



National Audit Office

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watchdog

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Reference FOI-1712  
Date 12 April 2024

## CONDITION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS REPORT

Thank you for your request of 4 April 2024 asking us to provide anonymised transcripts of interviews we conducted with Department for Education officials for our June 2023 report on the [Condition of school buildings](#). Your specific request is reproduced in **Annex A** for reference.

We have examined our files and can confirm that we do not hold transcripts of our interviews with departmental officials. We do hold notes of meetings and discussions we had with officials, covering a range of different topics and at different stages of the study. However, these were created for the purposes of our audit and our view is that they are likely to be exempt under section 33 of FOIA (public audit).

While we are not able to share our notes with you, through the discussions we were directed towards published sources of information which may be of interest:

- In terms of the condition of buildings, DfE conducts assessments of all school buildings, and publishes a summary of its assessments. The most recently published data can be found here [Condition of school buildings survey - key findings](#), although DfE is currently updating this and will be publishing new data in 2025 [Condition Data Collection 2 \(CDC2\) programme](#).
- DfE's assessments are not invasive and do not therefore consider the safety issues we highlighted in our June 2023 report. However, the most relevant, recent information on reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in education settings can be found [here](#).
- In terms of how DfE distributes and spends funding, this is through various routes which include:
  - The school rebuilding programme. Background information on this programme can be found [here](#) and confirmation of schools included here [School rebuilding programme: schools in the programme](#).
  - Schools in small academy trusts need to apply for Condition Improvement Funding each year for smaller capital works. Confirmation of the amounts allocated for this year are here [Condition Improvement Fund: 2024 to 2025 outcome](#) (and earlier years available).
  - Local authorities and larger academy trusts will be given additional capital funding to spend as they see fit. Details of that funding can be found here [School capital funding](#).



I am sorry we do not hold the information you requested, but I hope the links provided above are helpful. We would also be happy to discuss our published work in this area with you if that would be useful.

**Annex B** sets out the steps you may wish to take if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request for information under FOIA.

Yours sincerely,

**NAO FOI Team**

## **Annex A**

### **Request for information**

“The [NAO's report on the condition of school buildings from summer 2023](#) contains these lines:

*We interviewed departmental officials to understand DfE's approach to supporting the condition of school buildings. Those we spoke to were selected based on their current or past roles within DfE and were, or had been, responsible for policy in the following areas: formulating strategy; measuring the condition of the estate; monitoring building safety risks; providing funding for maintenance and repair; delivering rebuilding programmes; and engaging with the sector. These interviews took place online*

Can you please provide me with the anonymised transcripts of these interviews?”

## **Annex B**

### **Statement of Policy**

Our policy is to respond to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as helpfully and promptly as possible, having regard to the principles set out in the Act. I therefore hope you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not, then you should take the following steps.

In the first instance, within 40 working days, write to the National Audit Office Freedom of Information (FOI) Team at [FOI@nao.org.uk](mailto:FOI@nao.org.uk) or by post to:

FOI Team, Green 2, National Audit Office, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SP

The FOI & Correspondence Manager will arrange a review, which will be conducted by a senior member of staff who was not involved in decisions relating to your original request. Once the review has been completed, we will write informing you of the outcome.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Alternatively, you can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> or Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF.