

Consultation on school, early years and 14-16 funding 2008-11

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 1 June 2007

Your comments must reach us by that date.

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**THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Education and Skills e-consultation website (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations>).**

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

**Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.**

**Name** Steve Dainty  
**Organisation (if applicable)** Wirral Schools Forum  
**Address:** C/o Wallasey Town Hall  
Brighton Street  
Wallasey

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact e-mail:  
[SchoolFunding.Questions@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolFunding.Questions@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:  
Telephone: 01928 794888; or email: [consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:  
Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 311

e-mail: [consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

Please tick one of the boxes below that best describes you as a respondent

<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Authority	<b>X Schools Forum</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joint LA and Schools Forum
<input type="checkbox"/>	Headteacher Association	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Leader
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other School Staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	Early Years Provider	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14-19 Partnership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/>		Teacher or Support Staff Union
		<input type="checkbox"/>		Bursar/School Business Manager
		<input type="checkbox"/>		14-19 Provider
		<input type="checkbox"/>		Pupil or student

Please Specify:

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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Please Specify:

Which Local Authority area do you come under? WIRRAL

Comments:

If you are a school respondent, please tick as appropriate

<input type="checkbox"/> Nursery	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary
<input type="checkbox"/> Special	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	

Please Specify:

If you are an early years provider, which setting are you from?

<input type="checkbox"/> Early Years Providers - Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Years Provider - Voluntary	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Centre
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Please Specify:

CHAPTER 2: THE DISTRIBUTION OF DSG TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Page 12, para 23

1 Do you agree that the 'proportionality test' should be removed from the criteria used by local authorities and Schools Forums to decide whether there should be a contribution from the centrally retained Schools Budget to local authority combined services budgets in support of ECM outcomes?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree		

Comments:

No further Comments

Page 21, para 41

2 Which method of distribution would you prefer for the period 2008-11: Spend plus or single formula?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend plus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Formula
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Comments

The Forum believes that this is suitable time to return to a formula for funding local authorities

Page 23, para 49

3 Should we move the pupil number count used for Dedicated Schools Grant allocations from January back to the preceding autumn?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

**X Disagree**

Strongly disagree

Comments:

The current arrangements have not been in place for a sufficient time to allow a judgement to be made as to whether there is an inherent difficulty in the count date.

This proposal would cause difficulties because of the different counts for under 5's. It is suggested that this should be reviewed again at the end of the next CSR period.

Page 26, para 61

4 In the long term, which method of counting under 5s would you prefer: headcount or provision based?

Headcount

Provision based

Comments:

Existing arrangements.

Page 28, para 71

5 Which method of transferring funding for academies should we use: the current method or the recoupment method?

Current

Recoupment

Comments:

Page 28, para 72

6 Should pupils at academies for whom individually assigned SEN resources are allocated, be included on form 8B?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments:

Page 31, para 81

7 Should we consider using geographical based indicators such as Acorn and Mosaic in the distribution of DSG?

Strongly agree

Agree

**X Neither agree nor disagree**

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments:

Deprivation indicators do not recognise that there is a level of support required for all children. Funding should be established through a needs led approach before the additional problems of deprivation are considered.

Page 31, para 81



8 Are there other deprivation indicators that we could consider?

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Comments:

Page 32, para 84

9 Should we seek to target funding at pockets of deprivation in less deprived authorities?

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	

Comments:

Not if this funding is diverted from that proposed for all deprived children.

Page 32, para 84

10 If so, which method of distribution should we use?

Per pupil grant

Threshold based

Comments:

Page 33, para 87

11 Would a grant for exceptional circumstances be a helpful addition to the flexibility of the system?

Strongly agree

**X Agree**

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments:

This should however be additional funding not a top slice of current resources.

CHAPTER 3: SCHOOL FUNDING FROM 2008-09

Page 38, para 99

12 How would you prefer the Central Expenditure Limit to be set: by the current method; or through the simpler comparison between cash increases in Dedicated Schools Grant and ISB?

**Current method**

Cash comparison

Comments:

Page 41, para 113

13 Do you agree that we should remove the asymmetry from the Minimum Funding Guarantee methodology?

Strongly agree

Agree

**Neither agree nor disagree**

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments:

14 Do you agree that we should allow authorities to agree with their schools changes to the MFG methodology which affect up to 50% of their schools, as opposed to the current 20% limit?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree		

Comments:

15 Are there other changes to the decision making process on MFG variations that you would like to see considered – such as requiring there to be a majority of both primary and secondary school representatives in favour of a proposal?

Comments:

Do not agree with this suggestion.

