

Schools Forum

20 June 2024

Consultation Timetable 2024-25

This report relates to maintained and academy schools and is for information.

Recommendation

Schools Forum is recommended to:

1. The representatives from maintained schools are asked to note the timetable for de-delegation consultation for 2025-26.
2. All Schools Forum representatives are asked to note the estimated timetable for any potential need to consult with schools on any potential transfers between schools funding blocks, for example, from the Schools Block DSG to the High Needs Block.

1. Introduction

1.1 The following Schools Forum representatives are required to note the respective timetable proposals:

- De-delegation of funding from mainstream maintained schools - **maintained school representatives**
- To transfer up to 0.5% from, for example, the Schools Block DSG to, the High Needs Block DSG – **all Schools Forum representatives**

2. De-delegation

2.1 De-delegation is an option that enables some services to maintained schools to be provided centrally and the funding (from the Schools Block) to do so be retained by the local authority. If de-delegation stops then the centrally retained funding would be delegated in the main school budget and the local authority would either stop providing or charge for the service.

- 2.2 For information, the services approved by Schools Forum-maintained schools representatives for de-delegation in 2024-25 were as follows:

| Service | Primary | Secondary |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Free Schools Meal Eligibility | ✓ | ✓ |
| English as an Additional Language | ✓ | ✓ |
| Trade Union Facility Time Funding | ✓ | ✓ |
| School Improvement | ✓ | x |
| Gypsy and Romany Travellers | ✓ | x |
| Behaviour Support Services | ✓ | x |
| Medical Referrals for Employees | ✓ | x |

- 2.3 Please note when DfE removed the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant allocated to Local Authorities (which came into effect from April 2023). The Secretary of State retained the power to approve the de-delegation contrary to the decision of Schools Forum. This is to ensure councils are adequately funded to exercise their core school improvement activities should Schools Forum not be in favour of the de- delegation.
- 2.4 For 2024/25 the School Improvement reserve will be utilised to fund activity that was previously funded by the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant. For 2025/26, the de-delegation timetable and proposals will include this activity.
- 2.5 Warwickshire currently has 1 secondary maintained school and 108 maintained primary schools.
- 2.6 The proposed de-delegation timetable is as follows:

| Date | Action |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Monday, 24 June 2024 | Consultation sent to all maintained Primary and Secondary Schools (Headteachers and Chairs of Governors) |
| Friday, 13 September 2024 | Deadline for Schools to respond to the consultation |
| Thursday, 26 September 2024 | Schools Forum receive responses from schools and make de-delegation decisions for 2025/26 budgets. |

4. **National Funding Formula and 0.5% transfer between Blocks**

- 4.1 Since the introduction of the National Funding Formula from 1 April 2018, Warwickshire Schools Forum, with the approval of councillors, has endeavoured to stay as close to the 'hard' formula as possible, sometimes the affordability of the NFF due to the funding allocation does not make this possible.

- 4.2 The first indication of Warwickshire’s funding for 2025-26 is expected to be towards the end of August 2024 when the ESFA publishes indicative DSG allocations. These will be based on October 2023 school census data pupil numbers and will be updated in December 2024 to reflect the actual October 2024 census data.
- 4.3 Financial modelling will be undertaken when the indicative DSG allocations are published in August to understand the overall affordability of continuing with the steady state and what headroom may be available to fund other options. One of these may be, for example, the transfer of up to 0.5% of schools block DSG to the High Needs Block.
- 4.4 The proposed timetable for consulting schools and schools’ forum on funding proposals for 2025-26 is detailed in the table below. Please note that the ESFA have not yet confirmed the Disapplication deadline for 2025/26 and therefore this timetable is subject to change. If the deadline changes, the Extraordinary Schools Forum meeting scheduled for 5/7 November may also need to change.

| Date | Action |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Monday, 16 September 2024 | Provisional date to send out consultation to schools on any changes to the ‘soft’ National Funding Formula and proposals on any transfer between schools block. Consultation will run for 5 weeks. |
| Thursday, 5/7 November 2024 | Provisional dates for extraordinary Schools Forum to discuss outcomes from consultation with schools. |
| Friday, 15/22 November 2024 | Estimated Deadline for submitting any disapplication to the ESFA to move funding between schools block. |

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