

# NORFOLK SCHOOLS FORUM

## AGENDA

Meeting on Wednesday 22 November 2023 09:00 – 13:00

Venue: Cranworth Room County Hall

Members will be asked on the day for their permission to record the meeting to support the preparation of the minutes. The recording will be deleted once the minutes are approved.

Individual members, named below, are asked to provide verbal reports for these items.

09:00 – 09:05	1	<b>Welcome and Introductions Apologies</b>	<b>Report</b>
09:05 – 09:10	2	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising (5mins)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Review of redundancy costs for maintained schools – (update – review ongoing)</i></li><li>• <i>Further information on funding of audits for maintained Nursery Schools. Officers to contact Nursery Schools.</i></li><li>• <i>Maintained Nursery Schools - teachers pay and pensions grant funding, costing implications for schools with nurseries if they lose this. Officers to contact Nursery Schools (Covered in item 5)</i></li><li>• <i>Minutes from the Early Years Consultative Group requested by C. Jacques. (have been sent – in future will be published online)</i></li><li>• <i>Michael to follow up on work of communications team. (Covered in item 3)</i></li><li>• <i>Michael to reply to Mike Grimble email received by Martin White</i></li><li>• <i>Catering - Simon Paylor to email catering group when he has further info from contacts Neil Carle and Mark Gallant (update – catering group is established and have been updated. Forum will receive regular updates).</i></li><li>• <i>Teachers pay and pensions email - John Baldwin will share what info went out and update at November meeting</i></li></ul>	<b>3-14</b>
09:10 – 10:10	3	<b>Local First Inclusion (1 hour)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programme Update</li><li>• DSG Management Plan update</li><li>• Roundtable discussion</li></ul>	<b>Information and Discussion</b>

<b>10:10 – 10:40</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Schools Block Transfer and Notional SEN: (30 mins)</b> Schools Block decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair Funding consultation responses (block transfer)</li> <li>• Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer vote (0.5% and additional 1%)</li> <li>• Notional SEN recommendation</li> </ul>	<b>Vote</b> <b>Recommendation</b> <b>Recommendation</b>	<b>15-50</b>
<b>COFFEE (10.40 to 11.00)</b>				
<b>11:-- 11:45</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Remaining Schools Block Decisions (45 mins)</b> Schools Block decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding cap or alternative recommendation</li> <li>- Falling Rolls recommendation</li> <li>- Maintained schools audit decision</li> </ul>	<b>Recommendations</b> <b>Papers to follow</b>	
<b>11:45 – 12:10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Early Years Funding (25 mins)</b> Early Years Wraparound Pathfinder verbal update Early Years Block 2024/25 Funding Formula Update (inc. consultation outcomes)	<b>Information</b> <b>Recommendation</b>	<b>51-83</b>
<b>12:10 – 12:25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Special School Funding (15 mins)</b> Special Schools Funding Formula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GCSE provision</li> </ul>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>84-91</b>
<b>12:25 – 12:50</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>De-delegation/Central Schools Services Block (25 mins)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- De-delegation decisions</li> <li>- Central Schools Services Block</li> </ul>	<b>Papers to follow</b>  <b>Decision</b> <b>Recommendation</b>	
<b>12:50 – 12:55</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Review 2023-24 Future Meeting Plan (5 mins)</b>		<b>92</b>
<b>12:55 – 13:00</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>		

**Date of Next Meeting**

26 January 2024, 9.00am – 12.30pm, Cranworth Room  
County Hall

# Norfolk Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 29 September 2023 Cranworth Room  
County Hall  
09:00 – 12:30 hours

## Present

Amanda Conner (sub)	Terrington St Clement School
Steven Dewing	Sapienta Education Trust
Lacey Douglass	The Heather Nursery
Carolyn Ellis-Gedge	Parkside School
Bob Groome	Joint Consultative Committee
Glyn Hambling	Unity Education Trust
David Hicks	Synergy Multi Academy Trust
Carol Jacques	Earlham Nursery School
Clare Jones	Broadland Horizons Education Trust
Joanne Philpott	City of Norwich School
Sarah Porter	The Heart Education Trust
Daniel Thrower	The Wensum Trust
Joanna Tuttle	Aylsham High School
Vicky Warnes	Joint Consultative Committee
Jill Wilson (sub)	Toftwood Infant and Junior Federation
Martin White (Chair)	Nebula Federation

## Representing

Maintained Primary Schools
Academies
Early Years Representative
Maintained Special Schools
Joint Consultative Committee
Alternative Provision
Academies
Maintained Nursery Schools
Academies
Academies
Academies
Academies
Maintained Secondary Schools
Joint Consultative Committee
Primary Maintained Governors
Maintained Primary Governors

## LA Officers

John Baldwin	Head of Finance Exchequer services (for item 9)
Michael Bateman	Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement & Early Effectiveness
Martin Brock	Accountant (Schools, SEND & EY)
John Crowley	Assistant Director, Education Intelligence and Effectiveness
Marilyn Edgeley	Admin Officer
Dawn Filtness	Finance Business Partner
Jon Nice	Senior Advisor
Simon Paylor	Strategic Commissioner, Health & Disability (for item 8)
Nicki Rider	Assistant Director High Needs SEND
James Wilson	Director of Sufficiency, Planning and Education Strategy
Jon Nice	Senior Adviser, Education Intelligence and Effectiveness

## Apologies:

Adrian Ball	Diocese of Ely Multi Academy	Academies
Helen Bates	Roman Catholic Diocese	Roman Catholic Diocese
Martin Colbourne	City College	16 – 19 Representative
Mike Grimble	Avenue Junior School	Maintained Primary Governors
Rachel Quick	The Wherry School	Special School Academy
Hayley Porter-Aslet	Church of England Diocese	Church of England Diocese
Sarah Shirras	St Williams Primary	Maintained Primary Schools
Sam Fletcher	Assistant Director, Education Strategy & Infrastructure	
Sara Tough	Executive Director Childrens Services	

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair welcomed Carolyn Ellis-Gedge the new Maintained Special Schools Representative.

## 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Matter of Accuracy – page 10 change wording in Chair's summary to "group contract". The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

### Matters arising:

- Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs).

Officers confirmed that teams have been in contact with all SRBs. If any member thinks that is not correct, they should contact Michael Bateman.

- Alternative Provision

Nicki Rider confirmed she has had discussions with Andy Tovell

- Clarity regarding redundancy costs for maintained schools

There is a fund managed by Kate Philpin – if schools are RAG rated as green the authority will not fund their redundancy costs, but if they are rated as amber or red, then they will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. There is a review of the current approach planned, and the outcome will come back to Schools Forum in due course.

A union rep thanked Members for their support for recent industrial action.

## 3. Strategic Planning

### Local First Inclusion

This is the third report to Schools Forum on the Local First Inclusion programme and occurs two weeks on from our submission to the DfE of the second Tri-Annual Report (15<sup>th</sup> September 2023).

Michael Bateman gave a presentation providing an overview.

The chair thanked Michael for the encouraging update, in response MB highlighted the need to be cautious – the programme has many moving parts.

### Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)

- Has a site for the Yarmouth school been identified?

*Yes North Denes site.*

- There is a demonstration planned at the Forum by parents group for next Friday – would it be worth putting something out in Eastern Daily Press?

*Officers are aware of this – it is worth noting this is not specifically about Norfolk. It will be a good opportunity with the press to highlight all the good work we are doing.*

- Buying into LFI is a critical factor – disappointed about comment to executive board by member of parent partnership where it was expressed by them that the huge increase in EHCPs was a measure of parents dissatisfaction with schools – how will you grasp this?

*We have worked really hard with parent organisations over the years. At event earlier this week where 3 of the parent groups were represented we said we needed evidence of how many parents they represent and of how many they represent have this view. The answer was 300, 2,000 and 3,000 therefore a 5,000 reach out of 26,000 families. In response to a census we ran the majority said they were getting good guidance from their schools.*

- Members highlighted the importance of all agency messaging being in line with Local First Inclusion strategy

*We have a good working relationship at a strategic level with health colleagues. We will suggest saying what are needs rather than highlighting EHCPs. The intention is health teams become more and more integrated.*

- It would be interesting to know how they intend to reduce waiting lists because that is where we are getting the most negative push back from parents, children not even being seen for 5 years.

*It is likely that there will be changes to how pathways are administered.*

- It is important that messaging from health partners is accurate and consistent – an example was shared where a parent concerned about a child went to a community paediatrician received a letter with a sweeping statement that every setting in Norfolk staff were welcome trained. They are not.
- Extra places – and turning some taps off. Are you able to share some details of what those taps are?

*The basis for Safety Valve modelling the way we get back to a balanced budget is to turn the main tap off which is the Independent Sector. A big part of that is building the new special school places. The way we ensure the special schools are not full is the next level of pupil flow.*

- You mention bringing schools in line - the other aspect is governors, you need to bring them on board as well.

*Governors are part of our communication strategy. Governors and school leaders need to be our mouth piece.*

- Members highlighted that some Trust boards do not use Governor Hub and ensuring a broad sign posting of documents through all channels.

*There is a vacancy for a communications expert coming up.*

- (Via email) - Schools and Community Teams are in place what are their key objectives now?

*The KPI's are those agreed for the Safety Valve.*

- Members highlighted the lack of communication about what community teams are doing.

*The expectation is that teams are making direct contact. We recently hosted some events but with relatively low attendance.*

**Action: Michael Bateman will follow up on the work of the communications team, and reply to the email directly.**

- Members said it would be helpful to use ecourier, they said need to contact people directly and this was not happening also suggested it would be helpful to see who people are by name, what regions they are looking at and what their responsibilities are – eventually a clear directorate saying these are the people looking after key elements.

*In response officers said they did need Forum members to also take what information is out there and share it.*

- Members asked how the geographically based teams will work with Special Schools children – who come from across Norfolk.

*This is work in progress.*

**Action: NCC will circulate an MI Sheet sharing information about School and Community Teams.**

- Members said making direct contact is key.
- The chair said he was concerned about primary alternative provision while he understands the reason for the focus on secondary.

*We will keep looking at SRB model also this is a £100m six year program and we need to see where we are in 6 months.*

- Members highlighted the issue that there is a gap in provision before these SRBs are going to come on-line. Concerns were raised at the dependence on unregulated provision at significant cost and the issue it could cause primary children once they reach secondary age. It was recognised that there is a limit to the pace that can be done.
- Members highlighted the need for a clear messaging that we all use when we report back to the people we represent.

**Schools Forum noted the information provided.**

## Early Years Pathfinder – PowerPoint Presentation

The wrap-around childcare pathfinder scheme starts September 2024. Norfolk will start earlier as one of the authorities involved in testing wrap-around childcare. DfE are in listening mode about how they use this information in designing this program. Program is to provide access to childcare of all primary age children from 8pm to 6pm in term time. There will be significant funding available to support provision - £289m pot across the country – the idea is that at the end of the program settings are self-sustaining.

What should we do next, how should we to engage with schools, early years providers and multi academy trusts, around this issue? And what should we feed back to the DfE?

### Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)

- Members highlighted that demand for out of school provision is limited and provision is often not viable unless it draws on a large population from several schools.
- We could attach provision to zones but don't want people to think they can't work across the zones, and it was highlighted that MATs and large federations often have their own geography.

*We will need to flexibly adapt the model*

- Members asked if there any requirements what the provision will look like and highlighted that quality play work is different to learning in lessons but is not just children left to their own devices.

*We have discussed high quality play work rather than teaching and learning which is quite different. This funding gives us the opportunity to provide training and quality assurance.*

*Capital funding that is being given, almost all authorities are saying this is not enough and would not provide things like mini buses. This is the kind of feedback that we need to inform planning.*

- Members raised that the biggest problem in some areas will be transport, and the significant issues around this for complex needs schools – the special school representative will take this back to NASSH.

*The Early Years and Childcare team will be keen to talk to NASSH about this. There is funding for the LA to employ a project team. Members thought this was a good idea.*

- Members highlighted the risk around number of places - need to have a minimum funding guarantee.

*We can use the funding to ghost fund places to enable market testing.*

- Children with Complex Needs need to be catered for, which is a challenge for nurseries, funding needs to be associated with that as well.

*This has been the most common feed back from almost every LA to the DfE around the inclusion and SEND aspect.*

**Schools Forum noted the information provided.**

## **4 Dedicated Schools Grant Consultation Proposals**

### **Consultation and engagement plan**

This purpose of this item is to share information on the consultation process and get feedback from Forum members on the consultation questions and engagement.

There will be 2 different types of events: (i) Early Years Consultation days which will be face to face and virtual sessions, and (ii) there will also be virtual sessions for the main consultation with schools.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

- It would be a good idea to log the people that attend sessions and compare these to people who respond to the consultation. This would provide useful evidence.

*Information on sessions will go out with the consultation.*

- Members highlighted that with the first session being next Friday not much time. In future suggest discussing consultation events when we talk about the consultation topics in the summer. *Agree we could add later sessions. Would be good to have someone from Schools Forum at each of the sessions.*
- Very positive – suggest add a bit about Norfolk First Inclusion.

Consultations taking place:

- Mainstream Schools Funding/Special School Funding for GCSE provision
- Notional Send
- Early Years Funding
- Provisional DSG Allocations for 2024/25 and Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools' Formula

Officers said the main schools' consultation will include a narrative around falling rolls. The authority is not required to consult on this with schools only with Schools Forum. Forum will consider this in November. This is a change to the paper that was circulated.



## **Provisional DSG allocations for 2024/25 and Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools**

The total core Schools Budget will total over £59.6 billion in 2024-25 – the highest ever level per pupil, in real terms, as measured by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). This will include teachers' pay additional grant. The increase per pupil is 2.7% compared to the current year.

For Norfolk specifically, the DSG is £781m; this currently excludes the growth and falling rolls factors, and the Early Years Block.

### **Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools' Formula**

LAs are required to move to within 10% of the National Funding Formula. Norfolk already mirrors this.

Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) is proposed to be 0.5% - the LA will show the impact for schools as part of the technical papers to be issued.

Schools Block transfer – as per the paper, there are 3 options for ranking.

Other consultation proposals are as per the paper.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

- The Nursery school representative asked for further information specific to her sector.

*The Forum Representative for their schools will be sent more information to enable a Nursery School sector decision.*

### **Capping of Gains**

The options will be the same this year as they were last year.

Officers reminded that there had been a low response in the past from schools, particularly those affected, and so there was not a general understanding of the school system as a whole. The system will not receive well a change from the 'status quo' without a clear steer from Forum.

Since the last consultation, the Safety Valve has been agreed and includes the principle of Block transfers each year.

Unless there is a significant shift in overall funding for schools this will be a perpetual issue whilst the Block transfers take place impacting primarily upon those school who have become eligible for sparsity funding since the change in the NFF.

Officers clarified that it is important for the message to be shared with all schools by Members channels to ask them to respond and think about the whole system.

### **Comments from Forum Members**

- The importance of schools responding to this was highlighted – 1 in 6 schools are impacted.

## **Falling Rolls**

This is a fund that Schools Forum can provide a recommendation on; schools do not need to be consulted. Whilst there has, historically, been the option of a fund that Norfolk has chosen not to have, the rules have changed meaning that it no longer is only available to schools rated as Good or Outstanding. Therefore, it is appropriate to reconsider it for Norfolk.

Officers indicated that intention is to include high-level information about the potential for a Falling Rolls fund in consultation and discuss it further with Schools Forum in November.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

- We will need information on exactly how this fund will be used to justify why we should put this money away?

*agree, the decision of forum might be not to allocate.*

### **School Forum noted the increase in overall DSG funding for 2024-25**

- It will be important to highlight the important elements of the consultation to encourage engagement with a complex set of papers

## **Notional SEN**

In the paper there are two main options: defer for a year or move to the national average incrementally over a 3-year period with an increase of 1.5%.

There is a danger this could get confused with the 1.5% transfer from Schools Block to HN Block and so messaging is critical.

The DfE expect Norfolk to take notice of national averages if we do not, then there could be a risk of derailing the LFI Program.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

- Forum members recognised the significant impact an increase in notional SEND will have on schools and the importance of clarity of messaging.
- This is not an increase in funding and schools need to understand.
- It was highlighted that a 1.5% increase could be confused with the High Needs Block transfer.

The chair asked if members could be available for the consultation briefings and to have cameras turned on when they attend.

**Schools Forum noted the information provided.**

## **Early Years Funding Consultation**

This paper explains the proposed process for consulting on changes to Early Years funding from April 2024. This includes an introduction of new entitlements for eligible working parents for up to 30 hours of childcare from when their child is 9 months old to when they start school.

The paper also considers the distribution of the Teachers Pay and Pensions Grant and the guidance of using a quality supplement.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

- The Nursery school representative highlighted the higher costs associated with employing teachers, and questioned the impact on Nursery schools and schools with Nursery classes.

*The challenge back from other types of provider from the consultative group is that other providers employing people with same qualification level ought to be able to reward those in the same way.*

This will come back to Forum in November.

### **Action: Martin Brock to provide the information requested**

Carole Jacques also requested the minutes from the Early Years Consultative Group.

- Special Schools Funding Review

Special Schools requested a second funding review around GCSE provision and residential provision.

A proposal has been formed for funding additional costs for students capable of taking more than 5 GCSEs, and the LA asks that all schools engage and respond.

More work is required in relation to the review of funding for residential provision in conjunction with effected schools. The LA are currently reviewing information received to date and so are not in a position to be able to consult. This will be consulted on after the November Schools Forum meeting, if appropriate.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

Members asked why residential funding had fallen behind.

*Residential provision is more complex. Any revision to residential will be met by savings elsewhere on DSG HN Block and Safety Valve Recovery planning.*

**Forum noted the progress of the Special School Funding Review and the intention to include a proposal for meeting GCSE costs provision in special schools alongside the autumn consultation.**

**It was agreed to debate funding for residential provision at the November meeting.**

- **MFG Disapplication – Amalgamation funding**

Members are asked to agree the application of a second (and final) year of amalgamation protection for The Harleston Sancroft Academy, at 70% of two lump sums, for the 2024-25 financial year.

Officers confirmed they will receive split site funding.

Yes	14
No	0
Abstain	0

**Unanimously agreed.**

## **5. Catering**

The circulated report updates Schools Forum on the activity of the Schools Catering Commissioning Group in relation to Schools Catering Contract arrangements for Norfolk Schools.

At the last Forum meeting it was determined that tendering for a new schools catering contract would be preferable and a commissioning group should be established.

An extension to contract with Norse till March 2025 with a measure of performance management now appears possible, with Norse having no objections to this approach whilst a tender process is carried out.

The group would like non-maintained schools to be included in the new contract.

There is support for a per meal pricing model with any new provider.

The current lot for repairs maintenance will not be continued in the new contract.

A project plan will be shared with Schools Forum in due course.

The extension to the contract is under review by Neil Carle.

Communications will be going out to schools in the current contract following this meeting.

**Action: Simon Paylor will email the catering group when he has further information from Norse.**

The chair thanked Simon Paylor for his work.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

- Members questioned if schools had the option to do in house catering.  
*Buying into the contract is not compulsory.*
- It is important to choose the consultant carefully - not giving money for old rope.  
*We will liaise with groups.*

**Schools Forum noted the update.**

## **6. Risk Protection Arrangement update**

This paper highlights the differences between the NCC Insurance for Schools and the DfE Risk Protection arrangement. It explains why the authority encourages maintained schools to remain with the current comprehensive NCC insurance arrangements for 2024/25 under the current 5-year NCC insurance arrangement.