16 Should we continue with the 1% headroom between the MFG and DSG minimum increase or should we reduce the margin?

1% headroom

Reduce margin

Comments:

Page 45, para 126

17 Do you agree that the assessment of cost pressures feeding into the MFG should take account of efficiency savings, and thus lead to a lower level of MFG?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments:

Page 45, para 126

18 Should we go further than this, and reduce the MFG to below average cost pressures in the second and subsequent years of the CSR?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments:

Page 48, para 135

19 Would a levy on balances and extra guidance be effective in reducing the current level of excessive balances?

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Strongly disagree</b>	

Comments:

Page 49, para 139

20 Should we amend the Schools Forum regulations so that other members of school senior management teams, including Bursars, can be elected as schools members?

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	

Comments:

Headteachers and Governors have responsibility for school finances and are accountable. Although SMT might contribute to the discussion it seems more appropriate to leave the membership as it currently stands.

Page 49, para 142

21 Do you agree that all local authorities should have non-schools members from the early years sector and 14-19 partnerships?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

**X Disagree**

Strongly disagree

Comments:

It would be difficult to find anyone who could represent such a diverse group of establishments and who would feel able to agree to a decision that would affect all of them.

Page 49, para 142

22 Should we raise the current maximum proportion of non-schools members above 20%?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

**Disagree**

**Strongly disagree**

Comments:

CHAPTER 4: FUNDING FOR SPECIALISED DIPLOMAS AT 14-16

Page 54, para 157

23 Do you agree that funding for specialised diplomas for 14-16 year olds should be through a specific formula grant?

Strongly agree

**Agree**

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree



Comments:

Page 57, para 170

24 Are the three models for distributing funding for specialised diplomas at 14-16 to the front line the right range of options?

Comments:

Yes

Page 57, para 170

25 Do you agree that we should leave the choice of which option to local discretion?

Strongly agree

**X Agree**

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Comments:

Page 60, para 176

26 Do you agree that the LSC funding methodology should be used as the basis of setting the cost of partnership provision to schools, with local discretion to reflect the varying costs of provision and funding levels received by schools?

  

Strongly agree

Disagree

  

Agree

Strongly disagree

**X Neither agree nor disagree**

Comments:

There is some concern about introducing a system that will be difficult to administer, could increase bureaucracy and lead to potential conflict amongst schools and providers.

CHAPTER 5: EARLY YEARS FUNDING

Page 68, para 207

27 Do you agree that local authorities should introduce a standardised method for calculating the unit of funding for early years provision in maintained and PVI settings for the coming CSR period?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

**Disagree**

Strongly disagree

Comments:

It would not be possible to introduce such a change for April 2008.

28 How long would it take local authorities to develop, consult on and implement such a standardised method?

Comments:

29 Do you agree that local authorities should use the same methods to calculate pupil numbers in maintained and PVI settings for the coming CSR period?

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	

Comments:

Not convinced that there is any reason to change the current methodology.

30 Do you agree that we should retain a single budget calculation point for early years provision in the maintained sector?

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	

Comments:

31 Which of the options at paragraph 211, a-c, or an alternative approach, would improve the alignment of the funding systems for PVI providers and maintained schools and be achievable within funding constraints?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Places	<input type="checkbox"/>	Termly estimates	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guaranteed Minimum
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other.				

Comments:

Do not agree with this.

32 Would moving to a single formula for funding the free entitlement across maintained and PVI providers better enable local authorities to commission flexible provision?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree		

Comments:

Page 72, para 220

33 If so, over what timescale would it be practical to implement such a formula?

Comments:

Page 73, para 223

34 We would welcome views on whether further changes or guidance are needed to develop this wider function of Schools Forums in relation to the Every Child Matters agenda.

Comments:

It is too early in the development of the ECM agenda to decide that change is necessary. It is more appropriate to allow a period of stability over the next CSR period and then instigate a review. The position can be monitored during that period.

35 Would separately identifying funding for the early years entitlement help local authorities to ensure that the free entitlement is funded appropriately?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree		

Comments:

CHAPTER 6: SPECIFIC GRANTS

36 Do you agree that we should merge SSG and SSG (P) from 2008 09?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree		

Comments:

Page 79, para 245

37 In taking forward changes to the distribution of SDG over the period 2008-11, which method of transition would you prefer: (a) a cash (0%) floor; (b) a floor below 0%, to be set by DfES?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cash (0%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Below 0% DfES
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Comments:

Page 79, para 247

38 Should make payments of specific grants to academies from the Department rather than through local authorities from 2008-09?

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	



Comments:

39 Do you have any other comments about the consultation?

Comments:

40 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation. For instance did you have any difficulty understanding any of the questions and did you think we had the right number or type of questions?

Comments:

This consultation paper is extremely technical and in some parts hard to understand even for those steeped in the particular area to which it refers. If you are interested in obtaining the opinions of a wider group of partners involved in delivering the ECM agenda then it would be better if the technical detail was separated from the principle. This would make it more understandable and easier to comment on.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply**

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website:  
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 1 June 2007

Send by post to: Consultation Unit, Area 1a, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn Cheshire WA7 2GJ

Send by e-mail to: [schoolfunding.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:schoolfunding.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)