

LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM

The Leicestershire Schools' Forum will be held on **Monday 4th November 2024 at 2.00 pm via Teams**. The primary contact for forum arrangements is as follows:

Please see below for the agenda for the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Antoine Willie (Tel. 0116 305 1158)

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AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
1. Apologies for absence/Substitutions.	
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 September 2024 (previously circulated) and matters arising.	1
3. Resetting the SEND Finance System.	2
4. Any other business.	
5. Date of next meeting.	

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**Minutes of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum
via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 17th September 2024 at 2pm.**

Chair / Vice-Chair

Martin Towers	Academy Secondary Governor
Suzanne Uprichard	PRU Representative & Maintained Primary Governor

Attended

Jane Moore	Director Of Children & Family Services
Alison Bradley	Assistant Director For Education, Send & Commissioning
Deborah Taylor	Lead Member For Children & Family Services
Jenny Lawrence	Finance Business Partner For Schools & High Needs
Rebecca Wakeley	Education Quality & Inclusion Service
Ed Petrie	Academy Primary Headteacher
Rosie Browne	Academy Primary Headteacher
Lauren Charlton	Academy Primary Trustee
Dr Jude Mellor	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Kath Kelly	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Mark Mitchley	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Peter Leatherland	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Kelly Dryden	Academy Special Headteacher
Rebecca Jones	Maintained Primary Governor
Robert Martin	Maintained Nursery Governor
Rosalind Hopkins	Maintained Special School
Beverley Coltman	PVI Early Years Provider
Carolyn Shoyer	Diocese Of Leicester Director

Observing

Ian Sharpe	LCC Service Manager, School Organisation
David Warwick	GMB Union

Apologies

Felicity Clark	Academy Primary Headteacher
Dan Cleary	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Val Moore	Academy Primary Governor
Alison Ruff	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Phil Lewin	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Samantha Cooke	DNCC Representative
Kelly Dryden	Academy Special Headteacher
Simon Grindrod	Academy Secondary Governor
Jo Beaumont	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Jason Brooks	Maintained Special Headteacher
Lisa Craddock	Post-16 Provider

1. Apologies for Absences/Substitutions.

Apologies provided for Alison Ruff, Dan Cleary, Felicity Clark, Phil Lewin, Samantha Cooke, and Val Moore.

Jason Brooks, Jo Beaumont, Kelly Dryden, Lisa Craddock, and Simon Grindrod did not attend.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18/06/2024 (previously circulated) and Matters Arising.

Martin Towers discussed the minutes of the last Leicestershire Schools' Forum with forum members, presenting the opportunity to raise any issues or request amendments to the record. There were no amendments to previous minutes.

Peter Leatherland noted that he and Rosalind Hopkins were nominated to represent the forum at the SEND Schools Group but had not received any communication regarding meetings. Alison Bradley confirmed that a meeting for the SEND Schools Group occurred on 1st July; both were invited but no other meetings have been held. **Alison and Jenny Lawrence will ensure that Peter and Rosalind are invited to any further meetings on the SEN Investment Fund and Schools Block Transfer meetings if they are necessary.**

3. Elections for Chair / Vice Chair.

Alison Bradley recommended that the election of Chair and Vice Chair be aligned to the Local Authority (LA) financial year to align with financial settlements rather than the school academic year. There were no objections to the recommendation. Martin Towers and Suzanne Uprichard will continue as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

4. Early Years Funding.

The Early Years (EY) Funding report provides information on the progress towards recovering the overspend from the Early Years Dedicated School's Grant (DSG). Paragraph 4 details the LA's 2023-24 overspend, in which £0.13 was withheld from the 3- and 4-year-old FEEE, resulting in a reduction of the shortfall. In 2024-25, the LA will withhold a further £0.02 to continue to recoup the deficit, as previously reported to Schools' Forum.

Recommendation: The Schools' Forum note the contents of the report.