If a school is thinking of leaving the insurance scheme, the Insurance team would like to know this sooner rather than later to minimise the potential financial impact upon other schools within the arrangement.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

- As LA schools become fewer costs increase.  
*insurers think that schools are relatively high risk and liability claims can have a long tail consistency is important.*
- A member highlighted that they have found RPA to be good, but is missing cyber cover.
- People need to look at experiences and look at testimonials the only other way is to ask for external reviews of the two schemes.
- Individual schools will make a decision. As a governor I would want to ask NCC in the future what their cyber insurance is like.
- What happens if a school falls down?  
*if it is about maintenance issues predominantly that is a cost that will be with the school.*

**Schools Forum noted the information provided.**

## **7. Future Plan**

Members should note that the Schools Forum meeting on 22 November in the Cranworth Room County Hall is scheduled to run from 09:00 – 13:00.

## **8. AOB – raised by Chair**

People have contacted the Chair about an unfortunate email sent over the weekend about Teachers Pensions.

This email has caused great concern and the issue has been raised at the joint chairs meeting to identify what is being done about the issue and to seek assurance (which was received) that the contributions to the scheme had been made and the issue was Teachers pensions and MyOracle. The Chair has requested an update.

John Baldwin explained the position agreed is that the data in the old format will be accepted and teachers will see this in their records by mid-November. If schools have any individual approaching retirement age, then they should contact the LA as the sooner the LA is informed the better, and this has been communicated to schools. No contributions have been lost and manual 'fixes' have been in place for those retiring.

### **Comments from Forum Members and responses (in italics)**

- Members questioned how this was communicated, and why it was not communicated at the working group. We all need to know when this communication went out and at what time. All about transparency. Trust levels with NCC are disappearing.

*Email going out was a mistake and inaccurate. Nobody will be impacted. By the end of October expecting all records to be accurate.*

- There are impacts of this on the in-service death benefit.

*No person's pension will be impacted by this if anything happened to any individual we would be working with teachers' pension.*

*John Baldwin will share what communications have gone out.*

**Action: There will be an update of the current situation at the November meeting.**

## **9. Date of next meeting**

**22 November 2023 09:00 – 13:00 Cranworth Room County Hall**

**The meeting ended at 12:30**

# Schools Forum

Item No.4a

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Fair Funding Consultation / National Funding Formula: Part A</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>22 November 2023</b>

## **Executive summary**

This report sets out the proposed changes to the funding distribution formula of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from April 2024 and summarises the responses to the autumn 2023 Fair Funding Consultation with Norfolk schools, particularly in relation to the proposed Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer for 2024-25.

To support this consideration, this report also provides the survey responses received in relation to questions specifically relating to Local First Inclusion that may support the consideration of the Forum as to whether to support a High Needs Block to Schools Block transfer.

A subsequent paper on this agenda, Fair Funding Consultation / National Funding Formula: Part B, contains the specific survey responses, and associated recommendations, relating to the continuation or alternative to a hard funding cap, a Falling Rolls fund and consideration of charges relating to maintained schools' audits.

### **Schools Forum are asked to:**

- **Consider and comment on the proposed changes to the distribution formula of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant;**
- **Consider the feedback from the autumn 2023 Fair Funding Consultation;**
- **Vote on continuation of the movement of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2024-25;**
- **Vote on the potential movement of additional funding (an additional 1%) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 and provide a clear indication as a Forum as to whether such a movement is supported.**

## 1. Context

The DfE announced in their 'Schools Operational Guide: 2024 to 2025' changes will be made to the 2024-25 National Funding Formula (NFF), with details provided in **Appendix A**, including the provisional NFF unit rates for 2024-25.

Transition towards a direct schools NFF continues in 2024-25, with the end point being a system in which every mainstream school in England is funded through the same national formula without adjustments through local funding formulae.

Local authorities are required to move their local formulae factors a further 10% closer to the NFF values, compared to where they were in 2023-24, unless they are already mirroring the NFF (Norfolk's factor values do mirror the NFF).

The DfE have published the acceptable factor value range for each local authority. The range for Norfolk is shown in the table below:

<b>Factor</b>	<b>24-25 NFF</b>	<b>24-25 APT Minimum</b>	<b>24-25 APT Maximum</b>
Primary basic entitlement	£3,562.00	£3,472.95	£3,651.05
KS3 basic entitlement	£5,022.00	£4,896.45	£5,147.55
KS4 basic entitlement	£5,661.00	£5,519.48	£5,802.53
Primary FSM	£490.00	£477.75	£502.25
Secondary FSM	£490.00	£477.75	£502.25
Primary FSM6	£820.00	£799.50	£840.50
Secondary FSM6	£1,200.00	£1,170.00	£1,230.00
Primary IDACI F	£235.00	£229.13	£240.88
Primary IDACI E	£285.00	£277.88	£292.13
Primary IDACI D	£445.00	£433.88	£456.13
Primary IDACI C	£485.00	£472.88	£497.13
Primary IDACI B	£515.00	£502.13	£527.88
Primary IDACI A	£680.00	£663.00	£697.00
Secondary IDACI F	£340.00	£331.50	£348.50
Secondary IDACI E	£450.00	£438.75	£461.25
Secondary IDACI D	£630.00	£614.25	£645.75
Secondary IDACI C	£690.00	£672.75	£707.25
Secondary IDACI B	£740.00	£721.50	£758.50
Secondary IDACI A	£945.00	£921.38	£968.63
Primary EAL3	£590.00	£575.25	£604.75
Secondary EAL3	£1,585.00	£1,545.38	£1,624.63
Primary LPA	£1,170.00	£1,140.75	£1,199.25



Secondary LPA	£1,775.00	£1,730.63	£1,819.38
Primary mobility	£960.00	£936.00	£984.00
Secondary mobility	£1,380.00	£1,345.50	£1,414.50
Primary lump sum	£134,400.00	£131,040.00	£137,760.00
Secondary lump sum	£134,400.00	£131,040.00	£137,760.00
Primary sparsity	£57,100.00	£55,672.50	£58,527.50
Secondary sparsity	£83,000.00	£80,925.00	£85,075.00
Middle-school sparsity	£83,000.00	£9,290.00	£85,075.00
All-through sparsity	£83,000.00	£9,290.00	£85,075.00
Split sites basic eligibility funding	£53,700.00	£52,357.50	£55,042.50
Split sites distance funding	£26,900.00	£26,227.50	£27,572.50

Norfolk County Council launched the Fair Funding consultation on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, but this had to be re-issued with amended figures on 10<sup>th</sup> October after the DfE informed LAs that there were errors in their indicative published DSG Schools Block allocations. All early responders to the consultation, prior to the update by LA on 10<sup>th</sup>, were contacted by the LA and offered the option to either keep or replace their original submission.

## 2. Funding Formula Consultation Summary of Responses

The Local Authority received 28 completed responses to the online survey after the removal of:

- 3 early responses made prior to the correction of the DfE's indicative funding error - all of which the LA received a second updated submission for;
- 1 individual school's response, to avoid duplication where the trust had already provided a response for all of its schools.
- 1 academy federation response covering 3 schools, to avoid duplication where the trust had already provided a response for all of its schools.

Of the 28 complete responses:

- 10 were from individual schools/academies within the Primary sector
- 2 were from individual schools/academies within the Secondary sector
- 1 was from an all-through school
- 3 were from federations or partnerships of schools representing the Primary sector
- 1 was from a federation representing primary and secondary sector
- 5 were from academy trusts representing multiple academies
- 5 were from special schools
- 1 was from the Chair of Schools Forum

There were a further 57 partial responses (some of which were duplicates) that were not submitted. Additional information about partial responses along with feedback received at the online consultation sessions provided by the LA (attended by approximately 35<sup>1</sup> school representatives) is available in **appendix B** of this paper.

A total of 111 schools were represented by complete responses from individual or academy trusts' responses, out of 422<sup>2</sup> state-funded schools in Norfolk.

The overall number of **schools** represented within each of the responses were as follows:

	<b>Pri</b>	<b>Sec</b>	<b>All-Through</b>	<b>Federations /Partnerships</b>	<b>Academy Trusts</b>	<b>Special Schools</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27*</b>
<b>Representing:</b>							
Primary	10			14	62		<b>86</b>
Secondary		2		1	16		<b>19</b>
All-Through			1				<b>1</b>
Special School						5	<b>5</b>
<b>Total Schools</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>111</b>

\*Plus 1 response from the Chair of Schools Forum

The number of **pupils** represented within the responses was as follows (out of c.120k<sup>3</sup> pupils in state-funded schools in Norfolk):

	<b>Pri</b>	<b>Sec</b>	<b>All-Through</b>	<b>Federations /Partnerships</b>	<b>Academy Trusts</b>	<b>Special Schools</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of Responses</b>	10	2	1	4	5	5	<b>27*</b>
<b>Total Pupils</b>	2,107	1,239	874	3,357	24,883	604	<b>33,064</b>

\*Plus 1 response from the Chair of Schools Forum

This paper, along with Part B of this paper and the Special Schools Funding paper (both later on the agenda), breaks down the responses for each section of the consultation for Schools Forum members to consider when making their recommendations to the LA for the 2024-25 mainstream schools' funding formula.

### **3. Minimum Funding Guarantee/Affordability**

A Minimum Funding Guarantee of +0.5% (the maximum allowed for 2024-25) is proposed for all funding options to ensure that all schools see increases to their funding.

<sup>1</sup> A total of 30 school representatives were recorded as attending the sessions but others in attendance did not provide their details, so an estimate of those has been included.

<sup>2</sup> [Pupil Numbers on Roll \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-numbers-on-roll)

<sup>3</sup> [Pupil Numbers on Roll \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-numbers-on-roll)

Please note that if any further adjustment is required to calibrate Norfolk's formula to the final level of DSG funding available for 2024-25 it is proposed that this would be managed as explained below, including potential adjustment to factor values. For additional funding to allocate to schools, it would be allocated in the following order until all funds are allocated:

- Remove any funding cap on gains, if possible, or increase cap % to the maximum value that is still affordable;
- Increase the factor values, within the DfE's allowable range, by an equal percentage until all additional funding is allocated (maintaining the compulsory NFF Minimum Per-Pupil Levels)

If a reduction in allocation to schools is required based on final pupil data, the formula would be adjusted in the following order until the formula is affordable:

- Reduce the level of the funding cap, if there is one being used, reducing the level of maximum gains. The funding cap must not be lower than the MFG threshold;
- Reduce factor values within the allowable range by an equal percentage until the formula balances (maintaining the compulsory NFF Minimum Per-Pupil Levels);
- Reduce the level of MFG protection within the permitted range of +0% to +0.5%;
- Finally, and unlikely to be needed, request a disapplication from Secretary of State to reduce MFG or Minimum Per-Pupil Levels.

There were no specific questions in the survey regarding the level of MFG, or how any additional funds will be allocated, but this information was provided to all schools as part of the consultation document. **This principle has been a feature of Norfolk's funding formula in the past and it is not proposed that any changes are made for 2024-25.**

#### **4. Schools Block Transfer**

Norfolk is working with the DfE as part of its Safety Valve programme for recovery of very high DSG deficits.

The Local Authority is required to submit a full business case in the form of a 'disapplication request' by 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 if the LA requires a decision of the Secretary of State/DfE for either:

- (i) a block transfer above 0.5% where Schools Forum has supported a 0.5% transfer; or,
- (ii) any block transfer not supported by Schools Forum.

As part of the Safety Valve plan, a disapplication request for the transfer of funds between Schools Block and High Needs Block is expected by the DfE, and the LA will submit this by the deadline.

As the date of the November Schools Forum meeting is after the submission deadline of 17<sup>th</sup> November for the disapplication request to DfE, Schools Forum's

decision on a 0.5% block transfer and recommendation relating to the requested further 1% block transfer will be forwarded to the DfE after the November Schools Forum meeting has taken place.

The information below sets out the options modelled for consultation with schools, and the feedback received from responses, for Schools Forum members to take into account when making their decision on a 0.5% block transfer and recommendation relating to the requested further 1% block transfer (1.5% in total).

The key information and options for a Schools Block Transfer that was included in the LA's consultation are included in **Appendix C** for reference purposes.

#### 4.1 Specific Survey Responses

In our survey, schools/trusts were asked to state the impact of the each of the three block transfer options (detailed technical papers were provided alongside the survey):

Option 1 – Transfer of 1.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block

Option 2 – Transfer of 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block

Option 3 – No transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block

**Appendix D** provides the transcript of comments submitted by schools/trusts, grouped by each option.

Schools/trusts were also asked to rank the options:

- for their school/trust only, and
- for the system as a whole

#### 4.2 Rankings of responses for schools/trusts only:

Schools/trusts were asked to rank the impact of the options for block transfers for their school/trust only. The responses received were:

Option	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	10	5	13
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	7	18	3
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	11	5	12
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>

The survey system used (Smartsurvey) applies a weighting to each of the rankings, with options ranked 1<sup>st</sup> receiving the highest weighting, as follows:

Rank	Weighted Score
1 <sup>st</sup>	3
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1

Applying these weightings, the survey system ranks the overall order of preference of the options as follows:

Option	Weighted Score	Overall Ranking
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	60	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	55	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	53	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>

However, this is based on a single ranking per response and does not take into account the number of schools or pupils represented by federations and academy trusts.

Applying the submitted rankings to the overall number of schools represented (with schools within a federation or academy trust assumed to vote in the same ranked order), gives the following results (111 schools represented plus 1 response from the Chair of Schools Forum):

Option	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	12	15	85
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	17	90	5
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	83	7	22
<b>Total schools represented*</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>112</b>

\*Includes 1 response from the Chair of Schools Forum

Applying the weighted score to these results gives:

Option	Weighted Score	Overall Ranking
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	285	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	236	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	151	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>

Applying the submitted rankings to the overall number of pupils represented in the same way gives the following results (33,064 pupils represented by responses):

<b>Option</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	2,901	6,521	23,642
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	6,792	24,222	2,050
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	23,371	2,321	7,372
<b>Total pupils represented</b>	<b>33,064</b>	<b>33,064</b>	<b>33,064</b>

Applying the weighted score to these results gives:

<b>Option</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>	<b>Overall Ranking</b>
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	82,127	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	70,870	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	45,387	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>

#### 4.3 Rankings of responses for the system as a whole:

Schools/trusts were asked to rank the options for block transfers based on the impact for the system as a whole. The responses received were:

<b>Option</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>No ranking*</b>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	15	8	4	1
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	6	17	4	1
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	6	2	19	1
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1</b>

\*1 response did not rank any of the options

Applying the same weightings as before, the survey system ranks the overall order of preference of the options as follows:

<b>Option</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>	<b>Overall Ranking</b>
---------------	-----------------------	------------------------

<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	65	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	56	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	41	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>

Applying the submitted rankings to the overall number of schools represented (with schools within a federation or academy trust assumed to vote in the same ranked order), gives the following results (111 schools represented plus 1 response from the Chair of Schools Forum):

<b>Option</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>No ranking</b>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	37	21	15	39
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	19	48	6	39
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	17	4	52	39
<b>Total schools represented*</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>39</b>

\*Includes 1 response from the Chair of Schools Forum

Applying the weighted score to these results gives:

<b>Option</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>	<b>Overall Ranking</b>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	168	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	159	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	111	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>

Applying the submitted rankings to the overall number of pupils represented in the same way gives the following results (33,064 pupils represented by responses):

<b>Option</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>No ranking*</b>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	13,477	7,233	6,354	6,000
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	6,570	18,227	2,267	6,000
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	7,017	1,604	18,443	6,000
<b>Total pupils represented</b>	<b>27,064</b>	<b>27,064</b>	<b>27,064</b>	<b>6,000</b>

\*1 trust representing 6,000 pupils did not rank the options for this question

Applying the weighted score to these results gives:

Option	Weighted Score	Overall Ranking
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	61,251	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	58,431	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	42,702	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>

Schools/trusts were also asked to provide a rationale if their ranking for their school or trust differed from their ranking for the system as a whole. The comments received are included in **appendix D**.

#### 4.4 Local First Inclusion

The consultation survey asked three additional questions based around Local First Inclusion, and the responses received were:

**Q. As school leaders in Norfolk, do you believe that you have a good understanding of the ambition behind, and the principles of, the Council's Local First Inclusion (LFI) Programme?**

**Responses:**

Option	Responses	Schools Represented*	Pupils Represented
Yes	23	101	28,261
No	4	10	4,749
Do not know	1	1	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>33,064</b>

\*1 response from the Chair of Schools Forum included

**Q. Also, do you believe that the LFI programme of work will enable us to achieve these ambitions, in particular meeting children and young people's (C&YP) needs more effectively while also ensuring that we return to a balanced and sustainable budget?**

**Responses:**

Option	Responses	Schools Represented*	Pupils Represented
Yes	10	45	17,959
No	6	11	1,788
Do not know	12	56	13,317
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>33,064</b>

\*1 response from the Chair of Schools Forum included



**Q. If you have anything else you would like to add to support Schools Forum, the Secretary of State and LA Members in the decisions that they need to make regarding the Mainstream Funding Formula for 2024-25, please provide your comments.**

The comments received are included in **appendix D**.

## **5. Recommendation**

**Schools Forum are asked to:**

- **Consider and comment on the proposed changes to the distribution formula of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant;**
- **Consider the feedback from the autumn 2023 Fair Funding Consultation;**
- **Vote on continuation of the movement of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2024-25;**
- **Vote on the potential movement of additional funding (an additional 1%) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 and provide a clear indication as a Forum as to whether such a movement is supported.**

### **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

## Appendix A – Background: National Funding Formula 2023-24

### Changes to be made to the 2024-25 National Funding Formula

The DfE announced in their 'Schools Operational Guide: 2024 to 2025' that the following changes will be made to the 2024-25 National Funding Formula:

- Introducing a new formulaic approach to allocating split sites funding in the NFF in 2024 to 2025, replacing the previous locally determined split sites factor.
- Rolling the 2023-24 Mainstream Schools Additional Grant into the NFF by:
  - adding an amount representing what schools receive through the grant into their baselines;
  - adding the value of the lump sum, basic per pupil rates and free school meals Ever 6 (FSM6) parts of the grant onto the respective factors in the NFF;
  - uplifting the minimum per pupil values by the mainstream schools additional grant's basic per-pupil values and an additional amount which represents the average amount of funding schools receive from the FSM6 and lump sum parts of the grants.
- Increasing NFF factor values (on top of the amounts added for the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant) by:
  - 1.4% to the following factors: basic entitlement, low prior attainment (LPA), FSM6, income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI), English as an additional language (EAL), mobility, sparsity and the lump sum;
  - 1.4% to the minimum per pupil levels (MPPL)
  - 0.5% to the funding floor
  - 1.6% to the free school meals (FSM) factor value
  - 0% on the premises factors, except for: (i) Private Finance Initiative (PFI) which has increased by Retail Prices Index excluding mortgage interest payments (RPIX) which is 10.4% for the year to April 2023 and (ii) split sites funding which has been formularised.
- Introducing, for the first time, a methodology for calculating and allocating funding for falling rolls
- Minimum Funding Guarantee - Local authorities have the freedom to set the MFG in their local formulae between +0.0% and +0.5% per pupil (no change from 2023/24)

## NFF Unit rates

The current 2023-24 National Funding Formula unit rates and the DfE's proposed 2024-25 NFF unit rates are set out in the table below:

<b>Funding Factor</b>	<b>2023-24 Formula £ NFF unit rates</b>	<b>2024-25 Formula £ NFF unit rates</b>
<b>Age Weighted Pupil Unit</b>		
Primary	3,394	3,562
Key Stage 3	4,785	5,022
Key Stage 4	5,393	5,661
<b>Minimum Per Pupil Funding</b>		
Primary	4,405	4,610
Secondary	5,715	5,995
<b>Additional Needs Funding</b>		
Primary FSM	480	490
Secondary FSM	480	490
Primary FSM6	705	820
Secondary FSM6	1,030	1,200
Primary IDACI A	670	680
Primary IDACI B	510	515
Primary IDACI C	480	485
Primary IDACI D	440	445
Primary IDACI E	280	285
Primary IDACI F	230	235
Secondary IDACI A	930	945
Secondary IDACI B	730	740
Secondary IDACI C	680	690
Secondary IDACI D	620	630
Secondary IDACI E	445	450
Secondary IDACI F	335	340
<b>Low Prior Attainment</b>		
Primary LPA	1,155	1,170
Secondary LPA	1,750	1,775
<b>EAL</b>		
Primary EAL	580	590
Secondary EAL	1,565	1,585
<b>Mobility</b>		
Primary Mobility	945	960
Secondary Mobility	1,360	1,380
<b>Lump Sum</b>		
Primary Lump Sum	128,000	134,400
Secondary Lump Sum	128,000	134,400
<b>Sparsity</b>		
Primary Sparsity	56,300	57,100
Secondary Sparsity	81,900	83,000
<b>Split Sites (NEW)</b>		
Basic Eligibility	No NFF value	53,700
Distance Funding	No NFF value	26,900

## Appendix B – Partial Responses and Online Sessions Feedback

### • Partial Responses

The LA received 57 partially completed responses to the Fair Funding consultation. These partial responses were not submitted by respondents into the survey, and 45 of them provided no information at all as none of the questions had been answered.

