

SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action



For Information



Brief Description of Item (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

This report provides an update on a number of matters relating to the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant. The report also includes the benefit vs. cost analysis of trade union facilities time, which the Schools Forum is requested to consider so that DSG / de-delegated funding arrangements for trade union facilities time for 2018/19 can be confirmed.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

The Schools Forum made its recommendations on the 2018/19 DSG on 10 January 2018.

Background / Context

See the details for consideration below.

Details of the Item for Consideration

Short Updates on Various DSG Items (for Information)

The Executive proposed to Council on 22 February 2018, un-amended, the School Forum's recommendations on the allocation of the 2018/19 DSG. These recommendations were ratified by Council. Detailed budget information and guidance were published for maintained schools and early years providers on 23 February.

Members may wish to raise for the Forum's attention any significant feedback they have received directly on the 2018/19 DSG recommendations and / or budget information that has now been published.

At the time of writing this report, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has not yet formally confirmed its approval of our Schools Block Pro-forma for 2018/19 (the primary and secondary funding formula). We understand that this is due to the ESFA's delay in confirming rather than any compliance issue.

We currently await final confirmation of the 2018/19 High Needs Block allocation. An updated forecast of the spending position of the High Needs Block in 2018/19 will be presented to the Schools Forum in July.

The reconciliation of one off monies, following the 2017/18 year end closedown, will also be presented to the Schools Forum as usual in July. Members are reminded that, as a result of the error made by the ESFA in the processing of FSM data, a sum of £0.052m is unallocated within the 2018/19 Schools Block. Members are also made aware that the cost to the DSG in 2018/19 of business rates in schools and academies is currently estimated to be £0.64m lower than the initial forecast included within the Schools Block figures presented to the Schools Forum on 10 January 2018. The main reason for this reduction is the final confirmation of the lower business rates cost for schools that converted to academy status during 2017.

As Forum Members will be aware, development work is currently taking place in the following areas for expected implementation in 2018/19:

- The basis of allocation of the £0.8m Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYIP) within the Early Years Block for supporting low need high incidence SEND in early years settings.
- The delivery of the agreed cessation, from 1 September 2018, of the High Needs Block's funding of top up for placements of non-EHCP pupils in alternative provisions.
- The establishment / refinement of local agreements to enable and control the flow of monies where pupils are permanently excluded from mainstream schools and academies, in support of the SEMH review.

We now await DfE announcements on changes to DSG and formula funding requirements for 2019/20. We do not expect further significant change. Now that we have fully moved to National Funding Formula within our Schools Block, as well as having established an Early Years Single Funding Formula that is compliant with the DfE's requirement for a universal base rate, the amount of 'directed' change that we need to manage for the 2019/20 cycle should be limited. We have identified areas of DSG funding that we wish to review locally for 2019/20 and we will progress these within the normal review cycle, with any proposals for changes being presented to the Schools Forum in early autumn in advance of wider consultation. It is anticipated that the value of the Minimum Funding Guarantee for primary and secondary schools will again be a key decision. Most formula review for 2019/20 is likely however, to focus on High Needs Block matters, both the mechanisms for allocation and affordability.

Details of the Item for Consideration

We still await the DfE's consultation on the future funding of maintained nursery schools (the DfE stated that it would further consult following its initial publication of the national early years funding reforms in autumn 2016). 2019/20 is the final year of currently announced specific additional funding support within the DSG for maintained nursery schools.

As signalled in the High Needs Block consultation, published in autumn 2017, the Authority plans a holistic review of our High Needs Block 'top up' funding arrangements. The original stated intention is for the outcomes of this review to be brought into the 2019/20 DSG cycle. Top up funding is under significant pressure, which is increasing as the levels of need of children and salaries costs continue to grow. In the context of this, and the planned review, the District Achievement Partnership (DAP) has asked the Authority to more urgently look at the position of top up funding for the special schools sector and has asked for a closer assessment of whether the children currently in special schools in Ranges 4D - 4A (mainstream ranges) have been placed in the funding bands appropriate to their needs. This is an evidence-based piece of work. It is anticipated that a report on the outcomes of this work will be presented to the Schools Forum in May or July.

For wider awareness, the Government has published its response to its consultation on eligibility for FSM, Early Years Pupil Premium and the 2 year old offer under Universal Credit. Changes to regulations and revised earnings threshold are planned to come into force from April 2018. School colleagues are encouraged to read the outcomes document as it will prove helpful when undertaking eligibility checks and offering advice to parents. To access the document on the GOV.UK website click [HERE](#).

Trade Union Facilities Time

Please see Appendix 1.

Following their review of this statement, Members are asked

- For their final view on whether the cost per pupil of de-delegation for trade union facilities time for the 2018/19 financial year should be amended from the current £5.26 per pupil.
- If it should be amended, what the revised £per pupil figure should be.

If the Schools Forum wishes to amend the figure a report will be presented to the May meeting, which sets out the action that will need to be taken, including any transition, to implement this amendment.

Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)

As set out in the report (this is an item for information)

Recommendations

The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided in the report.

The Schools Forum is asked to give its response to the benefit vs. cost analysis of trade union facilities time so that DSG / de-delegated funding arrangements for 2018/19 can be confirmed.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Trade Union Facilities Time Benefit vs. Cost Analysis

Contact Officer (name, telephone number and email address)

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