 per annum for an average sized secondary school (1,000 pupils).
 - c. An increase in the employers' contribution rate for the Teachers' Pension scheme of 2% (14% to 16%) since September 2014; this would amount to approximately £82,000 per annum for an average sized secondary school.
3. Cuts to funding grants other than per pupil funding, including the Education Support Grant.
4. A reduction in the effectiveness of external support previously provided by local authorities, with schools being increasingly forced to provide it instead with limited and reducing funding.
5. Teacher training reorganisation has left a confusing mess which has discouraged new teachers and means there are simply not enough coming into the profession.
6. Teacher recruitment and retention concerns are putting additional pressures on budgets as recruitment agencies demand increased prices for subjects with a shortage of teachers and excessive signing-on fees for full-time staff placed on contracts.
7. Year on year reductions to post 16 funding aiming to bring school funding in line with further education colleges.

These issues are made even more difficult in Hammersmith & Fulham because of the high cost of living and lack of affordable housing which make teacher recruitment and retention exceptionally difficult.

We also have a school age population growing above the national rate which means that because of the time-lag in funding, our schools' budgets are put under additional pressure.

The combined effect of reduced income and increased costs has resulted in a real time reduction in overall funding of around 8-9% since 2013/14. With further increases in employer pension contributions (for both teacher and local government schemes) and the Apprenticeship Levy, this funding gap is set to increase to 12-13% within the next two years. The situation is not sustainable and is beyond the control of schools or school leaders.

Education is potentially at a crisis point and we would urge policy makers to take action before it is too late.

Specifically, we call on government not to cut school budgets further. Action needs to be taken on a national level that enables the teacher recruitment crisis to be resolved and to provide additional funding to be able to recruit and retain good staff.

Children's education is too important to be put at risk by cutting funding.

This statement is endorsed by Headteachers of schools in Hammersmith & Fulham

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