Of the remaining 12 responses:

- 5 of those schools provided separate completed responses to the consultation (or there was a completed response by the trust representing them), and those completed responses are included within the consultation response data. Therefore the partial data can be discarded.
- 1 partial response was a duplicate of another partial entry by the same school, so could be discarded.
- 1 respondent had not stated who they were representing and therefore the partial data had to be discarded to prevent it being a potential duplicate of another response.
- 5 partial responses provided some answers to the consultation questions and were not represented by any of the completed responses. The LA does not know whether respondents intentionally left the partial data unsubmitted (either due to uncertainty or for any other reason), or whether they were unaware that their responses had not been finally submitted. Consequently, these partial responses are not included within the final survey results, and it cannot be assumed that they hold the same weight as completed responses or even represent the final opinions of those respondents that left them unsubmitted. In summary, and for information only, these 5 partial responses were as follows (each of the responses represents an individual school):

### 1.1 Schools Block Transfer

**Schools Block transfer options for schools/trust** – 3\* of the 5 had ranked the Schools Block transfer options identically as follows:

Option	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	0	3	0
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	3	0	0
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	0	0	3
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

\*The remaining 2 responses did not provide any ranking.

**Schools Block transfer options for system as a whole** – 3\* of the 5 had ranked the Schools Block transfer options as:

Option	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Option 1</b> - £9.545m (1.5%) transfer to HN Block	1	2	0
<b>Option 2</b> - £3.182m (0.5%) transfer to HN Block	2	1	0
<b>Option 3</b> - No transfer to HN Block	0	0	3
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

\*The remaining 2 responses did not provide any ranking.

**Survey question: If your ranking for your school or trust only differs from your ranking for the system as a whole, please tell us why.**

**Responses:**

*'We support the transfer of 1.5% to the high needs block. We do, however, feel that for small rural schools there needs to be further work on ensuring that sparsity funding is not included in the calculation for the funding cap. The previous approach was fundamentally unfair to small rural schools within Norfolk as it resulted in sparsity funding for these schools not being received. This funding was specifically provided to Norfolk for these schools and diverting it to other purposes does not reflect the principles of the fair funding formula.'*

## 1.2 Local First Inclusion

**LFI survey question: As school leaders in Norfolk, do you believe that you have a good understanding of the ambition behind, and the principles of, the council's Local First Inclusion (LFI) Programme?**

**Responses:**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Do not know</b>	<b>2</b>

**LFI survey question: Also, do you believe that the LFI programme of work will enable us to achieve these ambitions, in particular meeting children and young people's (C&YP) needs more effectively while also ensuring that we return to a balanced and sustainable budget?**

**Responses:**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Do not know</b>	<b>2</b>

- **Feedback from Online Consultation Sessions held by the LA**

The LA held online sessions during the consultation period to brief schools on the content and to answer questions. The following questions and answers (and general themes) from those sessions were noted:

<b>Role &amp; School / Trust</b>	<b>Question / Statement</b>	<b>Response</b>
Finance Manager, Academy Trust	‘...Last year I seem to recall the 1.5% movement to high needs block would happen over the next six years. We seem to have the same time period this year. Has there been a change?...’	Confirmation that there was a possible 1.5% in year of the six years of the LFI programme, with these being in addition to the 1.5% transfer the year before the programme started, i.e. SoS agreement for disapplication request made in academic year 2022/23 for the financial year 2023/34.
COO, Academy Trust	<p>Is the NCC £35m HNB or NCC General Fund (note: following our answer he stated this was significant and gave supporting comments about LFI overall and the need for the whole system to assist with this).</p> <p>Then on similar theme, are S&amp;C Teams HNB or NCC General Fund...</p> <p>Re the proposals for Notional SEN , was there a danger that it could create more pressure on schools who are trying to do the right thing with SEN in their school.</p>	<p>Confirmation given that this was NCC General Fund.</p> <p>Confirmation this was a combination of HNB and NCC General Fund.</p> <p>Clarification provided to illustrate that we planned to mitigate this by having a far greater understanding of each schools’ approach to SEN, i.e. via INDES and IPSEF, which means that any allocation we make is a combination of individual child/cohort need + school resources + school practise. In simple terms it should increase county-wide consistency and, therefore, fairness.</p>

Governor, Primary School	When will the corrected budget information be available following the DfE error	Available by end of w/c 9.10.23, at earliest opportunity
Business Manager, Academy	Support LFI, stating that the 1.5% transfer was now based on a plan which had not been the case previously.	
Headteacher, Primary School	Set out the challenges for schools, in terms of increasing complexity of need etc and wanted more training for school staff but also stated more specialist provision is needed.	
Headteacher, Primary School	Was concerned that the combination of the 1.5% transfer and Notional SEN proposals would impact on schools that are trying to be inclusive. Despite their commitment to SEN (evidenced through their SRB and other provision / whole school approaches etc) she expressed scepticism that the LFI plan is/would work as had not experienced anything direct to date.	We clarified that LFI had only been live since April and School & Community Teams only being rolled out now, so we have always said impact would follow later this academic year and beyond.
Headteacher, Primary School	Wanted to understand the DfE error for the Schools Block and also to understand Notional SEN proposal in more detail.  Following clarification on Notional SEN proposal she was very supportive of this kind of approach, to ensure consistency, and mentioned that she worked within INDES and IPSEF framework and	Provided a summary of Notional SEN, with a focus on the nuance of this not impacting budget directly and also set out the preferred LA option for incremental changes.

	believed this was positive and ensured she was able to prove spend beyond 7.6% etc	
Chief Finance Officer & Trust Finance Manager, Academy Trust	<p>Asked if there was relevance in the use of language, i.e. consultation / survey, which is it ? and related to this who decides on 1.5% transfer for eg</p> <p>A clarification required on Notional SEN, very similar to questions from other sessions and therefore, answer given was consistent with above messages also.</p>	<p>Provided transparent confirmation that this is not a referendum and also that the SoS knows that the LFI plan is modelled on the transfer, however, we do have to reflect views of schools and schools forum to SoS, therefore, views are important and relevant.</p>
Headteacher, Primary School	<p>Stated that she has launched SEMH provision (with LA support, Suzi Allen ?) and is doing similar now for ASD...but stated that this was to ensure children could remain inclusive at her school but that two issues were challenges to this:</p> <p>A) the £16k top band for E3 and wanted to know if this would be reviewed.</p> <p>B) the environment / site restrictions can be a barrier to inclusion and to</p>	<p>Confirmation was provided that all parts of LFI would have an 'annual review' to ensure they were working (eg sufficiency) and E3 would be no different to this. MB asked for individual case example to be emailed direct so that it could be checked with Inclusion Team.</p>



	date the LA have stated this is a MAT issue	A balanced response was provided that set out that we want to enable sustainable inclusion but that the current capital programme is committed. Therefore, we would need details of a proposal and consider merit within the overall programme
Executive Headteacher, Academy Trust	Wanted clarification on the impact of the DfE funding error and 1.5%. Stating that as an inclusive school she was currently interpreting the plans as positive for her school but a) wanted to now read the FF info in detail and b) needed reassurance that she would still be able to access Element 3 funding etc as current	
General themes	<p>Questions focussed on understanding Notional SEN – i.e. does an increase result in decreased funding</p> <p>One school leader wanting to support the 1.5% for the ‘greater good’ but knowing that option 3 is best for her school... but did want to understand impact of Option 3 on ‘the system’ and we set out clearly the risks of that, in terms of risk of DfE concern about the Norfolk ‘system’ owning LFI strategic plan etc.</p> <p>One school leader also wanted to know about ‘mood music’ from SF members last year that</p>	Confirmation provided that if a school is spending more than 7.7% currently then essentially no change for next financial year in terms of access to Element 3 funding etc.

	<p>we reflected back to DfE...and also his view that it would be more palatable that 1.5% had a tapering down over the 6 years with 1.25% say in Year 3 and then 1% thereafter. We agree the taper idea may be a useful one to consider in later years of the 6 year plan, also confirmed that we had set out to the DfE that last year it was difficult for SF members as we had not been able to share the LFI plan in full with them at the time of the disapplication request.</p>	
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## **Appendix C – Schools Block Transfer Information and Options**

The key information and options for a Schools Block Transfer that was included in the LA's consultation are detailed below.

### **Option 1 – Transfer of 1.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block**

If we transfer 1.5%, the LA's Local First Inclusion modelling will balance, with the DSG deficit cleared in 2028-29 as per Norfolk's 'Safety Valve' agreement with the DFE.

We are keen to understand if you would support this option giving specific implications of the impact of a 1.5% Block transfer, and more Element 3 funding alongside collective, preventative system investment.

### **Option 2 – Transfer of 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block**

If we transferred 0.5%, the LA's Local First Inclusion modelling will not balance by 2028-29 and this is unlikely to be acceptable to the DFE under their 'Safety Valve' agreement with Norfolk, but this would show some recognition from the system as a whole that too many children in Norfolk with SEND are currently being educated within specialist provision rather than in mainstream provision. This would be very likely to result in reductions being made to the planned funding and support available to mainstream schools (both SEND and non-SEND).

We are keen to understand if you would support this option, giving specific implications of the impact of a 0.5% Block transfer and, therefore, less Element 3 funding or collective, preventative investment.

### **Option 3 – No transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block**

If we made no block transfer the LA's Local First Inclusion modelling will not balance by 2028-29 and this is unlikely to be acceptable to the DFE under their 'Safety Valve' agreement with Norfolk. Whilst individual schools would retain more funds individually, there would be significantly less that could be done collectively to support those who could and should be in the mainstream sector to remain there. Additionally, this is very likely to result in reductions being made to the funding and support available to mainstream schools (both SEND and non-SEND) and may adversely impact upon the preventative (non-statutory) safeguarding services that the LA offers.

We are keen to understand if you would support this option, giving specific implications of the impact of no Block transfer and, therefore, less Element 3 funding or collective, preventative investment.

In all options it was proposed to continue to mirror the unit values and methodologies of the National Funding Formula, updated for the financial year 2024-25, as this was the basis for all options given in the consultation and in line with previous Schools Forum recommendations to align Norfolk with the NFF factors and unit values.

However, the Local Authority (LA) is expected by the DSG regulations to repay the DSG deficit from within DSG allocations and therefore the LA recommends the higher transfer of funding of 1.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block.

The LA recognises the pressures on schools' budgets and the desire of schools to receive the maximum funding possible directly into their budgets via the funding formula, and that maximising funding in schools may support increased inclusivity and reduced escalation of needs.

However, the LA must weigh this up against the demand for specialist high needs SEND provision, the current and forecast levels of DSG deficit and be responsible in considering how the deficit can be repaid from within the DSG in future years, as required by the regulations. The LA is required to have a plan in place for recovery of the DSG which must be presented to the DfE as well as to Schools Forum.

The LA also recognises the difficulty that this situation presents for Schools Forum members in recommending an option for the 2024-25 funding formula. Schools Forum members are asked to take into account the views of schools' responses from the consultation, but also to consider the wider landscape of the DSG in making their recommendation to the LA.

Norfolk's current DSG Recovery Plan is underpinned by two key elements:

- the £120m capital investment to build new special schools, specialist resources bases and to develop student support hubs;
- and, the assumption of ongoing transfers of funding between the Schools Block and High Needs Block (0.5% plus a further transfer of 1%).

The LA is, therefore, minded to submit an application to the Secretary of State for an additional 1% transfer, estimated at £6.363m, and, if necessary, the movement of the 0.5% estimated at £3.182m (if Schools Forum vote against the 0.5% movement). In doing so the LA will be required to demonstrate, with a business case, that this is the best possible option for Norfolk as a whole schools system.

## Appendix D – Funding Formula and Schools Block Transfer

Comments verbatim as submitted through the survey, including if there appear to be errors in understanding of the factual data provided.

### Responses for impact on school/trust:

#### Option 1 – 1.5% Schools Block Transfer:-

*‘Positive impact - to increase staffing capacity; cover costs of children taking more than 5 GCSEs and associated costs as well as increased Band E children and children needing AP to meet needs in a different way as not school shaped - or adapt site to deliver a different offer to meet need on site.’*

*‘Leaves our school with significant reduction in funding, jeopardising the future of our school’*

*‘The level of SEND and behaviour need in the school is very high. We already struggle to recruit and retain staff due to the working conditions that exist with primary education. A smaller budget will just mean that we are less able to support the children and therefore the working conditions will be more challenging for the current staff. The support for the children will also be diminished.’*

*‘N/A as we are funded from the High Needs Block, however we would hope the full 1.5% would be transferred to help address pressures faced within the High Needs Block’*

*‘This would have an implication on staffing in year 3 and constrain investment in infrastructure. However, we understand the wider remit around this and as long as inclusivity is positively funded which allows us to deliver early intervention support and to meet the needs of our most challenging children we would support this transfer.’*

*‘Option 1 as we are collapsing under the pressure of ever increasing referrals (with resultant tribunals) from mainstream schools. We would therefore wish that maximum funding is given to projects i.e. LFI that are supporting mainstream placements to be maintained.’*

*‘By foregoing 1.5% of income, the schools will be unable to balance their budgets and will further increase their deficits. The immediate pressure on heads and the acute lack of TA support will increase further.’*

*‘Continuing transfers at this level will decimate schools budgets in the period where support staff pay award is unfunded and energy costs remain high.’*

*‘This will result in the loss of at least one support member of staff (LSA)’*

*‘Loss of at least 1 LSA’*

*‘I am in agreement of this option due to the exceptionally high level of need that we have in our school and the requirement for additional staffing as a result.’*

*'This would have a significant negative impact on our overall financial position, potentially resulting in a review of staffing leading to an adjustment.'*

*'The Governing body of the schools has been increasingly frustrated with the options available to children who cannot be accommodated in our schools due to their level of need. In several cases it has been ascertained that the Federation cannot provide the level of care a child needs only to find that specialist provision has also claimed that their offer cannot meet the child's needs and they have been either left with home provision or sent back to our schools.*

*Taking money away from the School's Block in the past has not improved the LA's offer for children with high needs or reduced the level of need in the county.*

*This year there seems to be a concerted effort by the LA to find and implement extra funding for children with complex needs not only to address the deficit but also to improve the outcomes for children with SEN in Norfolk.*

*In previous years there has been only an attempt to address the deficit without any improvement in services for children. This year there is some hope that the situation will improve although the plan is not without risk.*

*The DfE are not making the promise of funding easy and are insisting, as far as they can, that the 1.5% transfer to the High Needs budget takes place in order to receive the promised funding.*

*I sincerely hope that, this time, the LA will be able to provide funding to implement its initiative, although the prospective change in government may cause difficulties.*

*There is hope, however that an increase in the education budget may win votes.'*

*'Staffing- the school invests heavily in additional adults 1.5% transfer would cause a staffing restructure of support staff across all phases as current staffing and provision could not be sustained to meet the children's needs.'*

*'This option would cause financial issues for our schools.'*

*'This option will reduce our income, and will necessitate staffing adjustment. We appreciate that this option helps the situation with the High Needs Block and this is important to everyone, but it does impact on our school.'*

#### Option 2 – 0.5% Schools Block Transfer:-

*'Positive impact - to increase staffing capacity; cover costs of children taking more than 5 GCSEs and associated costs. Less able to cover amounts needed to meet needs effectively.'*

*'The previous approach was fundamentally unfair to small rural schools within Norfolk as it resulted in sparsity funding for these schools not being received. This funding was specifically provided to Norfolk for these schools and diverting it to other purposes does not reflect the principles of the fair funding formula.*

*The approach taken has impacted 70 rural schools, equivalent of 1 in 6 schools across Norfolk. 69 out of 70 of the schools are primary schools with an average size of 80 pupils. These schools already face significant challenges to ensure their sustainability and not receiving this funding further jeopardises their future. Without a*

*resolution to this issue, it is inevitable that schools will have to consider increasing class sizes, reducing provision to pupils, and in some cases total closure of the school.*

*Using the data in this consultation it shows that the 70 schools impacted have missed out on annual funding of £2.4m (6.4% of total school funding). This is equal to £382 per pupil (based on Oct-22 census figures of 6,197 pupils in affected schools) and results in these schools paying a higher contribution to LFI than some of the largest schools in the county. Given the important role these small rural schools serve in our education system education and their communities it is essential that this change is rectified in the 2024/25 funding formula to ensure fairness across Norfolk.*

*Option 2 is our preferred option as it resolves the issue for the 70 schools in full and minimises the impact on other schools to ensure fairness in the funding of LFI. Option 2 will have the least impact on our school and children'*

*'I am aware of the need to fund the high needs block so I am more supportive of a smaller amount being transferred. Any transfer of funds away from mainstream schools will have some effect as described above, the smaller the transfer, the smaller the impact.'*

*'N/A as we are funded from the High Needs Block, however we would hope the full 1.5% would be transferred to help address pressures faced within the High Needs Block'*

*'Less of an impact but comments regarding cost challenges remain as option 1. However, we understand this option would put at risk the Norfolk strategy on inclusion.'*

*'Option 2 causes concern that high numbers of mainstream pupils will continue to be referred to specialist placement which is causing extreme pressure on the complex needs school admission system and placements.'*

*'Most schools will fall into in-year deficit even if only 0.5% is transferred to HN block.'*

*'We are dealing with more and more high needs in mainstream school and are trying to be as inclusive as possible but we need the funding in place for us to be able to do this. This would impact on staffing.'*

*'This will still result in challenging budget position for all schools'*

*'This will result in the loss of hours for an LSA'*

*'Some hours of support staff lost'*

*'We will not be able to fund the staffing model required to ensure our pupils receive the education they deserve or keep pupils / staff safe.'*

*'We would fully support this option as it would enable our four schools to operate on a more secure financial footing and also support the high needs block.'*

*'Option 2 is more advantageous to our federation; however it will not address the deficit any quicker or appease the DfE so that the LA gets the extra funding for capital and other projects.*

*I have been consulted over the SEN deficit for many years now, and hope that we will see this plan address the issue successfully.'*

*'Due to the teacher and support staff pay increases alongside the DFE error in calculation of the NFF in relation to pupil forecast numbers and the uncertainty of funding for 2024/2025, to sustain the planning already undertaken by the school on a medium-term basis to support current pupils effectively, any increase in transfer at this point would make it more difficult to offset the DFE mistake.'*

