

Consultation on the Schools Block Funding Arrangements and Service De-delegations 2026/27

Consultation Analysis and Comments



Overall response rates to the consultation from all schools and academies is 28.48% (178 total responses), meaning that 71.52% of schools and academies have not participated in the consultation.

As this is the first year that the local authority has consulted on a school's block transfer to the high needs block, analysis has also been provided showing the average response rate of the previous two years consultation. Please note however that previous year's consultations were predominately regarding de-delegations which are only applicable to maintained schools. The analysis shows that there has been a minimal increase in responses and percentage rate from the maintained sector.

Total Schools			Responses		
Type	Total Types	Total County Responses	Type	Count	% of Total 26..27
Primary	481	29.31%	Primary	141	79.21%
Secondary	82	24.39%	Secondary	20	11.24%
Nursery	24	41.67%	Nursery	10	5.62%
Short Stay	9	33.33%	Short Stay	3	1.69%
Special	29	13.79%	Special	4	2.25%
Total	625	28.48%	Total	178	100.00%

Comparision			
Year	Total Types	Total Responses	Total Response %
26/27	501	178	35.53%
25/26	517	174	33.66%
24/25	538	164	30.48%
Average			33.22%



School Block Transfer

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposal of a 0.5% transfer from Schools Block to the High Needs Block to assist with pressures facing the High Needs Block?				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Primary	141	69	52	20
		49%	37%	14%
Secondary	19	6	12	1
		32%	63%	5%
Other	18	8	6	4
		44%	33%	22%
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Total	178	83	70	25
		47%	39%	14%

Q1 Comments:

A loss of above £13,000 to maintained nursery schools would have significant impact on our setting, particularly as we are in financial difficulty. However, the support from Schools Finance has been central in our recovery plan and so this should be continued.

Any reduction in funding will make our existence as a school even more difficult.

Whilst I understand the reasoning behind the 0.5% transfer to High Needs Block this doesn't address the root cause of chronic underfunding at central government level which collectively we need to apply pressure on the DFE to resolve. This is exacerbated by the perfect storm of rising costs and a sustained falling roll. It appears schools are being 'penalised' for a failure by central government to address the underlying issues and this option is the unsustainable 'stop gap'. Whilst this is no criticism of those who have the unenviable task of trying to strike a balanced budget I cannot support the 0.5% option for the reasons outlined above.

Our response to Q6 regarding the 0.5% transfer of funding, is due to the belief that the shortfall in SEND/HNB funding is a national issue which the Government urgently needs to address. The solution should not (cannot) be found in the Schools Block - schools are dealing with their own financial pressures, not least the significant impact of the increase in Employer NI costs, which is not fully funded.

As a small school, where the budget is already tight, it would add extra financial difficulties if funding was to be transferred to the high needs block.

We can see clearly the need for the authority to be able to relieve some of the pressures on the High Needs Block. We feel that this is a collective duty and a moral imperative that we should support as a school. However, it is very frustrating given that this shortfall can be predicted, that this money should be taken from a budget that is already set, particularly within the second half of the financial year. This places undue stress on schools' budget management and financial planning. It would be good, if coming out of this consultation,



the LA could consider if they need to repeat this process and include this in the budget preparation information that is provided in January/February 2026 for the 2026/2027 budgets.

I appreciate that additional needs requires more funding but I am unsure if this should come from our budget while we are also managing higher-needs pupils from our own budget.

The timing of the 0.5% is terrible, as an academy this comes half way through a financial year and has not ben budgeted for

Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

Question 2: Do you agree that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) level should mirror the National Funding Formula in the Lancashire formula in 2026/27?				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Primary	141	121	3	17
		86%	2%	12%
Secondary	19	17	1	1
		89%	5%	5%
Other	18	11	3	4
		61%	17%	22%
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Total	178	149	7	22
		84%	4%	12%

Q2 Comments:

I clicked 'not sure' re the MFG as we are a small school with Trustees who own our building and I am aware that this is not currently covered within the MFG and we would not be able to sustain this within our budgets if this were not put into our budgets through School's Forum



Service De-delegations

Question 3: What is your preferred de-delegation option for 'Staff Costs - Public Duties/Suspensions' in 2026/27?						
	Total Responses	Continue at the 2025/26 levels	Continue but reduce Trade Union Facilities Time contribution	Continue but no Trade Union Facilities Time contribution	Completely discontinue	Not sure
Primary	141	74	23	8	9	27
		52%	16%	6%	6%	19%
Secondary	19	13	3	2	1	0
		68%	16%	11%	5%	0%
Total Pri & Sec	160	87	26	10	10	27
		54%	16%	6%	6%	17%

Question 4: Do you support the de-delegation of funding for the Heritage Learning Team in 2026/27? (Primary schools only)				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Primary	141	66	49	26
		47%	35%	18%

Q4 Comments:

I have seen no impact of the Heritage learning team this year I may have missed something hence why I have said no.

Could you look into when the schools that benefit from the de-delegated Heritage Team are located? Schools in specific areas may get the benefit from this service where others may not.

For the other areas- not all schools can easily access or benefit from the Heritage Learning Team (availability, high travel costs to reach venues)- does the Learning Team have the capacity to provide equal experiences to every single Lancashire Primary School? If not, I believe it should be a schools choice whether to engage with this or not.

With regards to heritage learning- we pay an additional charge for history loan boxes so I am unsure what we can gain for the de-delegation funding from this.



