
For Decision

Review of De-delegation of the Dedicated Schools Grant

For maintained mainstream schools only, the formula mechanism contains options for schools to choose to de-delegate an amount from their formula allocation to contribute to Local Authority services that work to support them. Academies can buy back into any of these services.

Schools' Forum (Maintained Mainstream only) is required to recommend the de-delegated items each year. A paper was presented at the last Schools' Forum meeting on 2 November 2023 which proposed to continue with the de-delegated items as in 2023/24, however members did not approve the recommendations and it was agreed to come back to a future meeting with some proposals on each of the areas included.

Free School Meals Benefits Checking (per FSM6)

This service is provided by the Revenue and Benefits team within the Local Authority and completes Free School Meals Benefits checks on behalf of maintained schools. The number of children who are entitled to Free School Meals has a direct correlation with the amount of Pupil Premium Grant and school budget deprivation funding that a school can be allocated, with a reduction in numbers meaning a reduction in grant and school budget funding received.

Recommendation 1 - Schools' Forum are asked to agree one of the options detailed below:

Option 1 – continue to provide de-delegation funding for this service at £5.51 per FSM6 (£5.25 in 2023/24).

Option 2 – Do not continue to provide de-delegation funding for the service which will result in the service no longer being provided.

Trade Union Facilities Time

The de-delegated funding for Trade Union Facilities funds the entitlement to time off for teacher trade union duties and activities.

Employees who are union representatives of a trade union recognised by their employer are entitled to reasonable time off, during working hours and without loss of pay, to carry out union duties and undergo relevant training.

Trade union duties include:

- negotiations with the employer, or other functions connected with the subjects of collective bargaining, such as terms and conditions, redundancy and dismissal arrangements;
- preparations for negotiations, including attending relevant meetings;
- informing members of progress and outcomes of negotiations;
- matters of discipline (e.g. accompanying employees to internal hearings); and
- attending training in aspects of industrial relations relevant to carrying out their trade union duties. This training must be approved by the Trades Union Congress or by the trade union of which he/she is an official.

In Local Authorities where the Schools' Forum has decided not to de-delegate funding, individual schools manage their own facility time budget. This allows flexibility: schools may choose to organise their own facility time arrangements, buy into local authority services or pool funding with other schools.

In Bury, currently 31 of the 33 academies buy into the local arrangements.

Without de-delegation, or a high level of buy-back from maintained schools and academies, it is possible that there would not be sufficient funds for a locally co-ordinated arrangement and schools may need to organise their own facility time arrangements.

Recommendation 2 - Schools' Forum are asked to agree one of the options detailed below:

Option 1 – continue to provide de-delegation funding for this service at £4.41 per pupil (£4.20 in 2023/24).

Option 2 – Do not continue to provide de-delegation funding for the service with schools managing their own facility time or choosing to buy into a traded service for the locally co-ordinated arrangement, if this remains viable.

Local Authority School Improvement

The way in which the Local Authority School Improvement service is funded has changed with the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage grant received from government removed, and the ability for de-delegation of funding to be used when approved by Schools' Forum.

This funding was agreed by Schools' Forum in 2023/24 and it is proposed to continue with this funding at a value of £15.75 per pupil for 2024/25 (£15.00 in 2023/24).

The funding provides for the following:

- 2 School Assurance Officers
- Headteacher mentoring programme
- Headteacher conferences (academy schools are charged)
- Contribution to Headspace programme
- Secondary School Improvement
- Universal Quality Assurance (QA) Visit

Academies do not benefit and are charged separately apart from the universal QA visit, however not all academies take this up.

Recommendation 3 - Schools' Forum are asked to agree one of the options detailed below:

Option 1 – continue to provide de-delegation funding for this service at £15.75 per pupil for 2024/25.

Option 2 – Do not continue to provide de-delegation funding for the service with maintained schools managing their own school improvement service by way of individual buy back with the Local Authority.

Schools Causing Concern

As a local authority, the service works within the "Schools Causing Concern" guidance (updated Jan 2024). This details schools that are eligible for intervention. In addition to this the Schools' Assurance Team use information from quality assurance visits to analyse where there is need.

Funds are then allocated to maintained schools to address specific needs. Early intervention is a key use of this fund for maintained schools.

Recommendation 4 - Schools' Forum are asked to agree one of the options detailed below:

Option 1 – continue to provide de-delegation funding for this service at £6.62 per pupil for 2024/25.

Option 2 - Do not continue to provide de-delegation funding for the service.