*'This option is more sustainable'*

*'This would yield higher income from our school and this would benefit staffing.'*

### Option 3 – No Schools Block Transfer:-

*'negative as can't meet additional costs as outlined above.'*

*'High Needs Block needs funding but not to the detriment of our school small as would happen with option 1.'*

*'This will obviously have no impact on the school except that it will mean that the options available for children in the school who should really be in specialist provision will be reduced.'*

*'N/A as we are funded from the High Needs Block, however we would hope the full 1.5% would be transferred to help address pressures faced within the High Needs Block'*

*'School funding under this option would not be adequate to meet sen needs and given the recent government recalculations even with no transfer funding is not sufficient to prevent staffing adjustments in year 3.'*

*'Option 3 causes even greater concern that high numbers of mainstream pupils will continue to be referred to specialist placement which is causing extreme pressure on the complex needs school admission system and placements.'*

*'Norfolk based schools will achieve balanced budget in 2024/25'*

*'This would have a significant impact on our ability to support high needs in school.'*

*'After successive years of 1.5% transfers out of the schools block - a zero transfer would help redress the balance of funding.'*

*'Likely to still result in the loss of LSA hours'*

*'Still some hours of support staff lost'*

*'This would be an untenable option as we would be unable to staff our school safely.'*



*'We recognise that this is very unlikely to happen as we understand the high needs block deficit needs addressing.'*

*'Not really an option, but for purely selfish reasons. it is a tempting selection just to ease the budget restrictions in the federation.'*

*'To offset the DFE miscalculation, our preference would be for no transfer from the School's Block to High Needs Block until the impact is clearer in read detail for the budget years 2024/2025 and 2025/2026'*

*'I believe the decision to remove the 1.5% has already been taken. The removal of these funds have meant that we are unable to provide the same level of provision for our SEND children in terms of staffing and ability to deliver specific learning and SEMH programmes. I would expect that the schools should receive at least the equivalent amount of LA services working directly in schools with children as the amount removed from our budgets.'*

*'This is not practical - we realise that a transfer is needed in order for the LFI program to work.'*

*'This would yield higher income from our school and this would benefit staffing.'*

**Survey question: If your ranking for your school or trust only differs from your ranking for the system as a whole, please tell us why.**

**Comments received:**

*'The Trust is supportive of the LFI programme and its aims, however the current way of transferring the funding disproportionately impacts small rural schools which is fundamentally unfair on the 1 in 6 schools (70 in total) that have been impacted. If this could be altered for 24/25 the Trust would be supportive of the transfer.'*

*'It should not be necessary to take money away from already cash-strapped mainstream schools. Specialist provision should be better funded and available for the children who need it. Trying to reduce what is on offer and to get out of a financial hole at the expense of mainstream schools, who are already soaking up the overspill is not good for children or the system as a whole, as people are voting with their feet and are leaving the sector. '*

*'Because what benefits our school financially differs from what would benefit the system as a whole.'*

*'What benefits us financially isn't what it best for the system as a whole.'*

*'We understand that the success of the Safety Valve depends on sufficient transfers from the School Block to HN block. We do support the long term strategy.*

*Some of the schools are however already in overall negative reserves and any transfer from their budgets represents a very real problem'*

*'The need for High Needs support is recognised at a system level, but the direct impact at a school level where school leaders can direct resources locally reflects the difference in response.'*

*'In terms of Norfolk I can see why Option 3 is required however this has difficult impacts on the staff at my school.'*<sup>a</sup>

*'Thinking just about our Federation, we'd benefit more if the transfer was 0.5% or there was no transfer. But, we recognise this wouldn't be a fair approach.'*

*'The need for High Needs support is recognised at a system level, but the direct impact at school level where school leaders can direct resources locally reflects the difference in response.'*

*'The Federation has a high level of SEN and is very good at managing that need in our schools. With falling rolls in both schools, the budget is challenging for the next three years and every penny of extra money would help. As mentioned previously, recently Governors have been disappointed in the offer to children who find mainstream provision too difficult and need extra help. This is the first year in a long time where there has been an offer not just to take money from the School's Block, but also a clear plan with funding to improve the services to children with high needs. If the plan is successful then it is a win for the children in our care who need that extra help although this plan is not likely to have immediate effect and as a result there will still be children who will be subject to the gap in provision until the plan is fully in place.'*

*'Option 2 gives us higher income. Option1 helps the situation with the High Needs Block. We prefer option 1 for the whole system, if the sparsity capping is removed.'*

**Survey question: If you have anything else you would like to add to support Schools Forum, the Secretary of State and LA Members in the decisions that they need to make regarding the Mainstream Funding Formula for 2024-25, please provide your comments.**

**Comments received:**

*'The pot to be shared is not big enough.'*

*'We believe that NCC have the right aspirations with the LFI programme but appreciate that there is a significant challenge in delivery given the size of the starting deficit.'*

*'We are hopeful that decision making process for E3 grants award can be quicker than in 2022/23, when we waited the whole academic year to find out whether and how much funding will be given to some of our schools, while the support (e.g. TAs) needed to be in place from September 22.'*

*'In the end there is not enough money in any part of the system. We are 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' at all times; both in schools and at an LA level.'*

*'We feel the 0.5% option is the fairest way forward to support the HNB and all other schools.'*

*'I believe the decision to remove the 1.5% has already been made, otherwise how would the teams that the LA has created be funded. I understand that the LA has a statutory duty to consult - and this is the only reason it is included in the Fair Funding Consultation. I would also argue that Schools Forum should hear directly from schools as to whether the LFI programme of work is having a direct impact by working with children in schools.'*

*'At this early stage of LFI (Safety Valve), it is important that it is supported so that there is an opportunity for the proposals to succeed.'*

*'We strongly believe that the sparsity capping should be removed.'*

# Schools Forum

Item No.4b

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Notional SEN</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>22 November 2023</b>

## Executive summary

The DfE have issued updated operational guidance for Notional SEN to LAs and this requires a proactive consideration of the proportion of funding within the Schools Block and individual school budgets.

A paper setting out the context for this, nationally and locally, was discussed at the September Schools Forum meeting and it was agreed to consult with schools on the level of Notional SEN allocation for 2024-25 and beyond.

### **Schools Forum are asked to:**

- Review the responses received to the LA's Notional SEN survey;
- Provide a view on direction of travel for the Notional SEN calculation within schools' budget shares, i.e., whether we should move to a higher rate to be closer to the national average range;
- Provide a view on direction of travel for the methodology of calculating Notional SEN, i.e., whether we should continue with the current proportions of factors or begin to change the proportions based on DfE guidance;
- Note the requirement for the LA, within the context of the DfE Safety Valve programme, to actively align to national guidance which supports further our reduction on in year spend within the High Needs Block.

## **1. Context**

The DfE have issued updated operational guidance for Notional SEN to LAs and this requires a proactive consideration of the proportion of funding within the Schools Block and individual school budgets.

The DfE have provided national data on Notional SEN, with 75% of authorities allocating between 5% and 15% of their Schools Block funding as Notional SEN. In Norfolk, this percentage is approximately 6.6% currently. Across all authorities, the average is 11.5% which is a significant difference.

Therefore, there is a need to review whether Norfolk's Notional SEN budget should be brought into line with the national average. An engagement survey was issued in October to gather views from schools.

## 2. Notional SEN formula

The DfE expect the calculation of the Notional SEN budget to include:

- a small part of the basic entitlement funding;
- a larger part of deprivation funding, reflecting the higher prevalence of lower-level SEN amongst disadvantaged pupils, and
- the majority or whole of the low prior attainment factor funding, as this is the best proxy we currently have for pupils with low-cost, high-incidence SEN

Other elements of the funding formula may also be used.

## 3. Norfolk's Current Notional SEN Budget

Norfolk's current Notional SEN budget is £39.0m, representing approximately 6.6% of Schools Block funding within the funding formula.

Norfolk uses basic entitlement funding, IDACI deprivation data, low prior attainment and part of schools' lump sums to calculate Notional SEN funding.

The table below summaries Norfolk's 2023-24 Notional SEN budget:

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Total Value of Notional SEN 2023-24</b>
Total BPPE	£6,984,138
Primary IDACI	£5,328,248
Secondary IDACI	£5,724,753
Primary LPA	£9,155,126
Secondary LPA	£8,788,078
Total Lump Sum	£3,052,236
Total Notional SEN 2023/24	£39,032,578
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula	£590,916,630
Notional SEN as a % of SB funding	6.61%

The proportion of factors currently used to calculate Notional SEN in Norfolk are as follows:

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Factor Unit Values</b>	<b>Notional SEN within factor</b>	<b>% of factor relating to Notional SEN</b>
BPPE (Primary)	£3,394.00	£64.60	1.90%
BPPE (KS3)	£4,785.00	£64.60	1.35%
BPPE (KS4)	£5,393.00	£64.60	1.20%
IDACI Pri band F	£230.00	£212.18	92.25%
IDACI Pri band E	£280.00	£254.62	90.93%
IDACI Pri band D	£440.00	£277.34	63.03%
IDACI Pri band C	£480.00	£277.34	57.78%
IDACI Pri band B	£510.00	£277.34	54.38%
IDACI Pri band A	£670.00	£277.34	41.39%
IDACI Sec band F	£335.00	£307.66	91.84%
IDACI Sec band E	£445.00	£413.75	92.98%
IDACI Sec band D	£620.00	£423.42	68.29%
IDACI Sec band C	£680.00	£423.42	62.27%
IDACI Sec band B	£730.00	£423.42	58.00%
IDACI Sec band A	£930.00	£423.42	45.53%
Primary LPA	£1,155.00	£512.12	44.34%
Secondary LPA	£1,750.00	£774.97	44.28%
Pri Lump Sum	£128,000.00	£7,616.00	5.95%
Sec Lump Sum	£128,000.00	£7,616.00	5.95%

Based on what is allowed to be included within the Notional SEN the Norfolk formula meets requirements. However, compared to the DfE's expected methodology Norfolk's use of Low Prior Attainment (LPA) factor funding is low at around 44%, and the proportions of other factors could also be reviewed.

#### **4. Engagement Survey**

The LA carried out an engagement survey of mainstream schools from 3<sup>rd</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> October to inform discussion at Schools Forum in November 2023. The purpose of the consultation survey was to raise awareness of the difference between Norfolk's level of Notional SEN funding and the national average, to seek views from

schools on whether and how quickly Norfolk’s level of Notional SEN should change, and to seek views on whether Norfolk should adopt the DfE’s recommendations for calculation of Notional SEN.

## 5. Survey Responses

The LA received 3 complete responses from mainstream schools, and 9 partial responses.

One of the complete responses was from a Multi Academy Trust, therefore the 3 complete responses represented a total of 12 primary schools/academies and 6 secondary academies, and an overall total of 7,380+ pupils.

Only 1 of the 9 partial responses provided answers to some of the questions, the remainder of responses provided no useable information.

The responses received from the 3 completed responses is as follows.

**Questions 1-4** were for school/trust information for analysis of responses only.

### Question 5.

**Please choose one of the options below. Should we:**

Maintain the status quo for a further year, to allow time for the impact of Local First Inclusion programme to bed in further (i.e., any change starts from Financial Year (FY) 2025/26)

OR

Move towards the national average incrementally over time, with an initial increase of approximately 1% for 2024-25, an additional 1.5% in 2025-26, and an additional 2% in 2026-27 (noting that the LA believe this is the option that the DfE would expect us to progress to ensure that, as a ‘safety valve’ local authority, we are taking all possible steps to adopt national guidance)?

### Question 5 responses:

<b>Maintain the status quo for a further year</b>	<b>2</b> (from complete responses, in total representing 11 primary schools and 6 secondary schools)
<b>Move towards the national average incrementally</b>	<b>1</b> (from complete response representing a primary school)

In addition, 1 partial response also answered the question by choosing ‘move towards the national average incrementally’, however this response was not submitted so it is not known whether this was a valid/final opinion.

The rationales provided for responses are shown in appendix A (all comments are from completed responses).

### Question 6.

**Should Norfolk adopt the DfE recommended approach to modelling Notional SEN, i.e., the factors and values used?**

**Question 6 responses:**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>2</b> (from complete responses, in total representing 11 primary schools and 6 secondary schools)
<b>No</b>	<b>1</b> (from complete response representing a primary school)

In addition, 1 partial response also answered the question by choosing 'yes', however this response was not submitted so it is not known whether this was a valid/final opinion.

The rationales provided for responses are shown in appendix A (all comments are from completed responses).

### Question 7.

**If you have anything else you would like to add about any of the proposals for the Notional SEND Formula 2024-25, please provide comments in the box below.**

**Question 7 responses:**

There were no responses to this question.

## **6. Conclusion/Recommendation**

There were only a limited number of responses to the survey as a steer from schools for either the level of Notional SEN for 2024-25 or for adopting the DfE's recommendations for the Notional SEN calculation. The response received from a one academy trust represented the highest number of schools overall for the questions answered.

Unfortunately, this means that LA is unable to draw any conclusions or make any recommendations based upon the responses to the survey, with the exception, perhaps, that there are not strong views held by many schools as they have chosen to respond to other consultations but not this one within the same timeline.



## Schools Forum are asked to:

- Review the responses received to the LA's Notional SEN survey;
- Provide a view on direction of travel for the Notional SEN calculation within schools' budget shares, i.e., whether we should move to a higher rate to be closer to the national average range;
- Provide a view on direction of travel for the methodology of calculating Notional SEN, i.e., whether we should continue with the current proportions of factors or begin to change the proportions based on DfE guidance;
- Note the requirement for the LA, within the context of the DfE Safety Valve programme, to actively align to national guidance which supports further our reduction on in-year spend within the High Needs Block.
- **Therefore, the LA recommend that we do move to Option 2 and begin incremental moves to the national average from April 2024 at 1% change in Year 1 of a 3-year change.**

## Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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## **Appendix A – Notional SEN Survey, comments for questions 5/6**

Comments verbatim as submitted through the survey, including if there appear to be errors in understanding of the factual data provided.

### **Question 5 (Maintain the status quo for a further year)**

*'I think we need to investigate the impact of LFI first. Also there has been no analysis provided on how our demographics compare with other areas, so is the national average appropriate for us to adopt in the first place'*

*'Allow more time for the impact of the Local First Inclusion programme to be understood in more detail.'*

### **Question 5 (Move towards the national average incrementally)**

*'The current figure is not sufficient and does not reflect increasing resource costs, both in terms of support staff and actual resources, such as setting up alternative specialist learning spaces for individuals or smalls groups of pupils.'*

### **Question 6 (YES to adopting the DfE recommended approach to modelling Notional SEN)**

*'Yes as a principle subject to the analysis of demographics'*

### **Question 6 (NO to adopting the DfE recommended approach to modelling Notional SEN)**

*'Maintain status quo for a further year to allow impact for the Local First Inclusion programme to be understood.'*

# Schools Forum

Item No. 6

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Early Years Funding Formula Consultation</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>22 November 2023</b>

## Executive summary

This paper provides a summary of the responses received to the LA's autumn early years funding consultation on the 2024-25 Early Years funding formula. Input received from the EY Consultative Group is also included.

Proposals for the 2024-25 Early Years funding formula are set out in the paper and a recommendation from Schools Forum is sought.

As final DSG allocations are not yet known, the final proposed funding formula will be shared with Schools Forum on the 26 January. A final decision regarding the formula will be taken by Norfolk County Council's (NCC) Cabinet on the 29 January 2024, along with other decisions regarding the DSG budget.

- 1. Consider feedback from the Early Years funding formula consultation;**
- 2. Consider input received from the EY Consultative Group;**
- 3. Discuss the LA's proposals for changes to the 2024-25 Early Years funding formula;**
- 4. Make recommendations for the principles used to determine the final 2024-25 Early Years funding formula.**
  - a. Does Schools Forum agree that our new formula approach will take the same approach for supplements across all funding streams and only include mandatory supplements?**
  - b. Does Schools Forum agree that we should top slice all funding streams equally, and at the minimum level, to fund central costs?**
  - c. Does Schools Forum agree that we should consolidate TPPG funding within the base rate to distribute to all providers?**
  - d. Does Schools Forum agree that we should increase the SENIF fund to meet the increase in demand. (Rates to be determined once the Norfolk DSG allocation is known)**

## 1. Introduction

Following the LA's autumn early years funding consultation survey, responses from the survey were discussed the Early Years Consultative Group for their additional input. The LA are now seeking a recommendation from Schools Forum to guide the formula for 2024-25. The final proposed funding formula will be shared with Schools Forum on the 26 January, a final decision regarding the formula will be taken by

Norfolk County Council's (NCC) Cabinet on the 29 January 2024, along with other decisions regarding the DSG Budget.

The Department for Education (DfE) is introducing funding for the new expanded entitlements announced in the spring 2023 budget, which are being introduced in phases. The DfE published illustrative allocations for the new and existing entitlements in July.

From April 2024, all eligible working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year.

From September 2024, all eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access up to 15 hours free childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year.

From September 2025, all eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access up to 30 hours free childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year.

Early Years Block allocations are expected in November 2023, which will include the hourly rates that Norfolk will receive in 2023-24. The formula to be recommended to NCC's Cabinet will be brought to Schools Forum on 26 January.

## **2. Current rates and DfE Illustrative Norfolk hourly rate for 2024-25**

The illustrative funding allocations mentioned below were shared as part of the National funding consultation. The Government response to this consultation has yet to be published.

### **2.1 Under 2s entitlement**

This is a new entitlement that will be introduced in September 2024 for working families. It will initially fund up to 15 hours per week, and from September 2025 this will be extended to 30 hours per week.

There must be at least one member of staff who holds an approved level 3 qualification and is suitably experienced in working with children under two. At least half of all staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification and half must have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies.

The DfE National funding formula illustrative estimate for Norfolk is £10.38. Future rates paid to providers will be subject to the recommendations of Schools Forum, in relation to how much central spend, contingency and SENIF (top slice) is applied, and if supplements are introduced for the younger children or removed completely across all age groups.

### **2.2 2-year-old entitlement**

From April 2024, eligible working families of 2-year-old children will be entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare, extending to 30 hours per week from September 2025.

Eligible low-income families in receipt of certain benefits will continue to be entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare for 2-year-old children.

The DfE National funding formula illustrative estimate for Norfolk for 2024-25 is £7.64 per hour. The current base rate is £7.49 per hour, and this was increased from September 2023 by £1.85 as part of the Early Years Supplementary Grant. (This grant was awarded to local authorities as part of the Spring budget as a fixed term funding solution until March 2024).

It is likely that the same funding rate will be applied to the new and existing 2-year-old cohorts. The existing cohort from low-income families are likely to also attract Early Years Pupil Premium (currently 66p – see 4.4 below).

The equivalent of 7p per hour is top sliced for the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Fund (SENIF).

### **2.3 3- and 4-year-old entitlement**

The current 3- and 4-year-old DSG allocation for Norfolk is £5.24 per hour.

The current local funding rate is made up of a base rate and supplements:

Norfolk Base Rate: £4.65 per hour

Supplements:

- Deprivation (0-20%): £0.21 per hour
- Flexibility: £0.10 per hour
- Quality and System Leadership: £0.10 per hour
- Nursery classes taught by a qualified teacher £0.24 per hour.

The £5.24 allocation also includes an uplift of 34p from the Early Years Supplementary Grant.

### **2.4 Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Fund (DAF)**

The DfE have consulted on extending the EYPP (currently £0.66 per hour) and DAF (currently £881 per child), which is currently allocated to 3- and 4-year-old children to all funded children.

### **2.5 SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF)**

The local authority maintains the 3- and 4-year-old SENIF fund at the level of £0.850m for 2023-24 to meet demand for low and emerging need and for complex and medical need where there is no EHCP referral. There is also a £50k budget for 2-year-old SENIF claims.