Question 5: Do you support the de-delegation of Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty in 2026/27?				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Primary	141	92	29	20
		65%	21%	14%
Secondary	19	16	1	2
		84%	5%	11%

		Yes	No	Not sure
Total Pri & Sec	160	108	30	22
		68%	19%	14%

Q5 Comments:

Can we be assured that delegated funding for schools in financial difficulty from primary schools goes solely to primary schools in financial difficulty and not special or secondary schools? Do we receive a breakdown of how many and which type of schools this involves at the end of each year? With smaller numbers on roll expected will we be propping up small schools for a period as they merge or move towards possible closure, which I would understand as this would be tricky and maybe necessary. Could some of this money be used for converting shrinking mainstream schools to satellite special schools which are so badly and urgently needed?

Question 6: Do you support the de-delegation of funding for Children's Champion Functions in 2026/27?				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Primary	141	49	54	38
		35%	38%	27%
Secondary	19	8	9	2
		42%	47%	25%

		Yes	No	Not sure
Total Pri & Sec	160	57	63	40
		36%	39%	25%



Q6 Comments:

I would support further funding for Children's Champion if this support was still going to be offered to children at risk of perm ex. Nothing has replaced this support. Schools are really struggling to engage appropriate, impactful support from external agencies when they have a child at risk of perm ex. Thank you

My concern is that we are potentially going to lose money from existing budgets. I feel that Children's Champions are duplicating much of the work already done in schools. In principle they could be a good idea but in practice we have found them unhelpful.

We have had minimal support from CC's and funding could be better used to support staffing on our own setting.

Concern that access to IEST is limited to 2 in a year - need to understand the finances and impact - therefore have responded not sure on Children's Champions.

The Children's Champion I worked with was fabulous, but it just seems like another hoop to jump through before anything can be done to support SEND children who are (in my opinion) the children most likely of exclusion because they are in the wrong setting for their needs.

And again, a lot of schools in deprived areas have had their own version of a Children's Champion for years - employed as staff, in school, getting to know the children and families and not just a person (or 5!) at the end of a phone or email. The Attendance officers - who now have very little to do schools face to face - could possibly take on this role - are we seeing any improvements in attendance across county because of the step-back from the Attendance Officers?

Children's Champions were introduced to support children at risk of permanent exclusion, with the aim of reducing permanent exclusion across the county. They have not succeeded in doing this, moreover if you speak to Headteachers and pastoral teams across Lancashire their frustration is that using Children's Champions has become a hoop to jump through because they do not offer any advice that pastoral teams at schools have not already tried. On the other hand, the investment in a stronger attendance team has had a positive impact.

Children's Champions - I do not see what they have brought in terms of reduction of the number of exclusions or what they add to what our pastoral teams already provide and suggest on the journey that we have in trying to amend young people's behaviours to keep them in school.

General comments

Having worked in Lancashire schools for over 30 years, all my answers relate to value for money. I feel the LA needs to provide schools with their fair allocations and reduce spending on the wages of home/office based 'decision makers' and put the money where the need is - on the ground putting staff in schools. The High Needs Block funding is a particularly good example of this - the pressures are in schools and devising new 'projects' with 'drop-in' teams or creating new 'pen-pushing' roles has clearly not worked in the past few years. Good staff need to be incentivised to stay in schools using the school budget, not lured to Outreach roles.



Much deeper scrutiny of the INMIS (formerly Out of County) spending is necessary.

My biggest issue is the intended way to fund SEND provision in mainstream schools - this is not fair on non-SEND children.

I would like to use the money in my budget to buy in what I need for the children in my school.

Give money to schools without de-delegation and allow schools to choose how to spend its allocated money

Schools need more funds. SEND is in crisis and schools are unable to pay for the right support for children who need it. Funding per pupil needs to rise - many schools are looking at budget deficits over the next three years. How can this be allowed to continue?

Our budget is so tight, we are struggling to provide the support for children with SEN in our school. To take more from our budget is to take away from those children directly and makes our job even more difficult. We are aware of the acute need for more funding in SEN provision across the board, but it cannot and should not come from the budgets of schools who are trying their best to meet the needs of children with SEND in our setting. Budget is also the reason for the decision on heritage learning. "

As a school we do not get enough financial support for students with identified learning needs. Referrals get sent back to school (as thresholds get higher and higher), so everything must be done in house otherwise students are not supported to succeed. Where does the money come from?

It is disappointing that de-delegation for Inclusion Hubs is now not taking place as this is an invaluable service for schools whilst also saving considerable amounts to LCC and supporting pupils and reducing Permanent Exclusions. The purpose of the Hubs at their inception was to provide timely school to school support, to help colleagues in times of crisis which in turn helps the pupils in crisis, the loss of this will no doubt see the increase of permanent exclusions of our most vulnerable of pupils county wide which in turn will cause problems in terms of lack of school settings not to mention the detrimental effect on the pupils themselves.

We are a small school and despite making significant cutbacks in every area of our budget, including staffing. We are constantly struggling to stay out of deficit. It is an uncomfortable and unpleasant way to manage the budget year on year. Our income for disadvantaged children (Pupil Premium) is skewed negatively towards us as many of our families lie just above the threshold of deprivation. Disadvantaged families are not just those on a specific low income; disadvantage takes on many forms, which impact on our children and families, however these are not recognised, and we are not remunerated for these reasons, to best support the many families who require significant resources and support

SEND - want to support the high needs difficulties but unsure on the impact to mainstream education if taken from schools block

