

Consultation on the Schools Block Funding Arrangements and Service De-delegations 2027/28

Consultation Analysis and Comments

Overall response rates to the consultation from all schools and academies is 19% (118 total responses), meaning that 81% of schools and academies have not participated in the consultation. A summary of the responses is provided below. The analysis shows that there has been a reduction in responses of schools engaging with the consultation.

As this is the second year that the local authority has consulted on a school's block transfer to the high needs block, analysis has also been provided showing the average response rate of the previous three years consultation. Please note however that previous year's consultations were predominately regarding de-delegations which are only applicable to maintained schools.

Response rate to the consultation over the past four years

Year	Total Responses	Total Response %
2027/28	118	18.85%
2026/27	179	28.59%
2025/26	174	27.75%
2024/25	164	26.16%
Average		25.34%

Total number of responses per phase

Type	Total Types	Total County Responses
Primary	481	16.22%
Secondary	81	39.51%
Nursery	24	4.17%
Short Stay	9	0.00%
Special	29	20.69%
All Through School	2	50.00%
Total	626	18.85%

Responses by District

District No:	Primary	Secondary	Other	Grand Total	% Respond
01	13	1	1	15	22.73%
02	3	4		7	13.21%
03	2	2		4	12.50%
04	2	3		5	17.86%
06	15	5	2	22	30.14%
07	7	4	1	12	22.64%
08	5	2		7	10.14%
09	8	1		9	14.75%
11	7	1	1	9	17.65%
12	5	4		9	18.75%
13	5	3	1	9	18.00%
14	6	3	1	10	23.81%
Grand Total	78	33	7	118	18.85%



School Block Transfer

Q1. Do you agree with the continuation of the 0.50% transfer to the high needs block from schools block to assist with pressures facing the high needs block?				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Primary	78	45	31	2
		58%	40%	3%
Secondary	32	5	25	2
		16%	78%	6%
Other	8	6	2	0
		75%	25%	0%

	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Total	118	56	58	4
		47%	49%	3%

Q1 Comments:

We agree that funding must be found for HNB but should come from Central Government not taken from Schools Block

We recognise the significant pressures facing the High Needs Block and the need to ensure that appropriate provision is available for pupils with SEND.

However, mainstream schools are also experiencing considerable financial pressure, with increases in staffing and non-staffing costs alongside increasingly complex levels of need being supported within mainstream settings.

Any transfer from the Schools Block therefore needs to be considered carefully. Whilst additional High Needs funding is clearly required, continued transfers from mainstream school funding reduce the resources available to schools which are themselves supporting increasing numbers of pupils with additional needs.

We would also support the greatest possible protection for individual school budgets through the Minimum Funding Guarantee, particularly given the financial pressures schools are currently managing.

Whilst we appreciate the significant cost pressures facing the high needs block the 0.50% transfer is at the expense of the schools block and this is now the 3rd year this has been the case. This is not a sustainable option with school budgets already pressured coupled with falling pupil numbers and frozen High Needs funding for the past two years we are heading for a perfect storm. Sadly we don't have the answers but needed to put this on record.

The further reduction to schools block funding is not sustainable given other recent reductions and the pressures school budgets are facing. This money must be found elsewhere.



As we all know, school budgets are severely stretched. We are dealing with children with more and more complex SEND needs with little or no support from the LA. We are losing the sports funding money that gave us some leeway on certain costings. It's very stressful managing a school budget now and more money needs to come from central government to support HNB rather than shaving more off schools' budgets which are already at or beyond breaking point. One thing that I don't agree with central government funding and where monies could be re-directed is universal FSM for Y2 downwards - this makes no sense in the current financial climate and the expansion of FSM for everyone on Universal Credit (which includes many professionals on decent salaries). I appreciate Schools Forum has no power over this but the current model around school meals means monies that could be better spent are subsidising families that don't need that subsidy.

There is a strong feeling regarding question 6. It feels as though that this hasn't been clear in the past as to what the true cost will be to the school. We simply cannot cope with an approximate £70k reduction in our funding in a given year in the current climate.

We are under considerable financial pressure. The thought that we will lose approximately £70K is a disaster for our recovery. We are having to lose staff already - this is the equivalent of another teacher!

As a large secondary, 0.5% transfer is a significant sum, around the cost of a member of staff. Whilst I understand the pressures on the HNB, the transfer is creating pressures on schools in other areas.

I disagree with the 0.5% transfer to the HNB on the basis that there is insufficient transparency around expenditure to date and the use which would be made of the transferred funds. I feel that the transfer will add financial pressures to those already felt by schools as a result of much of the work around SEND Reform to date.