### **2.6 Maintained Nursery School Supplement**

The current maintained nursery school supplement paid to the local authority is £364,602. This is a combination of £50,852 for TPPG and a supplement of £313,750. Alongside this, £46,112 additional protection is provided by the LA from the EY block.

## 2.7 Central Spend

Due to the expanded entitlements an increase in the capacity of local authority support will be required to administer the increase in numbers of children accessing early education funding. According to DfE illustrative data shared as part of the national consultation, potentially 2897 additional children will be eligible for 2-year-old funding and 1426 children aged under 2 will be eligible for the funding. Not only will this increase normal funding applications there is a potential for an increase in EYPP, DAF and SENIF if the national consultation results confirm the proposals to expand these funding streams across all entitlements.

## 3. Consultation with Early Years Providers

The LA, at the September 2023 Schools Forum meeting, announced its intention to consult early years providers on changes to the 2024-25 funding formula during the autumn term. The consultation survey ran from 3 – 31 October.

During the consultation period, Early Years and EY Finance staff held a number of face to face and virtual surgeries with providers to discuss any concerns and queries they had regarding the expanded entitlements. These events proved to be helpful in terms of providing up to date information as well as discussing their future plans.

The Early Years Consultative Groups met on 7 November to give their feedback on the survey responses.

### Consultation Responses

The LA received 124 complete responses to the survey, and a further 119 partial responses. The results are provided in Appendix A for comments. A sample of the comments provided by respondents are presented in *italics*.

Just over 45% of respondents indicated they are not currently planning to expand their provision to offer the new entitlements, but nearly 40% have indicated they already have an admissions age that would accommodate eligible children. The biggest concern about the new entitlement was the funding rates, but other concerns included the level of demand and recruitment of sufficient staff to be able to expand child numbers. Several respondents commented that they had concerns that the new rates may be less than the private fees they currently charge parents and were concerned about the drop in income.

*“We are unable to reduce our age at the moment due to funding and expense of changing our provision for under 2’s.”*

*“Hall rent is too expensive to even consider any changes with staff wages increasing and very low funding rates per child.”*

*“Preschool building cannot accommodate a change in admission age due to lack of room, space, and facilities and condition of the building. The Trustees/Parents Group*

*have put a proposal forward to the Parish Council for a new building in the village that would be funded by the sale of parish land, provide a site and the building be owned by a village trust. The new nursery-preschool would service surrounding villages as the village is a designated key service centre by the X Council.”*

Most consultation responses agreed that the same approach should be applied across all funding streams. A small majority agreed that the optional supplements should be removed.

*“We currently lost our room leader in our 3-4yr old room who had a BA and were struggling to recruit, obviously this was stressful and even more concerning that we may find ideal candidate but if they did not have BA we would loss funding. You can have an extremely strong level 3 with lots of experience who is better suited in that room risk funding with we all strongly rely on at the moment!!!!”*

*“Even though we are in receipt of certain supplements, we do not feel this is fair to the wider sector and the chronic underfunding across the board. The supplements do not, in reality, cover the cost of highly-qualified staff, so a higher base rate for all is the fairest solution. Especially if more can be passed to providers due to lower admin costs.”*

*“We do not have many children in the setting who are entitled to the supplements so removing them and offering a higher base rate seems the best option for us.”*

The pass-through requirement proposal to retain a smaller percentage across all funding streams was the preferred option and an overwhelming number of respondents agreed that TPPG should be consolidated and distributed across all providers as part of the 3- and 4-year-old base rate.

*“My concern for increasing the pass through to 97% will affect the statutory duties we receive from early years.”*

*“The new scheme will not work if providers are not paid a higher rate, settings have closed at an alarming rate over the last few years and with the increase in families needing spaces with their ‘free’ funding it will break the system. As providers we will be dictated to even though we run our own businesses, as all of our children will be funded due to the extended age groups. Without adequate funding we will not survive.”*

*“All providers should be working to the same standards whether a qualified teacher is working in the setting or not. The drive to employ EYPs doesn't seem to have worked! (Probably as there is no remuneration available to pay these higher qualified people a decent wage representative of their qualifications and experience.)”*

Whilst the majority of providers indicated that they do apply for SENIF, there is still a high proportion (46%) that do not make applications. However, this may be because they do not have any children that would be eligible for the funding or, as indicated, they feel able to meet need within their current provision. Most that had made a claim indicated that the rate did not sufficiently meet the cost of supporting the child and 50% agreed that the SENIF budget should increase to meet expected demand

and the hourly rate should be uplifted. However, to manage a sustainable SENIF fund respondents felt that spend should be capped or lower levels of need met within current provision.

*“The current funding doesn't cover the actual cost of providing support for children with SEND- eg. direct support, making visual aids, writing support and behaviour plans, applying for funding, supporting parents, EHCP/SALT referrals, associated staff costs eg supervisions/oncosts. We have a deficit budget and the shortfall in SEND funding plays a significant part in this.”*

*“There certainly needs to be higher investment to ensure children's needs can be met in main stream as there is such a shortage of special needs places.”*

#### **4. EY Consultative Groups Feedback**

The Early Years Consultative Groups reviewed the consultation responses in detail and concluded, through a majority vote that the recommendations of the survey should be followed, i.e.:

- Optional supplements should be removed;
- TPPG is consolidated within the 3- and 4-year-old base rate;
- The budget for SENIF should be increased and hourly rates uplifted.

There was recognition that the consultation responses were very close in some of the elements and some different views were expressed on the options.

#### **5 Proposals**

All local authorities are awaiting the Government response to the national funding consultation. Until that is published alongside the funding rates for 2024-25 it is not possible to confirm actual rates. Therefore, we are asking for a set of principles to be agreed, that will then inform how the LA administers the distribution of DSG Early Years Block to providers. These principles are based on the outcome of the local funding consultation and the recommendations for the EY and Childminder Consultative Groups.

- **Supplements:**  
71% of survey respondents thought that we should have the same approach to supplements across all age group funding streams. Of this 71%, a narrow majority (52%) felt the best approach was to maximise base rate funding by not using any optional supplements. Comments suggest that the biggest concern was loss of funding. Although conflicting views were expressed, both consultative groups agreed this was the best option.

Options where supplements are retained would continue to place an administrative burden on the local authority. Presently it is estimated the admin burden is at least £10,000 per annum. To introduce supplements across all age ranges could potentially at least double this burden with the additional complexity and uncertainty for providers.



**Does Schools Forum agree that our new formula approach will take the same approach for supplements across all funding streams and only include mandatory supplements?**

- **Central spend:**

The consultative groups agreed with the 52% of survey respondents who felt that central costs should be equally distributed across all age group funding streams. This will increase base funding rates for 3-and-4-year-olds which will mitigate the impact of loss of supplements for some providers.

We therefore propose that our new formula approach should top slice the same percentage from all existing and future funding streams. In future years, as the overall amount of funding increases, we will keep the level of top slice at the minimum level to fund central costs.

**Does Schools Forum agree that we should top slice all funding streams equally, and at the minimum level, to fund central costs?**

- **Teachers Pay and Pension Grant:**

The consultative groups agreed that 65% of survey responses felt we should consolidate TPPG within base rate paid to all providers. Currently this funding benefits a relatively small number of providers. Survey respondents questioned if this funding was appropriately and proportionately matched to quality and identified many other models of providing high quality early education and childcare. The impact of this proposal, alongside the other recommendations would be:

<i>increase</i>	<i>provider</i>	<i>%</i>
(£0.12)	1	0%
(£0.02)	57	10%
£0.02	226	38%
£0.12	205	35%
£0.22	102	17%

**Does Schools Forum agree that we should consolidate TPPG funding within the base rate to distribute to all providers?**

- **SENIF:**

51% of survey responses felt we should increase SENIF to meet expected demand and enable current hourly rates to be uplifted.

The current SENIF budget is £900,000. Current 2023-24 outturn forecast is £1.3 million as demand continues to increase termly.

**Does Schools Forum agree that we should increase the SENIF fund to meet the increase in demand.** (Rates to be determined once the Norfolk DSG allocation is known)

Assuming all of the above proposals are agreed, the central spend percentage is reduced to 4% and contingency reduced to 0.25%, the illustrative base funding rates for 2024-25 could be:

	3- and 4-year-olds	2-year-olds	Under 2s
Current base rate	£4.65	£7.49	N/A
Indicative 24/25 base rate	£4.87	£7.15	£9.53

The indicative base rates have been based on the illustrative rates and PTE provided in the national consultation and the current PTE following the July 23 Norfolk allocation adjustment. 3-and-4-year-old funding was out of scope of the national consultation; therefore, we have used the same percentage uplift to determine an illustrative 2024-25 EYNFF hourly rate.

**Schools Forum is asked to:**

- 1. Consider feedback from the Early Years funding formula consultation.**
- 2. Consider input received from the EY Consultative Group.**
- 3. Discuss the LA's proposals for changes to the 2024-25 Early Years funding formula.**
- 4. Make recommendations for the principles used to determine the final 2024-25 Early Years funding formula.**
  - a. Does Schools Forum agree that our new formula approach will take the same approach for supplements across all funding streams and only include mandatory supplements?**
  - b. Does Schools Forum agree that we should top slice all funding streams equally, and at the minimum level, to fund central costs?**
  - c. Does Schools Forum agree that we should consolidate TPPG funding within the base rate to distribute to all providers?**
  - d. Does Schools Forum agree that we should increase the SENIF fund to meet the increase in demand.** (Rates to be determined once the Norfolk DSG allocation is known)

### **Officer Contact**

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## Appendix A – Comments submitted in survey (verbatim as received)

**Q. Please rank the factors in order of importance to you as a provider for 3- and 4-year-old funding.**

Base Rate
Quality Supplement
SENIF
Flexibility Supplement
Deprivation Supplement

### Comments received:

<p>the base rate doesn't reflect a normal hourly rate, settings are losing out for cost difference. deprivation supplement is based on locality of homes where some are on a higher income but live in this postcode so makes them eligible for EYPP</p>
<p>Base rate is too little for businesses to run on and as we aren't allowed to charge the difference this means more and more people and businesses are closing. I also don't think it's fair that people who have higher education get more we should all get the same. I have a degree and I feel people are punished when they do just as good job as someone with the education.</p>
<p>As a setting we only qualify for base rate and senior funding. Due to our current building we cannot offer more hours for flexibility funding and the highest qualification a staff member holds is level 4 so do not qualify for quality funding. No families qualify for deprivation.</p>
<p>The base rate is important as all ofsted registered providers are governed by the strict rules given - ratios qualifications etc, quality is because each employ highly qualified staff and SENIF is because we have so many more children coming to us who require lots of support in being able to access all tha5 is on Offer to them.</p>
<p>A good base rate could mean most providers will cover their running costs without the need for any of the supplements, or asking parents to cover the cost of resources, outings and consumables etc Quality and flexibility depends on staff qualifications and again needs to be enough to attract and more importantly, retain the higher qualified and experienced practitioner. SEN and deprivation are individual circumstance and location dependant, not all settings will qualify!</p>
<p>Having an increase in the base rate allows all providers to benefit from any changes. DS should be second as research clearly identifies the increase in need for children from areas of high deprivation and the base rate doesn't come close to meeting this need for additional support.</p>
<p>I work long days providing very flexible care around parent's work needs.</p>
<p>The basic rate us to low, this us where the majority of funding comes from. If I had a child with additional needs an extra person might need to be employed or additional resources acquired.</p>
<p>High deprivation and increase in SEN needs which cannot be met without financial support.</p>
<p>I only get base rate + flexibilty. This doesn't match my hourly fee !!!</p>
<p>As a lone worker base rate is considerable under my "private charge" which means I need to show more quality in my training and flexibility and working a 50 week is sometimes unfeasible.</p>
<p>Base rate is vital for the survival of early years settings, Norfolk already receives the lowest amount in the country, no where near what any provider can survive on. There is a huge SEND gap with very little external support/huge waiting lists leaving providers left to pick up the pieces.</p>

Deprivation is done on postcode, not individual circumstances and in my experience the children I have received this additional funding for are not the ones most in need.
Havent had any funded children since summer 2021 so am not up to date with the current funding conditions
The base rate is important as it helps to provide more of an even keel for settings working in different areas
I don't get deprivation part or have never claimed SENIF
As a school Nursery in an academy chain we do not have to provide a qualified teacher in our Nursery. However we do. Despite this we never benefit from the quality supplement. We do not benefit from the flexibility supplement as we stick broadly to school hours. A higher base rate benefits our setting the most. I have a lot of experience of how hard it is to offer quality provision to those children with SEN without additional funding and therefore rate it highly.
I worked hard for my qualifications so feel this needs to be paid more for. And for being willing to be flexible to the parents needs. Deprivation payment-I don't feel this extra payments changes the way someone cares for the children.
Base rate determines how many children we can afford to take on as a setting Quality, all/most settings invest (re-invest_ heavily in staff training and differentiate their mission based on staff involved Deprivation as we know, high levels prove for more challenging sessions, which require different/more creative interventions and supports, resources are usually replenished more frequently SENIF, many settings require, but the training should be in place to cope with this Flexibility, times are hard, settings are struggling with staff recruitment and retention, some are only able to offer reduced hours, they shouldn't be punished for this through less monies.
Flexibility and quality are paramount in early years education in order for parents to work. I have rated the base rate as my top ranking as without a decent base rate to build on there is no incentive to offer funding.
The base rate is the highest amount of income of our setting and we are also eligible for flexibility supplement so these two make up the bulk and most reliable part of our income. SENIF and deprivation payments are intermittent and cannot be relied on when forecasting future income and making plans. Not eligible for quality supplement.
I don't think having a level 3,4,5 should affect your money, you can be a good quality provider without these
We always seem to have a high number of SEN And the rest following of importance
Base rate is not enough to cover running costs at the moment, this HAS to be increased otherwise MORE settings will close as it is not affordable to remain open! All settings should employ highly trained staff so recompense for this needs to be rewarded. All settings have to be more flexible with hours to ensure working parents can access the childcare hours they need. Aren't ALL areas in Norfolk now providing for children from deprived families????
Don't feel qualification level is best indicator of quality provision at all.
Simply because we are not in an area classed as deprived at present
I only provide early education and childcare for children with complex SEND. In order to do this highly skilled, highly qualified, intensive, paperwork-heavy, very important and sometimes stressful work, I feel that I need to be paid a reasonable rate. Especially when I am only able to look after 2 children at a time, due to their high needs.
We very rarely receive any deprivation supplement, therefore this one is least important to us
Base rate is most important as this gives an idea of our income from funding based on our intake and waiting list. We have seen an increase in the number of children who require additional support through SENIF.

I believe that with a higher base rate initially would be a great help to many providers as not everyone is in a deprived area etc to gain those extra few pence an hour.

At both are settings, staff (supported by charity finances) have invested heavily in personal training, to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is high at our settings. It would be unfair, for settings that make little investment in staff training, and offer lower standards of quality childcare, able to achieve the same hourly rates, as settings that have made such efforts to raise the standards in their settings. Furthermore, there would be little motivation for business owners/managers to support/, fund and encourage their staff to self develop, if the funding was the same across the board.

Settings that offer a flexible service to families, often find themselves out of pocket at points in the week, running sessions or times, during the sessions that are less profitable but much needed for families. We rely on the additional monies paid with the flexible supplement, to enable us to continue to offer a flexible service to our families. Settings that go above and beyond to support families should be recognised through the flexible supplement.

I think it's unfair for a childminder to get a special rate if a child lives in a certain area. We all do the same job and provide the same thing for any child in our care. It would be wrong to spend more on a child that comes from a deprived area! Just because they live in that area does not mean that are deprived!! The base rate should be more so all children benefit

The base rate, SENIF and deprivation supplement is obviously very important as this ensures we have enough money to remain viable and offer the best possible care for all individual children's needs. Flexibility is important too as sometimes there is five weeks between payments, which at times is really stretching the funds. In our setting the Quality Supplement does not apply.

Childminders are more flexible than most nurseries offering longer hours and care during the holidays

I have rated the SENIF highly because we have such a high number of children coming through with SEN and needing extra interventions and support.

I have rated Quality less highly because although we currently receive this, it is difficult to recruit staff of this level. We do however have lots of talented and experienced Level 3s

The base rate is most important to us followed by the Quality and Flexibility supplement

All need to be sustainable, inline with inflation otherwise the setting will be forced to close.

Base to be increased to support provisions overall with the rising costs.

Families equally will feel the strain of rising costs.

It is highly important for settings to provide SEN children with the best support which can be done through funding.

most of our children do not qualify for any additional funds. The current base rate does not cover our costs and we lose money on every grant session

As childminders the rate base rate paid is usually lower than our hourly chargeable rate.

A the number of children with SEND is increasing it is important this is reflected in funding for those settings who offer an inclusive provision. Equally the area of deprivation will have high levels of SEND even if they are low levels of speech and language delay. The base rate obviously is the foundation of all income. Flexibility is important to all parents but most providers will offer this to remain sustainable. Emphasis is placed on qualifications and therefore expected Quality, this is not always reflected in practice and in my opinion some staff who are lower qualified have excellent practice. and quality are important but

As a setting we would like to see a higher base rate/SENDIF per child. Currently the SENDIF rate doesn't provide enough financial support to enable us to effectively assist the children with their individual needs.

The rural area we are based in means we have very few children who are entitled to the deprivation supplement.

We have a highly qualified staff team so the quality supplement is very important to us. The extra amount per child is often the difference between us being sustainable or having to do extra fundraising.

As we know the funding rate is below costs, it is simply not affordable to have a funding rate that does not rise inline with other inflationary costs such as minimum wage rises (In Essence we just cannot keep absorbing the loses on base rates) inclusive of supplements settings are still barely meeting costs so the base rate is of the utmost importance.

Quality we must acknowledge the recruitment crisis here, We cannot attract workers on the low pay we are able to offer, those that are passionate about progressing and establishing early years as a career have no incentive to stay in the field. In order for us to push for a better qualified and skilled workforce which is needed in this crucial stage of children's development we really must place value on practitioners being of high quality. (I see this as the second biggest threat to the sector, the lack of good quality staff has huge impacts)

SENIF- Children with SEN undoubtedly need extra support this requires out of ratio time, resources and training therefore funding for this is vital

Deprivation supplement- As a setting in an area of deprivation this does have a place and is incredibly useful however often the affects of deprivation are seen through speech and language delays which can be claimed through SENIF. That being said we also see unfortunately a link between deprivation and support for FSP, CIN and CP so again this needs time and resources to support families (Its hard to rank this at number 4 because it is important but you need an answer so i have tried to be as logical as I can be)

Flexibility supplement- to providers this is of the least importance, I understand for the council you need funded hours to be offered in a flexible manner to parents however from a provider prospective parents will access what works and suits for thier families. I do acknowledge that their may be concerns on providers offering funding in an inflexible and supportive way (Which I believe is wrong) however I feel some of this could possibly be addressed through the provider agreement or alternatively if the provider is offering it in such an inflexible and unrealistic way to parents you could do this as a 'penalty' on the base rate. I understand there would be complications here but a suggestion of sorts.

- 1 is a solid income
- 2 in a recognised area of deprivation and children with a variety of SEN Needs
- 3with a need for longer hours
- 4 secures extra income
- 5 struggle to attract higher qualifications due to costs

Base rate should be the same for all providers. Not all practitioners hold a childcare qualification so for those that have this should be acknowledged.

