

Schools Forum

1 October 2020

De-Delegation of Schools Block Budget for 2021-22

This report relates to representatives of maintained schools only.

Recommendations

Representatives of maintained schools agree the timetable for the consultation of De-Delegation for services in 2021-22

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. De-delegation is an option that enables some services to maintained schools to be provided centrally and the funding 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.
- 1.2. The purpose of the report is for the Forum to agree the timetable for de-delegation of a range of services for 2021-22. De-delegation is a series of decisions which the Schools Forum is required to take on an annual basis.
- 1.3. If any information is released which suggests a revised approach is needed prior to the December meeting of the Schools Forum a note and revised timetable will be circulated to Forum members.

2. De-Delegated Services

2.1. The services which were de-delegated to schools by school phase in 2020-21 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

A brief description and proposed cost of the services in 2021/22 is as follows:

2.2. Free School Meals Eligibility - £0.63 per pupil

This funds the administration process of free school meals. Services are also traded through WES. If de-delegation is not continued, as with academy schools where Warwickshire's service is not purchased, schools will need to develop their own systems for receiving applications, checking eligibility on a regular basis and responding to any queries or complaints from parents. Parents will no longer be able to apply for Free School Meals via Warwickshire County Council's Customer Service Centre or website and schools will not have access to real-time eligibility data or the dedicated Department for Work and Pensions helpline (only available to Local Authorities)

2.3. English as an Additional Language (EAL) - £4.35 per pupil

Support includes initial language assessment and reports, meetings with parents, guidance on admission and induction arrangements, short term targeted intervention and advice on EAL pedagogy, at no cost to the school. Services are also traded through WES.

2.4. Trade Union Facility Time - £2.60 per pupil

The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 creates a statutory right for Union Representatives of recognised unions to reasonable paid time off from employment to carry out trade union duties and to undertake trade union training. In order to comply with these Regulations, WCC operates a county wide “pool” arrangement covering all maintained schools, whereby appointed union representatives of each of the recognised unions attend consultative meetings (e.g. policy implementation) on a county basis and are also called upon to represent members in individual schools. This pool arrangement avoids schools needing to establish individual bargaining arrangements.

Where appointed representatives are absent from the classroom to attend to their union duties, the school where they are employed are reimbursed from this centrally held budget, for the cost of a supply/cover teacher. The implications of this budget being delegated to schools would be that there would be no further reimbursement of supply cover arrangements which would have a disproportionate effect on the schools that employ union representatives leaving these schools financially disadvantaged.

2.5. School Improvement - £6.55 per pupil

This funding buys in support for schools where some intervention or assistance may be required. It does not support staffing but without the funding, the staff employed by the local authority to carry out statutory intervention work would have no resources to offer practical support to schools, such as training and development, support for maintained school inspections or ad hoc advice and assistance. Whilst there is a risk to vulnerable schools if this funding is delegated, the authority would still be able to carry out its statutory functions.

2.6. Gypsy and Romany Travellers - £3.63 per pupil

This service provides four locally based education support officers who work in partnership with schools and other services to support the needs of children from the Traveller community. Services are also traded through WES. If this service was not provided centrally, then schools may well see an increase in costs with these children attending less and having lower attainment. Someone from the school would need to contact/visit these families to get the pupil back into school and it would mean that the relationships and understanding of the culture of these families would need to be available in many schools.

2.7. Behaviour Support Services - £1.04 per pupil

This money goes directly into primary schools for non-statement pupils at risk of permanent exclusion or following a managed transfer. The pupils will have met the criteria for commissioned support. The money has, for the schools concerned, been a key part of the transitional planning and provision prior to a statement being finalised. Often the pupils concerned are unexpected arrivals with very complex home circumstances and it has been crucial to ensure the child, school and family get appropriate support rapidly. Supported children have been located in all parts of the county including small rural schools and the need is felt most keenly in schools that are unused to meeting such needs.

2.8. Medical Referrals for Employees - £0.45

The County Council manages a contract for the provision of Occupational Health Services. Schools access this service and a budget is held centrally to which the costs of the medical referral of school based staff are charged. This relates to both the costs of pre-employment medical checks and the referral for medical advice in the management of short term and long term medically related absences from the workplace. The referral process is accessed by all school based staff. Should the budget be delegated then schools would be invoiced separately for their usage of the service.

3. De-Delegation Timetable 2021/22

3.1. The consultation timetable is as follows:

Date	Action
Monday, 12 October 2020	Consultation sent to all maintained Primary and Secondary Schools (Headteachers and Chairs of Governors)
Friday, 13 November 2019	Deadline for Schools response to consultation
Thursday 3, December 2019	Schools Forum agree de-delegation for 2021/22

4. De-Delegation beyond 2021/22

4.1. In July 2020 the ESFA announced the national funding formula for schools and high needs. At the same time the government announced that it will shortly put forward proposals to move to a 'hard' National Funding Formula (NFF) in the future, which will determine schools' budgets directly, rather than through local formulae set independently by each local authority.

- 4.2. Government believes that moving to the 'hard' NFF will level up the school funding system so that all schools across the country are funded on a comparable basis. Government will consult wider with local authorities, schools and others to make this transition carefully.
- 4.3. One consequence of moving to the 'hard' NFF could be the end of de-delegation which will mean services will have to review the way they charge schools in the future.

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