The consultation lacks clarity and is too rushed. Opportunities for transparency and discussion through forums other than schools' portal have been missed. I feel that further consideration should be given to the impact of the transfer on individual schools and their particular contexts and circumstances. The forum should consider introducing the capping and scaling measures available in the APT to ensure greater equity and fairness across schools.

Local Authority recommendation to Schools' Forum

The Local Authority would like to acknowledge all comments received and accepted with thanks.

It should be noted that this proposal seeks to continue the approved transfer agreed for 2026/27 and it is not seeking an additional 0.5% transfer, therefore schools will not see the significant deductions referred to in some responses as these amounts are already taken into account in the baseline (starting point) for 2027/28 Basic Entitlement unit values.

It is also important to note that 0.5% transfer does not simply provide a contribution to reduce the High Needs deficit. The Local Authority has recently had our SEND Reform Plan approved by the DFE, and their expectation is that Councils in deficit continue to ask for 0.5% to enable the reforms. This is an integral part of our plan. We are not using the funds to offset the deficit; we are using the funds to enable the system through the direct investment into essential mitigations, all of which will ultimately contribute to reducing the High Needs deficit, including;



- Inclusion Hubs
- SEMH and PRU outreach services
- Targeted reintegration support
- Specialist Teaching Service provision
- Sensory support services
- Transition support
- Associate Specialist Teachers.

We reserve the right to apply to the Secretary of State to ask for approval of this if Schools' Forum do not agree as we risk losing circa £5.6m in each of the next two years (exact figures being subject to the DSG funding settlements for each year) which will jeopardise the 90% offset of the 2026/27 high needs block deficit and the 2027/28 offset, potentially costing the system hundreds of millions in funding.

The Local Authority therefore recommends the 0.50% transfer from the Schools Block to help support all High Needs SEND reforms and mitigations for 2027/28.

Vote (All voting members):



Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

Q2. Do you agree that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) should be set at 0% for 2027/28, ensuring the highest level of protection available to schools through this funding factor?

	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Primary	78	63	3	12
		81%	4%	15%
Secondary	32	30	1	1
		94%	3%	3%
Other	8	8	0	0
		100%	0%	0%

	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Total	118	101	4	13
		86%	3%	11%

Q2 Comments:

I am supportive of the proposals overall and recognise the significant pressures facing the High Needs Block and the importance of ensuring that children with SEND receive timely and effective support. However, I would ask that the impact of funding decisions on small rural schools continues to be carefully considered. Small schools have many of the same fixed costs and statutory responsibilities as larger schools but significantly less flexibility within their budgets, while also supporting pupils with increasingly complex needs from existing resources. I therefore welcome the proposed 0% Minimum Funding Guarantee to provide the greatest available protection and stability for school budgets.

Local Authority recommendation to Schools' Forum

The Local Authority would like to acknowledge all comments and views appreciatively received and accepted with thanks.

Based on the majority response in favour, the Local Authority recommends the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) be set at 0.00% for 2027/28.

Vote (All voting members):



Service De-delegations

Q3. Do you agree to the de-delegation option for Staff Costs - Public Duties/Suspensions in 2027/28 as outline above?				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure
Primary	78	43	16	15
		55%	21%	19%
Secondary	32	16	5	5
		50%	16%	16%
Total Pri & Sec	110	59	21	20
		54%	19%	18%

Q3 Comments:

I also support the continuation of the de-delegated arrangements for Staff Costs/Public Duties/Suspensions, which can provide valuable financial protection for small schools, and the Heritage Learning Team, particularly with charges remaining at their current level. Overall, I would welcome continued consideration of how funding arrangements can protect the financial sustainability of small schools whilst ensuring that pupils with SEND receive the support they need.

Local Authority recommendation to Schools' Forum

The Local Authority would like to acknowledge all comments and views appreciatively received and accepted with thanks.

Based on the majority response in favour, the Local Authority recommends the continuation of de-delegation for Staff Costs – Public Duties for 2027/28.

Vote by sector (maintained schools only):

Primary:

Secondary:



Q4. Do you support the de-delegation of funding for the Heritage Learning Team in 2027/28?				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Primary	74	41	25	8
		55%	34%	11%

General comments

A lot of strain is being put on my budget due to the cost of support required to support the growing needs of the children in school.

My school budget is beyond stretched and we have a financial recovery plan in place. We cannot support any additional funds de-delegated from our budget even for these important reasons.

Local Authority recommendation to Schools' Forum

The Local Authority would like to acknowledge all comments and views appreciatively received and accepted with thanks.

Based on the majority response in favour, the Local Authority recommends the continuation of de-delegation for the Heritage Learning Team for 2027/28.

Vote by sector (maintained schools only):

Primary:

Secondary: Not Applicable