In the area which we cover we do not qualify for quality or flexibility supplement and majority of our funding is made up of the base rate

Base rate most important to our school - followed by SEN to allow inclusion within our setting

In our setting we rarely apply for the last three supplements,

The base rate is important to us as it's our largest source of income and deprivation is low in our area meaning we are unable to get much additional funding for our Nursery. We still have to adhere to the ratios with our staffing regardless of the types of children we have in our setting therefore our outgoing costs are high as a maintained Nursery School. We also have additional costs that private settings do not have e.g. headteacher, teacher on site etc. Having said this it does ensure that we offer high quality education for our children. We do have several children with special needs each

year that require additional support when they attend. We offer places to children with profound complex needs who are unable access early education in most other settings.

1. Base Rate - is universal availability to all
2. SENIF - is very important to help fund needs of SEN
3. Deprivation - not relevant in our are, but important
4. Flexibility - not relevant to us, but useful for parents
5. Quality - least useful

It is the only way to drive up standards for the children by paying the staff more to improve their knowledge

Quality and Flexibility not relevant to us.

most of our children are base rate only we need this figure to be our priority for income figures

2 and 3 are things that we, as a nursery, put in place to better serve our children and parents. 4 is essential to have some weighting so those children can get targeted support in the form of specific resources.

However 5 we often find that those children have no additional needs to their peers. I appreciate this is not always the case, and perhaps the area where we operate, but this is certainly our finding.

It is important that children who have additional needs or who come from deprived/vulnerable families receive additional funds to allow additional support

The more money per hour per child benefits all children and that's where the most mney needs to be

All providers are entitled to a fair base rate with those in a deprived area receiving more to cover additional needs. Quality supplement is unfair to be given to a level 6 as I feel those practitioners with level 3 and several years practical experience are as good and sometimes better but penalised by the system.

We are eligible for the first three, and these make up the majority of our 3-4 year old income. We are now experiencing higher than ever levels of SEN with many needing an additional member of staff for support. The SENIF does not cover the cost but helps.

Base Rate to enable continuing funding. Deprivation as we are located within a deprived area a high proportion of our children qualify for the funding across both weightings (77% at present). SENIF, just under 50% of our children have additional needs.

Base rate is the most important to me to ensure that I am getting a fair rate followed by the quality supplement to encourage childcare practitioners to gain qualifications.

Senif was next to help practitioners provide for children with additional needs.

The base rate affects every setting, this is the most financially impactful aspect of the funding. Quality and flexibility penalises settings that are unable to offer extended hours or those that have high quality staff that choose or are unable to undertake additional qualifications

base rate is important to us as this is what we get for our children. In mu area, which is more affluent, deprivation isn't a big issue. good qulaity provision should be rewarded.

I

The current base rate is low so by increasing this and then adding the supplements the rate will be higher. For those unable to achieve the flexibility supplement or quality supplement then the base rate is such that it is a worthwhile rate.

Base rate is important to me as that's the main income for me. Senif and derivation will both require additional support. People who put the effort in to gain higher qualifications should then be able to earn more.

We support several children who are living in deprived areas and children with SEND who need higher support than the typical child within a provision. Many of the children have disabilities and/or complex health needs that require a higher staffing ratio.

The majority of our nursery places are funded on base rate with no other considerations, so that is our most important factor



We don't have 3-5
SENIF is important to us as a setting as we have a lot of speech issues since covid. We are also in a deprived area
Quality is low on the list as I do not feel this is important. We do not have many children on deprivation supplement so have placed this lower on the list. Flexibility is important to us as it increases the base rate final figure for funded children in our care.
we provide childcare in a very deprived area with lots of SEND children who need additional support to reach their full potential
Base rate is because it is for all children and quality is important as it quality of teaching.
due to high numbers of children registered and enquiries for funding entitlement the current hourly rate is detrimental to business. our fee paying parents are subsidising the short fall but as numbers of funded children increase we have less fee paying parents and this is causing a financial issue that cannot continue.
due to rising numbers of SEN children requiring higher intervention the rate for this is placed as 2nd - we need this funding to provide additional staff but they will also fall within base rate category - a rise in SENIF is important due to additional staffing wage rises
I have placed quality supplement lower as all staff have qualifications and staff work towards gaining higher, but retention is harder due to low wages overall - quality supplement is a bonus but not a necessity if increases can be applied elsewhere
Base rate is the largest proportion; we want to provide quality staff to support the children and we want to be as flexible as we can to support our parents.
To ensure we offer all children the best start and opportunities in life
The base rate impacts more children and families and is therefore a greater proportion of our income. We invest in well-qualified staff so the Quality supplement is important and we offer long hours across the week.
The needs of our children are significant and this has the most impact on our sustainability. The current funding does not cover the cost associated with the level of need.
Base rate must increase then reward for quality and flexibility then the other options
Quality to support quality provision over and above
Flexible to support the loss providing extended hours for working parents
SENIF reduce ratio to provide quality care to children who need it most
Deprivation I don't feel this is required as you can claim additional funding through SENIF
As a school Nursery, we have greater need for base rate and SENIF. The majority of our income is through funded children and so the base rate is important to us.
1 - most important 5- Least important.
The base rate is very important as this is the main focus on the funding of all children.
SENIF funding is also important as this additional money means we can by additional resources to support our children to continue to develop and prevent and further development gap.
Deprivation money we use to support those children who may not be able to access specific resources we can use this money to support these children.
It is important to ensure that staff are working with the children are qualified and safe to do so.
I don't think we offer flexibility supplement
1- if the base rate 3-4 years stays as it is how can providers to stay open, if overhead costs continue to increase!
2/3 Its a case of allowing providers receive the flexibility and quality supplements or add the to the base rate as I think everyone now strives to meet the criteria where and when they can.
4-/5 both as equally important as 2-3 for any child/provison whom requires extra financial support .
The base rate is fundamental to trying to run a sustainable business. Deprivation is based on postcode, you are assuming families in these area require extra funding which is not true of all families. Perhaps a similar calculation to the EYPP award would be a much more realistic approach.

1. Base rate needs to cover all fixed costs, wages, building rent and utilities, sufficient equipment and resources, statutory training, insurance etc.
2. Quality supplement supports both structural and process quality by recognising higher level training and qualifications and promotes early years education as being of high and equal value to education of other age groups. Our manager is a degree holder and our setting supports students up to degree level.
3. Our Preschool continues to provide support for children with additional needs including speech and language and ASD and complex health needs.
4. Early Years is about education but also about childcare and parents and families need support to access and maintain work, including wrap around care.
5. Preschool is not in an area of deprivation.

**Q. Which of the following options would you prefer?**

Maintain the current criteria.

Remove the criteria 11-20% most deprived.

Combine the current criteria to those living in the 0-20% most deprived parts of the county.

**Comments received:**

with so many families financially struggling we are "fixing that gap" more.

Those in most need should get the highest supplement.

It is vital that where a child needs extra support funding is available to provide it  
 ie more staff needed, different resources needed etc

As long as this change increases the 10% funding level. The current rate doesn't come close to recognising the increased level of need in the areas of high deprivation.

I'm happy with the current criteria

Cost of living is getting higher and more people will be living in poverty soon if not already. Our bills are going up, but I don't feel it is right to increase the hourly rate I charge at this difficult time.

Relatively recent changes to the criteria for deprivation have raised some postcodes to higher categories. However, the deprivation levels have not changed and are still a barrier.

I do not really

Understand the question

Unfortunately postcode is not a reliable factor in determining actual deprivation since the sale of social housing to private buyers and I don't agree with any of the current criteria but forced to choose.

Think it would be fairer

Deprived areas require additional funding to help close the attainment gap

I don't get this part of the payment

We receive a very small amount of deprivation supplement. However, I think it is important to offer the best provision for the children who need us the most i.e. children from areas of deprivation.

I don't like the deprivation payment. It's just a bonus for the childcarer-the children gain no benefit as the childminder would not treat them differently

we work (rurally) next door to a deprived boundary, therefore we get lots of interest in the 2 year funded children but not the deprivation supplement

Unsure

I am assuming it will be easier to manage if all one rate. It seems a strange supplement. I have parents who live in brand new houses that they are buying that are eligible and parents who are

struggling in small rural pockets of social housing but because there are also lots of wealthy older people living in same postcode our children don't qualify.

Everyone should receive the same level of education

We are in a deprived area and this money can really help enhance there environment

This setting is in a very rural village, with many one parent families and families out of work however our postcode does not allow parents a deprivation payment. However, we do have one child that lives 15 miles away that travels to us and we do have the payment for this child. His parents both work and have a comfortable income - This does NOT MAKE SENSE!!!

As we are an independent school this isnt really relevant

Settings working in the most deprived areas have extra work to do to help the children catch up and to support their families. They deserve a higher rate of pay.

These would be fully funded children and they should be covered under our universal offer to ensure all children make progress

We are not directly based in a deprived area however we do have families where deprivation is apparent. Widening the area and the requirements to will help to identify this. Not every deprived family lives in a deprived postcode area.

this would enable a fairer rate for all who live in a deprived area

The current system is not appropriate in our area and does not reflect the needs of our community. We are always aware that there are many families living under financial hardship in our local area. However, as they have not been identified through the current system (because their postcode is not recognised) the children/ setting does not get the much needed financial support and recognition needed.

I think it is important that all children living in a deprived area are supported regardless of the percentage.

Don't effect me, so leave as it is

I have no real views on this as we don't receive it

We currently do not see a need to change this.

To ensure the ones the just miss the percentage are still covered.

The current criteria is not fair as it is given to all parents living in a certain post code. Some of these parents do not need any financial help whereas others, who are in need are living in a post code that does not qualify

It is a researched fact that young children who live in an area of deprivation are more at risk of developmental delay. It also demonstrates if a child attends a early years provision it can improve later life chances providing it is of high quality. With the experiences many young children have recently had being born just before the pandemic or during this increases the chances of delay for those who live in areas of identified deprivation.

We feel the funding should be directed to where it is most needed.

This would cover more children in the deprived parts of the county.

Over half of our children receive deprivation supplement, there is a link between this and extra time and resources needed to support these families. I think the deprivation supplements are really important and key and i feel the current criteria is correct however unfortunately it is just that the rates are still to low to truly cover what has to go into supporting these childrens and families. Deprivation supplements would be less key if other services which have been stripped back such as Health visitors, children centres etc could support the families without the setting needing to take the lead here.

Our electricity bill has gone up by over £500 per month minimum wage will again increase significantly in April. In areas of deprivation where the majority of children are funded it means settings have zero control

Over managing their costs v income because this is dictated to us by the rate provided. There is

absolutely no way many settings will survive the coming year on the current funding rate and this is going to hit those in areas of deprivation the hardest. The deprivation supplement whilst not a lot is definitely something that need to be considered carefully.

To ensure a level playing field

Make for the simpler to understand who will qualify for the supplement

Covers all deprived areas and treated the same

We would prefer to maintain the current criteria as we understand the challenges that other settings face regarding children that come from a deprived area and the need for additional funding for that. The base rate continues to need to reflect the cost to fund early education in a maintained Nursery School.

So it is an even amount to all deprived areas

The most money goes to the most disadvantaged

it seems a fair system at the minute

The deprivation payment scheme works well as it is

The demographic of postcodes is changing, particularly with the cost of living issues faced at present. Not all families in 0-10% face deprivation and some families in 11-20% have more deprivation than 0-10%.

Things are tight at the present time for all families and those families within the current 11-20% are probably now in the same position as the families were who were in the 10% this time last year.

Payments for deprived areas should be fair

A higher percentage of our children fall into the 10% weighting therefore maintaining the the current criteria option would be more beneficial to the school to support the children.

Parents choose our setting because it is within their budget to do so regardless of their postcode

I think it should be equal for the 20% as there may not be a lot of difference between someone in the 9% area and the 11% area.

The current system seems to work. we want those families and children to continue to be identified. more fair

Children are either in a deprived area or they are not hence wanting to combine

children in the 10% often need more support than children in the 11-20%

it simplifies it

a number of families fall within the above criteria - broadening this to combined will offer a fairer calculation

would be simpler to understand for everyone

To ensure this is available to a wider group

The deprivation in our community is escalating as such the deprivation funding is not indicative of need.

If a child needs additional support you can claim through SENIF

Postcode is just assuming!

It is easier to have one rate.

I feel that if children are in the top 20% then they should all receive the same amount per hour, as they are all in a deprived area. This allows more to be provided to support these children.

We have had children in receipt of this funding and staff have questioned why? During home visits, sharing of photos, consultations, families share with Key Practitioner. This has reflected healthy living conditions e.g. holidays, new cars etc whilst the lower 0-10% were always seen to be struggling e.g. cleanliness, books, clothes, food, nappies etc The rate should increase for them or their should be further insights into the 11-20% family backgrounds.

A deprivation payment should be based on each families circumstances the same as EYPP & 2 year funding. Postcode allocation is a blanket approach and misses families in need in other postcode areas which are looked on positively rather than negatively.

Even in our area where we don't meet eligibility according to IDACI ,we still have families who we support-warm coats, new cooker, signposting/debt management, using donations or general fundraising.

We individualise EYPP often using to support the child's learning and development opportunities outside preschool when a family's income is low. Proposal if no extra cost- combine current criteria.

**Q. Which of the following options would you prefer? (Quality supplement)**

Maintain the current criteria.

Remove the supplement from the formula.

Change the current criteria.

**Comments received:**

drop the criteria to level 5, more staff are able to qualify at this level and provide a high standard of care

settings should see financial benefit of having good quality staffing.

Change this to level 4 or above or completely remove it. This supplement, I feel, tells staff that their qualification means nothing unless they're level 6 or above. Level 3 and 4 work just as hard as level 6.

We employ a EYPP and yet struggle to pay her worth she could easily work in a school environment and get paid £9.00 more per hour. We were all encouraged to do degrees and yet funding is so poor we could actually work in an unqualified profession and get paid more,

I think a Childminder qualified to level 6 or above should recieve an additional supplement

As a maintained setting we do not receive this funding. Which is not fair funding. If the LA can demonstrate this supplement has increased the quality of provision it should stay, if there is no evidence it has impacted on the quality of provisions it should be removed and the money used to increase the base rate.

I have a degree, QTS and post-grad. Very happy that i provide excellent quality in my childcare.

Some practitioners spend lot of money to get better qualified to support the children and families we look after. This deserves to be recognised.

We should all be supporting high quality childcare/provision.

I have a city and guilds in childcare, this is not recognised, so therefore I dont get the extra

Quality childcare should be recognised

I would like to see settings with a qualified teacher receive this supplement as well. If not, I would vote for removing it.

Those that have studied and have a deeper understanding should receive a higher payment.

Quality YES we all want to be better and this is a great incentive

Remove flexibility

Our highest qualification of staff is Level 5 which use to be the criteria to receive the supplement.

ALL setting should have highly qualified team members (When I did my EY degree it was going to become necessary that all settings had this qualification!)

Does not equate to quality. Whole criteria is too subjective. Would make more sense to go with Ofsted grades if you are doing this - which would also be a bad idea.

I work hard and I am committed to developing my professional knowledge and skills, in order to provide a better service for children and their families. I would like to be rewarded for this, above settings who choose to provide the basics.

Employing staff with a level 3 is hard enough let alone anyone with a level 6. We would not be in a position to employ a level 6 practitioner let alone be able to pay them.

Our level 3 staff are highly qualified and provide excellent care. We have also noticed level 2 practitioners are put off going for their level 3 because of the conditions of training( online) and requirements. We feel this supplement is wasted as not many settings have Level 6 practitioners and this money could be used to support settings in other ways.

As a charity over the years we have invested heavily, both financially and professionally through personal/ setting development. To enable us to raise the standard of Early Years education for our children and their families. It is only right that we should receive this supplement. This money is used to ensure that staff can be paid (as much as is possible considering we work in a notoriously poorly paid industry) an hourly rate that reflects the level of commitment that they have trained too, and subsequently the efforts they have gone too, to raise the standard of quality education for the children attending the setting.

Removing the quality supplement would a) demotivate owners/managers of settings and practitioners to setting and self development. Encouraging a 'why should I bother' mindset which will in turn, inevitably lower the standards of Early Years education over time. We need to be continuing to invest our commitment across the county to raising standards b) It is grossly unfair to create a level playing field by removing this supplement.

I think the criteria should include practitioners who have gone on to complete an Early Years Foundation Degree (Level 5)

I think it's too difficult to recruit at Level 6 and many of our current Level 3 are very experienced and talented. They provide excellent quality which is not recognised by the supplement

Early Years staff should have their qualification acknowledged, inline with school teacher status, to help maintain their roles.

With the current level of funding and rising costs settings can not afford to pay staff to train for a higher qualification and staff do not earn enough to pay themselves. Even if they are qualified, level 6 or above, settings can not afford to pay them any more than staff who have a level 3, There is no incentive to work hard and train for a higher qualification.

In my professional opinion this is the least important supplement. Early Years providers should aspire to have highly qualified staff to benefit the childrens learning not just for additional supplements

As a setting we can not afford to lose 10p per funded hour per child, If this was to be reduced or removed then the base rate will need to be increased.

This encourages a more highly qualified workforce.

We have a recruitment crisis on our hands, we are losing staff to either schools or supermarkets for less pressure and more pay.

We MUST do something to attract higher quality staff and be able to pay them. Again this supplement whilst not wanting be rude but just honest doesn't help much but it's still something. As a sector we have to do better. Our children deserve better. The standard of staff coming out of college with level threes are incredibly poor.

It only applies to one staff member and therefore we need to value those settings placing priority on training staff rather than a token staff member to get the funding.

Regardless of how high your qualification common sense tells you the more staff to child ratio benefits the children especially coming out of Covid times and in areas of deprivation one teacher to one practitioner cannot deal with a group of children who all have their own unique needs

Getting the Quality supplement acknowledges the qualification as not all practitioners hold a childcare qualification

I'm level 4 trained but the qualification is not recognised in quality supplement
Increase Base rate for all settings
I think the difference between a level 3 and a level 5 is huge. And not many childcare settings have a level 6 in situ. Not is there an incentive on the pay scale to complete the level 6. So the criteria for Quality Supplement should be level 5 and above.
If our quality supplement comes through our maintained Nursery grant then we would need to continue to receive the grant in order to run a sustainable Nursery. We have highly educated staff that work within our Nursery which helps us to provide outstanding early education.
Does not affect our setting, but if 48% use it, they must need it
again its a far figure
This is a supplement based on our decision to staff for this with extra resources, so seems fair.
The money used for this could be used more efficiently in other areas.
The arguement that it enables a higher wage to be paid to higher qaulified staff isn't reflected in the value of the supplement as it isn't enough to pay the wage that those staff can earn in the school sector. The more money on the front line for every child will benefit more children
A level 3 qualified person with several years of practical experience is a capable as level 6 and sometimes better qualified/experienced
It shows recognition for those who support their staff with CPD and believe in having a team of highly skilled and qualified practitioners.
To enable the funding to be used in other areas to support the children,
There are many settings offering high quality provision with practitioners ONLY with a L3 qualification. They are being discriminated against because they've chosen not/unable to study a degree qualification yet still offering high quality care. The base rate is the most important part of the funding to contribute to settings maintaining a sustainable business
I don't think that children attending settings with qualified teacher status practitioners necessarily get a better experience. There tend to be less practitioners and some are not specifically EY trained. If they are maintained settings, they sometimes have to work to school criteria rather than EY.
Those who have gained additional qualifications should be able to earn more.
Level 4,5,6
This currently works for our setting.
In nursery lower the criteria from a level 6 to level 3, why should this be different to a childminder
It shouldn't matter what higher qualification you have with regard to looking after children so should not be supplemented
All qualified staff, even level 2 should be recognised, not just level 3 and above
so we meet the criteria.
We wish to maintain high quality, experienced staff and retain the staff we have, not have to downgrade roles or devalue staff
I am level 5 qualified but this is not recognised at present.
To be able to ensure children are receiving an experience they can learn from and thrive
It is an incentive to invest in better staff qualifications which ultimately benefits the children.
It would be more logical to associate this with the ofsted rating/quality of the setting as a whole or perhaps looking at the percentage of staff at Level 3 or above.
Reward the practitioners that have a level 3 or above
Quality control from LA to ensure children are receiving quality care
Our setting maintains quality of provision as rated by Ofsted despite not having enhanced staff qualifications at level 6
We increased the ratio in one of our rooms, which is led by qualified teachers, however we do not receive any quality funding. The Head of the Nursery is a qualified Teacher, who is also the Early Years Lead and Assistant Head but we still do not receive any quality funding.

