

Press Statement

Tuesday 22 August 2017

Response to announcement from Barclay Review of Business Rates:

Speaking on 22 August, John Edward, Director of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools, said:

“The findings of the Barclay Review run completely contrary to the charity test the Scottish Parliament required all schools to undertake; would put Scottish education at a competitive disadvantage in the UK and globally; would substantially impact the work schools can do on offering bursaries and other community provision; and would set independent schools aside from all other charities - for no sound legal, political, educational or economic reason. Most of all, for a rates review, they would most likely cost the Scottish taxpayer and Government more than they seek to raise.”

The charity test for Scottish independent schools is the strictest in the world. Our high-attaining schools have worked incredibly hard over 12 years to meet that test. Any sudden alteration to rates relief would have very serious consequences for the employment of teachers, support staff and third party suppliers – as well as those 30,000 pupils educated.”

A review of business rates should not be used to single out 0.3% of Scotland’s charities for differential treatment, when the exception to the rule is not the independent school sector – rather the council-run one.”

Press queries

For more information, please contact:

Alison Herbert or John Edward, SCIS

0131 556 2316 (office)

07973 489 292 (out of hours)

Notes to editors:

- The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) represents over 70 member mainstream and additional support needs schools, which educate more than 29,000 children of mixed abilities and diverse backgrounds. SCIS promotes choice, diversity and excellence in Scottish education. See www.scis.org.uk.
- Out of 24,229 registered charities in Scotland, independent schools in membership of SCIS number fewer than 60, or c.0.3% of the charity sector in Scotland. In terms of rates relief, the same schools constitute 0.7% of the bodies awarded rates relief in Scotland.

- Relief to charities is currently based on registration with the independent Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), under the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. All schools registered as charities and in membership of SCIS have undertaken, or are undertaking, the charity test required by OSCR which ensures public benefit provisions match the core purpose of “the advancement of education”.
- In 2016, an independent economic impact report looked at the exchequer (£246m) and other benefits that the independent school sector contributes. See <http://www.scis.org.uk/facts-and-figures/economic-impact-report/>
- 4.1% of pupils in Scotland attend an independent school. The independent school sector is equivalent in size to the 8th largest local authority in Scotland.
- The independent sector currently employs 5.9% of the teaching workforce in Scotland, making it the 6th largest employer of teachers and employs more than 3,000 support staff.
- One third of boarding pupils in Scotland currently come from overseas. Scottish Government’s Council of Economic Advisors recognised in 2010 the economic value of independent schools, including boarding schools, to Scotland.
- The Review is factually incorrect when it states that state schools “pay rates”. Paying 20% of rates as a result of a mandatory relief still demonstrates that 20% is being provided from external sources - by membership or subscription fees, tuition or school fees, charitable contributions and other forms of personal expenditure. This is clearly distinct from other bodies such as educational bodies that do not receive relief, including state-maintained schools, where the entirety of the funding – including paper-based rates “payments” - is derived from national and local taxation levied upon the whole population irrespective of their individual use or demand.

ENDS