I feel that the currently system worked well. I think it encourages setting to ensure they are meeting the correct criteria to be able to receive additional money per hour.

We have been so lucky to receive the extra funding for this criteria. If it were to be removed then the extra supplement cost shouldbe added to the base rate.

It allows us to employ higher qualified staff to ensure we are able to consistently provide outstanding Early Years education.

1. Staffing ratios and group sizes affect the quality of provision. Our preschool can have up to 12 children mixed age range 2-4 yrs comfortably in the room.
2. Having Level 6 promotes a professional well qualified service equivalent to other educational provision. Attracts higher level workforce or would if pay was higher.
3. Retains staff, promotes ethos of ambition.

3. Higher qualifications support quality.

### Q. Which of the following options would you prefer? (Flexibility supplement)

Maintain the current criteria.

Remove the supplement from the formula.

Change the current criteria.

### Comments received:

This supplement penalises settings that cannot open for 7.5 hours a day.

Any setting offering at least 9am till 5pm or any variation of that will get the supplement, It may encourage or support longer opening hours and better flexibility/choice to parents.

There are a number of setting that due to restrictions on premises and cost for additional staffing required to offer flexible hours are unable to access this funding. Remove and add the base rate.

I would rather that the flexibility supplement was added on to the base rate for all 2-4 year olds

I work for longer hours than many nurseries and offer parents care around the hours they need to do their jobs.

We work long unsociable hours and this should be recognised

The LA should be promoting support for working parents and encouraging providers to offer this where feasible.

It appears to work as is

We are unable to benefit form this. However, I don't have strong feelings on it.

Those willing to stay open longer hours and being flexible so it helps parents should receive extra money

We are able to claim flexibility supplement at the moment as our numbers just allow us to do this. As a small rural setting our numbers fluctuate quite a bit so we often have 2 adults in with 2 children for an hour so it's a case of how long we can sustain this offset against how much we are gaining from that increase over our total number of funded hours.

Currently working families are entitled to claim 30 hours funded. Why do settings have to be open 37.5 to be able to access the extra 'flexibility' funding? It would make more sense to have this awarded at 30 hours of opening.

Seems unfair on those that cannot do this

currently you have to be open 2 days for 7 hours, that doesn't seem very flexible for parents

I work long hours to meet the needs of families and I appreciate being compensated for this, over and above what school based settings provide.

Add more on to th base rate for everyone



<p>We work hard at both settings, to ensure we offer quality flexible childcare, to support our working and non working families. Often, by opening later into the day or opening earlier in the morning than other settings. The costs to our setting in staff wages are higher as a result, and many of the hours we are open at either end of the day are less profitable, and run at a loss. It is only right and fair that settings who go above and beyond to support families with flexible childcare, should be better financially supported. Than settings that choose the simple profitable route of 9am-3pm to help offset the loss of income.</p>
<p>A lot of nurseries and preschools put restrictions on when people can use the funding - they charge for lunch times and the start and end of the day. Flexibility should also be based on providers willing to provide funding for a whole day!</p>
<p>Childminders more flexible</p>
<p>We don't currently claim this but we have recently extended our hours to include breakfast and teatime clubs so we are interested in looking in to it</p>
<p>Maintain the criteria but this requires an increase in hourly rate.</p>
<p>We pride ourselves in continuity of care, all our staff work full time and every child is looked after by the same Key Person whenever they attend. This is very important. To offer flexible hours would result in staff working on a rota and this would not fit our ethos of the child first and secure nurturing relationships.</p>
<p>I don't think it is necessary, just increase the base rate.</p>
<p>I'm not sure how to change the criteria but fundamentally we should be supporting working parents</p>
<p>Would seem a fairer system for those settings who are unable to open for longer periods to receive the money allocated for this supplement within their base rate.</p>
<p>We are unable to reach the flexibility supplement as we run in a community village hall and are restricted in the hours and days we can open.</p>
<p>I think I would rather see this money be used towards qualification levels. I feel parents have choices and can choose a setting that meets their needs and this doesn't need to form part of the criteria. I understand some settings will          Try to 'play the system' here but I think educating parents on how they can access funding will          Give them an indication of the best provider for them. I know some of the bigger chains apply their funding in really unfair ways to parents however if parents were educated on how they can claim they would consider their providers more possibly.</p>
<p>Equally          Some providers hands may be tied and can only operate certain hours because of building constraints etc and shouldn't be penalised for this.</p>
<p>It still does not help some of our working parents who need a much longer day, we know of a single parent whose shift starts at 6am in the morning till 6pm 3 days a week</p>
<p>Due to being in a rented village hall we can not operate longer hours so unable to claim this supplement</p>
<p>Increase Base rate for all settings</p>
<p>As a Nursery school and daycare setting which we provide extended care from 8am until 5pm and we are finding that more and more families are looking for extended hours and a more flexible way to use their funding which fits in with their work. The flexibility supplement helps us in providing such provision for our families which we would be unable to offer without it. There are very little settings in our area that offer extended, flexible hours.</p>
<p>Hourly rate should be universal</p>
<p>again far system</p>
<p>This is a supplement based on our decision to staff for this with extra resources, so seems fair.</p>
<p>it is important to allow parents to have flexibility when they are looking for childcare</p>

Settings that can open for longer will be doing so already as it's financially viable to do so to offer parents the flexibility they need. Settings that can't open longer are penalised. The more money on the front line benefits every child.
It is offered but parents do not need to access it. Most daynurseries have opening times to meet this criteria
To enable the funding to be used in other areas to support the children,
Settings that are unable to offer longer days because it is not viable are being penalised and unable to access this additional rate
Difficult to verify opening hours and although may offer longer hours, they may not be taken.
This works very well for the families who attend our setting.
We are a school based provider, the max hours we can offer are 6.75 per day so this supplement is out of our grasp
we choose to only offer funded hours during the school day 9-3 due to losing so much off the hourly rate we charge to what we receive from funding hours
N/A
Having a supplement for opening longer during the session to give parents flexibility in care is important, a supplement to benefit this helps with maintaining our preschool
the hours need to be longer, as a normal working day is longer than 7.5 hours
yes because we do receive it.
we have a high number of working families who rely on the flexibility of using 7.5 and above hours per day - the flexibility supplement helps towards our financial sustainability to offer this
To be able to provide very flexible cover for our working parents in the current climate
To give parents more flexibility which suits their childcare needs
Enables us to be flexible across the week.
Increase the flexibility part
Provide only if a separate session is offered.
We do not meet the flexibility criteria and therefore would be happy with the removal, if it increased our base rate.
It is important to be able to offer as much as possible to support parents. I feel the current criteria works well.
See above
It supports us to open 8 - 6 pm, Monday to Friday to support working families
Parents and families need childcare that is flexible and responsive to working parents extended and wrap around care needs.

**Q. Which of the following options would you prefer?**

Answer Choice	Maintain the current rate	Decrease the current rate	Increase the hourly rate
1 £1.13: Low and Emerging - Need Average is below 3	56	7	68
2 £1.50: Low and Emerging Need - Average is between 3 and 4	49	4	76
3 £6.50: Complex and Medical Need - Average is 4 or more	67	5	60

**Comments received:**

to enable staff to employ dedicated staff the cost will need to be met

The needs of the children are paramount and the SENIF funding is appallingly low to help support these children. Some children need consistent adult support and £1.50 per hour is appalling to support these children

Many children have complex needs within our setting, they join us in sept and yet we are expected to fund them until the panel meets in Oct and decide how much money we are awarded to support the children. We have no early years support teacher who visits and advises us and yet we are expected to be health visitors, speech therapists and occupational therapists within our normal everyday duties at nursery. We are also never given any help towards staff costs for meetings, paperwork, telephone calls.

Supplements need to better reflect the additional staffing and resources that a SEN child may need. Settings need to have enough finances to attract and retain the specialist practitioners needed for this important role

The SEND rate for a child who is waiting for an EHCP, for us, is on average £100 per term, this is so low it offers almost not impact on the actual costs of providing the specialist provision these children require.

As a maintained setting we have enrolled a number of children with additional needs who have been asked to leave their PVI provision. If this money is redirected and added to the base rate the settings who support children with additional needs will be additionally penalised, while the setting who do not provide places for children with additional needs will see an increase in their base rate. To reduce the number of children who are moving into reception with additional needs the LA has to invest in early years.

I haven't had experience of this area.

To allow someone to be employed on 1 - 1 basis.

For pupils with complex needs a higher adult ratio is required and the current rate does not facilitate this.

The hourly fee would nowhere near cover the cost of a SEN child. As a childminder I can't afford to take them on because they need more time which means you'd have to have far less children

Having

Not been ever in reception if this I feel

I can not answer this fairly

Providing support for children with SEND, additional resources, time for additional paperwork and meetings is costly. Children with SEND are already being failed through huge waiting lists for support and lack of provision willing to help it needs to be funded properly.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to manage children with SEN within the setting. More financial support would allow settings to fund staffing to increase ratio of staff

I have never had the funding so can't really comment but it seems very complicated!

I find this hard to comment on or decide on! I think the two lower bands are very low payments, not allowing for much alteration to provision. Overall I think the payments should be on a sliding scale but maybe not quite so heavily weighted towards the top payment. A more even spread perhaps?

I don't know about this

Not aware of the above. We have lots of children awaiting for EHCPs but none are currently awarded EYPP.

We have applied for SENIF over past few years. The Low and Emerging Need has been used for training and resources. It is better than nothing but it isn't a great deal of money so am happy for that to remain the same if the complex and medical needs could be increased to go further towards the cost of employing staff. It only covers 2/3 of hourly NMW. This means that settings are having to subsidise the cost of supporting children with complex needs, often without the much-needed support of other professionals.

If a child has any level of SEN they will need that additional person to help them. All people offering this extra support need the same wage, so payments need to be more similar.

Seems a sensible and proportionate way of doing it. Need in this area is growing if anything so I would ideally increase the amounts, but that would then have to come from elsewhere.

The amount of funding based on complex needs does not equate to a one to one childcare practitioner who earns even minimum wages.

Because it's way too low, for instance if you need to enhance ratio or provide equipment, this rate of funding does not cover this

Most low and emerging needs of 3 and below can be met with good practice and capable staff. Children with needs of between 3 and 4, need more interventions, 1:1 and small group support, which means more staff. Children with complex and medical needs require 1:1 support and time spent on paperwork, family support and meetings. When £6.50 is added to a meagre Base rate, it does not equate to a single wage.

Children in band 3&4 need extra help, but without enough funding they do not get as much help as they need. If a group of 4 children in band 3&4 needed help, we would only receive £6 on the current rate and this is not enough to fund an extra member of staff for an hour.

We have so many children at present with low and emerging needs. With no baby groups, health visitor groups, speech and language, drop in centres, toddler groups etc we are getting children who have never been seen before in any setting, never met a health visitor, no 2 year checks completed before they come to us. All of this is contributing to the amount of support these children need on joining our setting. The current SEND funding we receive does not cover the time spent in helping and supporting these children and their families.

I think extra is needed for below 3 year olds as many two year olds come in needing more support

We only make a claim, if the needs of a child are so great that in order to support the child to attend the setting we a) require an additional staff member to work with the child, to enable them to make suitable progress and or to help keep them (and/or the other children) safe from harm and b) we do not have the funds in our bank account to cover the cost.

It is vital for children and families with SEND (and only fair and reasonable) that there is additional funding made available to support these children should it be required, to enable them to access quality childcare alongside their peers.

Early years providers are usually the ones who deal with the emerging needs and push to get the help the child needs. We initially deal with more of these type of children. So should be paid more to acknowledge this.

It is important that the rates coincide with increases relating the resources required to care for the children and practitioners wages who are caring for the children.

Don't claim so haven't a clue

Even with SENIF we are finding it difficult to meet the needs of the increasing number of children with SEN needs. We need enhanced staff ratios but the funding is not enough to cover them which means we have to use our own reserves which is not sustainable.

The rates need to increase inline with inflation, and to recognise the work and training that staff do to enable the funding for each child.

Increase average of 3 or below slightly to reflect that there are still needs to be supported which would benefit from slightly more funding.

The current rate does not provide the finances required to employ a member of staff to look after the child. Some have severe emotional/behavioural problems, others have medical needs which require constant monitoring and checks, which a key person with 7 other children in their care cannot safely provide.

This lower level of need is in my experience nearly always around delay in speech and language development. This level of need should be supported within the provision by qualified staff and training opportunities. If consideration is being given to the quality supplement perhaps these should be considered in unison, one or the other

For children who fall into the 3 and above, often need staff working with them for the majority of their time at the setting, often on a 1-1 basis. This will take a member of staff away from the other children who are still requiring the care and attention from that member as they are within staff ratio.

We do not have any children with SEN and I do not know enough about the rates paid i.e. if they are enough. But any increase would benefit children with SEN.

To be frank it shouldn't come from the same pot. SEN response in Norfolk are poor across the board. We fail SEN children and this is part of the reason.

I cannot emphasise this point enough it should absolutely not be a providers responsibility to deliver a sen place at their own cost. This is a cost that should be solely placed on the government as it is there responsibility to provide Ada quote and suitable SEN places for children. A struggling private setting should not have to operate at a loss to provide a SEN place for a child. We are not a school Or a LA we are businesses and as such that burden is not our responsibility to bear. We absolutely should willingly provide places and do all that we can to accommodate for children but we cannot be expected to run at a loss for this that is an absolutely run and unfair expectation

To put on a private business and I do not believe any other business are placed in such a position. Because of this you see children turned away and then it is a few providers that end up beating the brunt because we do so with our hearts not our minds then you end up

With several

Children and an unsustainable business. It's wholly wrong for everyone involved.

Where one to one is required this should be covered fully.

I have said maintain current rate for the others because again you are asking us to choose between a rock and a hard place. I don't feel this is a fair question to place on providers ultimately you need to change the system you can't take from one pot and add to another this just shifts the problems it doesn't solve it.

Really all the rates need to go up across the board.

I'm sure you're aware of all of this but this survey is ultimately like being asked if we would rather die by drowning or by fire.....

We appreciate budgets are tight

What we receive at present does not cover minimum wage to support children with SEN

If children with SEN are to be given the opportunity to attend mainstream nursery/childminder provision, the setting must be properly funded to allow adequate supervision and support.

Some children with a lower emerging need sometimes requires more resources to help them to thrive.

For the low emerging needs some additional support can be provided through normal ratios however for those that have complex needs that do not have an EHCP is place yet often require 1:1 support

I would not want other areas of unding to loose funding and it is a reasonable amount

the money received for the lower bands in inadequate for providing provision

the rates could do with being higher to help with teachers and equipment needed for the child. everything gone up massively in price

Not applicable to us at present so unfair to comment.

Complex needs require more support and therefore would need additional funding.

Children under 3 already receive a better hourly rate so this enhancement in rate helps meet their needs. The pool of children for this is relatively small.

The needs of children is increasing and the interventions needed require more staff time out of ratio.

A higher rate for low and emerging 3/4 year olds will help meet this out of ratio staff cost.

Those with complex and medical needs, require the most staff intervention - typically 1:1 (even though we can't call it that) and this enhancement plus the base rate is only enough to meet the staff hourly cost. There is no spare for non contact time, report writing, meetings etc.

Resources to help children development are more and more expensive to buy, every child has a different need, so a different resource is need for each child, plus the one to one time needed for SEN children, decrease the possible attendance, and earning are lower. Not ideal for the times we are all going through.

The need for SENIF is increasing year on year, nurseries are struggling to accommodate SEND child and are losing money, as there is no funding for 2year olds whose parents pay for the child to attend, but the child may have severe needs, which takes up a member of staff. The whole county needs more SEND nurseries to help levitate the strain on mainstream nurseries.

To be able to provide the targeted support that is essential for children with SEN to make good progress we quite often need to enhance our ratios. There is also the cost of specific resources, additional staff time required for writing support plans, meetings with parents, creating visual aids etc. With wage increases these costs are higher than ever.

The current system works well, don't change it.

If you have a child that attends 6 hours a week and qualifies for the £1.13 rate - realistically what is a setting able to do with £6.78 a week or even £27.12 for 4 weeks. How much of an impact will that have on the child? As with most things it is the business that has to suck up the cost/time/staffing and provide additional measures and support for the children in our care. The time it takes in reality to observe/gather evidence/complete an application is financially more costly to the business in staff hours than providing the support for the child without applying for the funding.

There is a need for Sen support within early years settings. By raising the rate it will allow for more children to be supported to achieve their potential.

I don't have any SEN places so hard to know if that's enough or not.

Rates to low to support children needing extra staff. rates do not cover extra wages

We are a setting that prioritise places for children with a very high SEND levels. The majority of the children require an increase in staffing support to maintain their health, safety and provide them with the opportunities to attend an early education setting that can support their complex needs.

The two low and emerging needs need to be brought in line with one another as provision for these children is quite similar

so much needs to be provided to help this children and their development. lack of finances shouldn't stop this from happening

Due to speech being an issue in the current cohorts and speech being left for Early years to be responsible for we need extra funding to allow for these interventions

Children on higher level support often require adult support for a large majority of the day. The payment received helps but does not reflect the hourly rate paid to staff members for this care. As a charity run preschool we have to do lots of fundraising to make up the shortfall. Children on level 3/4 can often require a majority of time to care for them and help with their needs throughout the session and should be brought up in line with level 4/5 in my opinion

costs have risen, so the funding does not cover the amount of cost needed to give the child extra support

2 year old needs SENIF to support them with difficult children to give parents a relief.

post pandemic we are experiencing a higher number of children with additional needs, these may be fairly high initially and decrease as support is in place and development improves / and or needs are more complex ongoing. this impacts all areas within each room and additional staffing is required longer term to ensure consistency in supporting higher interventions - again this comes down to the financial impact on sustainability

We did have a child with complex needs who needed full time support but the supplement does not meet the cost of having an extra member of staff so needs to be increased

None of the current rates reflect the true cost to the provider

The current level of funding does not cover anywhere near the costs of supporting children.

The children banded 3-4 require additional support which is not covered in the funding.

Average below 3 - the SEN need is lower, so we are able to manage with the staff we have.

Average between 3 & 4 - Our experience shows that these children's needs are more complex and we have a greater financial need, i.e more staff

Average is 4 or more - more financial demand, perhaps 1 to 1 needed, currently the hourly rate combined with the base rate will cover this expense.

When supporting children it is important to be able to provide resources and support to parents for the child as well as supporting the child in the setting. We feel working with the parents well will promote to positive partnership and supporting the development of the child. If the money was increased more could be provided for the child which would hopefully prevent their development gap from increasing.

Sometimes we also find parents are unsure how to support their child, so this money would also be used to support them.

Rows 1-2 - Any child who has low and emerging needs at the starting point of their early years journey, I think the rate should match for both rows, as the support required can be more or less dependent on the child not their age rate. Row 3 - No change due to the struggles children face and the support required to look after their care and educational needs.

The time taken to apply for £1.13/£1.15 per hour cancels out the extra amount for a staff to work with a child!!

Unless there is an increase in overall funding from Gov into the DSG then it is better to maintain the existing rate for consistency and sustainability.

The banding and application is easily understood and works.

**Q. From April 2021, SENIF was extended to 2-year-old children. This is financed by reducing the 2-year-old base rate paid to providers. Which of the following would you prefer?**

The continuation of top slicing the allocation to fund additional support for funded 2-year-olds with SEN.

To enable an increase in the 2-year-old base rate consider removing the ability to apply for SEN funding (SENIF) for funded 2-year-olds which would mean each child is funded at the same rate irrelevant of need.

**Comments received:**

More and more 2 year olds are coming through with additional needs, why should they be penalised by not allowing us to claim funding to support their needs.

There is a lot of work/staff/time involved when providing care for a child with additional needs and yet any money received just helps towards the wages if the time a member of staff is spent with a child.

The funds should be allocated appropriate to each child's needs

This goes a small way in acknowledging that these children require a significant amount of additional support.

Again, i have no experience with this, but feel it is only fair to give extra support to those who need it.

Very few 2 year olds are identified that young.

Increased funding would enable EY provision to plan more effectively and meet needs quicker.

I dont agree with 2 year funding, it should not be given to parents who are not working!
I currently recieve SENIF for a 2 year old and it has been invaluable, allowing higher staff ratios and replacing favourite resources which have become damaged. I would not have been able to continue supporting this particular child without the additional support.
Sen funding should not be restricted by age
We do not have 2 year olds in our setting.
Again, unaware
The system appears too complex and should be clearer for settins
We have been able to apply for SENIF for funded 2-year olds which has meant we were able to support children with very low levels of communication and getting them onto the SALT waiting list much earlier.
When a child begins preschool at age 2 they are not entitled to increased funding immediately. We have to welcome them in to the setting, assess and work with them for a period of time before we can begin the process of gathering evidence of their needs. Meaning they are potentially 3 before a claim can be made. So a higher base rate would enable better use of money from the offset.
Being able to apply for SENIF for 2 year olds is really important in meeting children's sometimes very high needs. Without this funding, families would not be able to access vital early education and childcare for their children with SEND.
Ratios are lower for 2 year olds and therefore there is more posibility for small group work
All children aged 2 should have access to 2 year funding at the same rate. Children aged 2 with SEND, generally speaking, are able (with varying degrees of support from the setting) to access and benefit from Early Years education aged two with the universal provision. This 2nd year in the child's preschool life, enables staff to fully understand the child's learning and development needs, whilst focussing on nurture and PSE development. As the child progresses aged 3-4 the learning gaps become grater and more significant, and the child's need can be better identified, the child is physically more mobile and active, and this is then, the time to ensure that if additional funding is required to support the child to access their Early Years entitlement, funds are available.
This is a difficult question to answer as it important for both reasons,
We rely on SENIF for 2 year olds with a high level of need
An overall increase will enable settings to better support the 2-year-olds
As this age group have 1 key Person for 4 children, the funding does not cover the cost.
If the base rate was increased this would offer internal opportunity within providers to use the money accordingly. Consideration needs to be given to whether there is a genuine developmental delay or just 2 year old behaviour, perhaps requesting evidence from professionals to clarify actual delay.
As a setting we currently feel that the 2 year funding rate is fair, It is vital to continue to provide SENIF for 2 years as without this some children in this age bracket will not be able to access settings.
Often Two year old children need extra support with or without SEN but those with extra need will need extra funding.
Again I can't answer this option. Neither is acceptable. Norfolk need to reassess how SEN childrens needs are met. The burden should not be placed on providers to finance SEN places.
All of these things add to a sector already on its knees you are asking us to provide places we cannot afford with no support.
In our position we have our fair share of SEN pupils we manage our budget to accommodate needs of all children



We have found we have to absorb much of the initial early stage costs of supporting children with SEN, or with possible SEN which would be better channelled into the basic rate, particularly for two year olds.
We would prefer a higher base rate for our 2 year olds as this would enable additional support to be put in place within normal ratios and then as needs are identified SENIF funding could be applied for when they are 3.
A higher 2-year-old rate would benefit more settings and allows time to assess if a child is in need of SENIF or needs progression through natural development
consistency of funding
most two year olds wont be assessed for SENif till nearly three or over anyway as their needs havnt shown much at age 2
not all children need the additional funding. additional support should be allocated based on need
For those children who need additional support, not having a pool of funding to use could exclude them from accessing their hours
If a two years old is developing at normal rate, there is no need of extra more complex recourses .
Neither of those options are ideal
The current system works well, don't change it.
The base rate is the most impactful to businesses being able to remain viable for parents to access us
Additional funding would benefit for more severe sen cases.
We support several children aged 2 that present with signs of a disability however these children are not diagnosed with a disability until later on in their education however they still require a high level of support before their official diagnosis. If support is enabled at the earliest point, we are able to start the child off on the best foundations for their learning.
We do not take 2 year olds so this has no effect on us
its fair
This was a good addition to the funding and don't see why it needs to change.
all children regardless of age should be able to be offered SEN funding
Wasting money on children that do not need it
A number of 2yrs do not meet criteria for SENIF but do require additional support - even if only through first term, a higher number of 2-3 yrs have behaviours which require additional support - therefore an equal rate across this age band would enable all needs to be met within receipt of higher base rate
neither choices are fair to settings; two years olds with needs may need the same support as a 3 or 4 year old with SEN needs. Settings may refuse to take SEN children if no funding??
Enabling SENIF 2 years old to have the additional support they need
those with complex needs require further support - which costs money.
Base rate should rise regardless with the current cost of living, SENIF should be an additional support cost, especially as children's development has taken a hit due to covid-19 and various cutbacks across the industry resulting in early years staff dealing with the developmental footfall.
The level of need is high for all 2 year olds- our 2 year old room is a smaller space with lower numbers of children which means that in most cases SEND needs can be met- it would be necessary to continue to have access to exceptional needs funding to enable inclusion for children with complex need irrespective of funding.
Every child has a different need.
I would also like to be able to claim funding for 'paying' children who are banded 4 and above
Historically and currently, our experience shows that the 2 year old children who have SEN needs are not 2 year funded.

If a child has a recognised need for SEND then I feel they should be able to apply for the additional funding because the sooner support and intervention can begin the development gap should stop growing

The base rate £5.50 for 2 year olds is hugely better than the base rate for 3-4 year olds. Our current private rate £5.35 for 2 year olds. We are not support parents who need to go to work whilst competing with local providers but our rate does not meet overhead costs. Top slicing supports both the provision and a child with SEN.

2 year funded children and their families require a lot of both managers and practitioners time. A lot of the families have issues that have not been dealt with appropriately before they arrive at our door. We spend a lot of time building the families trust and work with them to ensure better outcomes for both them and their child, this equates to more than the hourly rate before education even starts!!

Our practitioners identify additional needs in 2 year olds and some extra funding has enabled us to provide appropriate levels of support.

# Schools Forum

Item No.7

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Special Schools Funding: GCSE Provision</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>22 November 2023</b>

## Executive summary

This report summarises the responses to the autumn 2023 consultation with Norfolk schools in relation to the Special Schools Funding formula specifically in relation to GCSE provision from April 2024.

### Schools Forum are asked to:

- **Make a recommendation as to whether the special schools' funding formula for 2024-25 should be amended in respect of GCSE provision, considering the feedback from the autumn 2023 consultation survey.**

## 1. Funding Formula Consultation Summary of Responses

The consultation was launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> October and closed on the 31<sup>st</sup> October, with responses provided as part of the Fair Funding consultation survey alongside the consultation in relation to the Schools Block funding formula.

Details of the consultation responses are provided in the Fair Funding Consultation / National Funding Formula: Part A paper elsewhere on this agenda.

## 2. Context

The top-up model for special schools was reviewed two years ago. At that time, no resources were specifically identified to recognise costs incurred by special schools where pupils can study and sit a high number of GCSEs (greater than 5). As a result, the LA was asked to undertake a second review of that element specifically. In addition, a review of special schools' residential funding was recommended due to the significant period of time since it was last reviewed (being out of scope at the time of the previous funding review).

A Special School's Funding Review group met between March-June to discuss proposals to include within the Fair Funding consultation. Due to the impact that any additional costs will have upon the Safety Valve/Local First Inclusion DSG Management Plan (and the level of DSG block transfers agreed from mainstream schools' budgets), mainstream schools as well as special schools were invited to respond to the proposals affecting special schools' funding.

A proposal for the funding of GCSE provision was discussed with the formula review group and was included within the autumn consultation, details of which are provided in appendix A for reference.

### 3. Survey Responses

The survey asked all schools to respond to the proposal for GCSE funding due to its potential impact on the Safety Valve/Local First Inclusion DSG Management Plan.

The options within the survey were as follows:

**Option 1** - Addition of funding for GCSE provision based on:

- a teaching element of £973 per additional GCSE, for pupils studying for more than 5 GCSE's.
- exam fees, invigilation, and paperwork at £653 per exam entered (there may be more than one exam for some GCSE subjects)

This would be implemented as a new pupil characteristic with separately funded band values for the teaching element and exam element. As this characteristic has not previously been funded within the special schools' band values, and it is intended to be allocated as additional funding for the schools affected, the funding for additional GCSEs would be given in addition to any protection required for all special schools through the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG).

This option is expected to have an additional cost to the High Needs Block of the DSG of c. £0.118m per annum, which will be an increase to the in-year deficit for 2024-25 and will need to be built into the next revision of the DSG recovery plan if agreed.

**Option 2** - No change to current funding arrangements for special schools

A comments box was also provided for further feedback.

**Responses received:**

Option	Number of Responses
Option 1 - Addition of funding for GCSE provision	8
Option 2 - No change to current funding arrangements for special schools	12
No response chosen	8

Option	Number of Schools Represented*
Option 1 - Addition of funding for GCSE provision	9
Option 2 - No change to current funding arrangements for special schools	60
No response chosen	43

\* Including 1 response from Chair of Schools Forum

Option	Number of Pupils Represented
Option 1 - Addition of funding for GCSE provision	1,800
Option 2 - No change to current funding arrangements for special schools	11,687
No response chosen	19,577
<b>Total pupils represented</b>	<b>33,064</b>

Although this proposal related to the funding formula of special schools', all schools were invited to respond to the consultation survey. In total, 69 schools were represented in answers given for the question and the responses received were:

	Supporting proposal	Not Supporting Proposal
Special Schools	4	1
Primary	5	53
Secondary		4
All-Through		1
Other		1
	<b>9</b>	<b>60</b>

Comments from responses received for this question are provided in **appendix B** with information regarding the partial responses received but not submitted in **appendix C**.

Schools Forum are asked to:

- **Make a recommendation as to whether the special schools' funding formula for 2024-25 should be amended in respect of GCSE provision, considering the feedback from the autumn 2023 consultation survey.**

### Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

## **Appendix A – Background Information: GCSE Provision**

A proposal for GCSE provision based on the allocation of additional funding for pupils in special schools that are studying for more than 5 GCSEs at a cost of £1,626 per additional GCSE (with higher cost for subjects with more than one exam paper) is included in the consultation survey.

It is accepted that each school takes the decision on how to provide for GCSEs within their own setting, and there are variations in how schools choose to do this.

Pupils that are attending our ASD/ Communication and Interaction and SEMH schools are likely to be capable of accessing a mainstream style of KS4 provision, and in some schools the pupils may choose from a range of options. The number of GCSEs taken by each pupil will vary depending on ability and the curriculum offer at their school. Most of our Special schools with a mainstream ability intake are/will be offering 5 GCSEs per pupil, and the cost of this level of provision is generally expected to be met within existing pupil funding.

Special schools provided the LA with approximate costs that they thought might be specific to GCSE provision, and those were used to arrive at costings for additional GCSEs provided.

The additional expenses directly attributable to enhanced GCSE provision are:

- specialist teaching time
- additional exam fees, and
- invigilation time.

It was acknowledged that most qualified professionals can deliver other KS4 qualifications, however GCSEs could require specialist teachers (depending on the subject on offer).

We recognise that there are pupils in special schools who may be capable of achieving a higher number of GCSEs than the anticipated five, and to support those pupils the LA is consulting on a proposal whereby some additional funding might be provided to special schools.

The proposal assumes that a young person may access more than 5 GCSEs when predicted attainment is level 4+ in English and maths. Where this might not be the case it would be expected that more time is spent on these core subjects.

The LA has apportioned the teaching costs which could be given to schools as additional funding. It is proposed that this funding could be paid per pupil / per GCSE taken over and above the already anticipated number of five GCSEs.

Assumptions have been made around number of formal teaching sessions per week and the potential teaching time required for a GCSE, as well as average class sizes for GCSEs in special schools.

Estimated cost of 1fte. specialist teacher (potentially covering more than one GCSE subject and based on a class of 6 pupils): Main Pay Range level 6 with SEN 2 allowance (inc. on-costs) = £58,404

<u>Specialist Teaching</u>		
Sessions/hours formally taught in a week (6 per day)	30	
Approx. sessions/hours per week for a GCSE subject	3	
Cost of Teacher for each session (over a whole year)	£1,947	
3 x GCSE lessons per week (for whole year)	£5,840	
Divided by a class of 6	<b>£973</b>	per pupil/per additional exam

In addition, other costs directly attributable to providing an above average level of GCSE provision outside of the specialist teaching are proposed to be covered as follows:

Exam fee		£45	per pupil/per additional exam
<u>Invigilation</u>			
Average number of invigilators required per exam	1.2		
Average number of hours per exam (inc. breaks)	3.24		
Average hourly invigilator requirement per exam	3.89		
Scale D Teaching Assistant (£26,436 inc. on costs)			
hourly rate	£13.74		
Total cost of invigilation per exam		£53.42	per pupil/per additional exam
<u>Paperwork</u>			
Hours required per GCSE (based on OCR qualification)	12		
Teacher hourly rate (MPR6 with on-costs)	£46.17		
Total cost of paperwork		£554.03	per pupil/per additional exam
<b>Total exam costs per additional exam</b>		<b>£653</b>	(rounded up)

The total of all these elements together gives a per pupil / per exam costing of £1,626, which could be funded for all pupils taking any number of GCSEs over and above the anticipated five.



As an example, a special school with 10 pupils who completed 7 GCSE's (2 above the anticipated number) could receive additional funding of £32,520 (based on one exam per subject).

Should this option be taken forward, the LA proposes that the funding will be split into two parts. Initially, the teaching element (£973) would be given to enable the school to set up the additional GCSE and fund the teacher. When the pupil is entered for the exam, the LA would then fund the remainder (£653 per pupil per exam).

This split is because the LA has been informed that young people may study a GCSE but then not take the exam, and therefore the school may not incur the exam costs.

In order to allocate funding, the LA would obtain data in advance from all the relevant special schools based on the number of pupils that are expected to take more than five GCSEs, and the number of additional exams over and above the five. The pupils will all be expected to have predicted grades of 4+ in English and maths. This data would be used to fund the initial specialist teaching element via top-ups. The second funding element for exam fees, invigilation and paperwork would be allocated retrospectively for those pupils who are entered into the GCSE exams.

Based on the number of children achieving and sitting more than five GCSEs previously, the estimated financial impact of implementing this proposal is approximately **£0.118m** per year, split between the following schools as follows:

School	Estimated number of qualifications attracting funding	Estimated funding (teaching element £973)	Estimated funding (exam fees, invigilation and paperwork £653 per paper)	Totals
Fen Rivers	20	19,460	33,303	<b>£52,763</b>
Eaton Hall	4	3,852	6,661	<b>£10,513</b>
Bure Park	0	-	-	<b>£0</b>
The Wherry	19	18,297	31,638	<b>£49,935</b>
Duke of Lancaster	2	1,926	3,330	<b>£5,256</b>
	<b>45</b>	<b>£43,535</b>	<b>£74,932</b>	<b>£118,467</b>

## **Appendix B - Special Schools' Funding Review – GCSE provision**

Comments verbatim as submitted through the survey, including if there appear to be errors in understanding of the factual data provided.

### **In support of option 1 – addition of funding for GCSE provision in special schools' formula**

*'ability to provide for capabilities of students to avoid going to special schools meaning life chances being limited - enabling all to flourish and achieve full potential.'*

*'We support this proposal, however please do not forget the impact that other accredited courses can place onto Special Schools (ASDAN, Towards Independence, TITAN etc)'*

*'I am supportive of the LA recognising the additional cost of ensuring the children are able to reach their potential in terms of qualifications, but I do not agree that the costs are limited to GCSE grade 4 passes. I am not supportive of the proposal as set out, but would be supportive of a wider funding criteria which included ALL pupils being able to achieve their potential even if that isn't a GCSE pass.'*

*'In principle, this is absolutely necessary as children in special schools should be able to access more than five GCSE's if they are capable of taking them. But the risk to the DSG High Needs deficit cannot be underrated. Can the costs be monitored and reported back to School's Forum to assess the impact of this extra funding?'*

*'Special schools need to be financially supported to ensure that children who are able to study for more than 5 GCSEs have their needs fully met as a matter of principle of inclusion.'*

### **In support of option 2 – no change to current funding arrangements for special schools**

*'This could be seen as discriminating in favour of the needs of the most able pupils. This requires a further discussion around similar arrangements for qualifications offered in the majority of special schools e.g. entry level functional skills qualifications.'*

*'We feel this should be up to each individual school in question to decide upon and budget accordingly.'*

*'As this has a direct impact on the funding for mainstream schools I cannot support this.'*

*'It doesn't appear clear to me as to why this particular aspect of special schools funding needs to change, and why it is not included as part of existing funding.'*

## Appendix C - Partial Responses and Online Sessions Feedback

A summary of the 57 partially completed response to the consultation survey received by the LA is provided in the Fair Funding Consultation / National Funding Formula: Part A paper elsewhere on this agenda.

### 1.5 Special Schools' GCSE Funding

**Survey question: Which option do you prefer?**

Option	Number of Responses
Option 1 - Addition of funding for GCSE provision	1*
Option 2 - No change to current funding arrangements for special schools	0
No response chosen	0

\*The response was from a primary school

#### Comments:

*'To give all children the opportunities they need to go on to succeed in adulthood.'*

## SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN – 2023/24 Academic Year

**I – Information & Discussion    D- Decision**

	Autumn Term			Spring Term			Summer Term	
<b>29/9/23</b> (Friday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>September (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Provisional DSG Allocations for 2024/25 and Fair Funding Consultation for Mainstream Schools' Formula  Early Years Funding Consultation  Special Schools Funding Review	I  D  D  D	<b>26/01/24</b> (Friday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>January (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Election of Chair/Vice Chair  Review Membership  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Proposed DSG Budget including central costs  Pupil variations 2024/25  Special Schools Residential Funding	D  D  I  D  I  D	<b>17/05/24</b> (Friday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>May (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Dedicated Schools Grant 2023/24 Outturn  Annual Audit Report (Norfolk Audit Service)	I  I  I
<b>22/11/23</b> (Wednesday)  09:00 – 13:00	<b>November (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Early Years Block 2024/25 Funding Formula Update (inc. consultation outcomes)  Schools Block (inc. consultation outcomes and Schools Block transfer)  De-delegation/Central Schools Services Block  Special Schools Funding Consultation	I  D  D  D  D	<b>13/03/24</b> (Wednesday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>March (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Agree next year's plan  Final pupil variations (only if changed from January)	I  D  I	<b>10/07/24</b> (Wednesday)  09:00 – 12:00	<b>July (Cranworth Room CH)</b>  Strategic Planning (inc. Local First Inclusion)  Updates on Scheme for Financing Schools (Financial Regulations)  Dedicated Schools Grant Consultation Preparation	I  D  I