Beverley Coltman raised a concern regarding the expansion of 2-Year-Old-Funding (2YOF) to 9-month-old children. This resulted in an enormous administrative cost to providers and additional employments, but EY settings haven't received additional funding to cover the cost. **Jenny Lawrence noted that the LA's administrative costs are met within the 30% pass through rate and costs for providers are met from the hourly rate.**

Beverley Coltman raised concerns on behalf of the National Day Nursery Association regarding the burden on EY providers to manage the costs of new systems and processes, such as transferring 2YOF and 3YOF, which requires manual transitioning. This is time and labour consuming, which costs EYs settings.

5. School Financial Standing.

The School Financial Standing report sets out the 2023-24 financial position for Leicestershire schools as published by the Department for Education (DfE). The report also details how the LA will use this information to inform discussions on school performance and the expansion of the Notional SEN Budget, as per the recent publication of 2023-24 guidance. The report indicates that individual school budgets have increased higher than the Notional SEN Budget.

Recommendation: The Schools' Forum notes the content of the report and:

- a) The intention of the LA to expand the Notional SEN Budget calculation for 2025-26 to include FSM and Ever 6 Free Schools Meals.
- b) To consider the financial data presented in this report within assessments of school performance and in assessing requests for Exceptional SEN funding.

The school balance information presented within the report is taken from previous years. The DfE has used balances submitted from Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) portioned out for their academies, which means that reports on school balances for academies is not accurate to individual schools. **Jenny Lawrence agreed to share a link with Schools' Forum to illustrate how the DfE publishes data regarding school balances.**

NB. DfE Publication: [Data Sources & Interpretation.](#)

Kelly Dryden noted that the information presented in the report will be used to support LA funding decisions on supporting children with SEN, informing LA discussions with schools and requiring schools to evidence their spends. Kelly questioned whether this has been communicated with schools and, if not, how it would be. Jenny Lawrence confirmed that no communication with schools has been made yet regarding the school balance information obtained from the DfE. In addition, Jenny noted that this supports LA discussions on broader issues faced by schools beyond SEN, such as struggling small primary schools. The LA will be transparent that they have this data and how the data will be used.

Robert Martin questioned whether the available information would change how the LA interpreted the school's obligation of the first £6k of the Notional SEN. Jenny Lawrence confirmed that the school's obligation of the first £6k is enshrined in legislation and cannot be changed by the LA.

Kath Kelly noted that 47% of schools in MATs have in-house deficits which are expected to get worse this academic year. However, this is not reflected in the data set provided for 2022-23. Jenny Lawrence reminded the forum that

information presented is taken from the DfE's publication. The data shows that school balances increased during Covid-19 and, whilst decreasing, remain higher than pre-Covid-19.

The DfE data attributes MAT balances across MAT schools. However, MATs may have schools across different councils and do not fund their schools evenly; schools as part of the same MAT may be funded better or worse in Leicester than in Leicestershire, which is not reflected in the report. Jenny Lawrence acknowledged that the data presented has limitations, but balance information is taken from a publicly available DfE data source.

Suzanne Uprichard observed that the Notional £6k and 10k placements was set before rises in inflation. Suzanne questioned whether this will be updated to reflect increased costs. Jenny Lawrence informed the forum that the LA will not know about any changes until new budgets are set by the new government. However, Jenny noted that with the £6k and 10k placements being set, the burden of inflation is carried by the LA.

6. **SEN Investment Fund & Schools Block Transfer.**

The School Block Transfer Final report was released on the morning of 17th September. Jane Moore addressed concerns regarding the lateness of papers being circulated to forum members; the document was released for the Forum's review and consultation and will be voted on during the next Schools' Forum in November 2024. The report was released to Schools Forum to align with the commencement of the consultation and to ensure it was sighted before the meeting.

The LA has proposed the establishment of a SEN investment fund where funding is ratcheted to reduce the growing prevalence of pupils presenting with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH). The LA has previously detailed and reported the position of the High Needs Block, the work done to reduce spending and to move to a position of not overspending, as well as setting out the national position of High Needs funding. The report sets out the LA's proposal to establish a ringfenced SEN Investment Fund through a transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

The funds from the Schools Block transfer would be ringfenced and used exclusively within schools as a redistribution of funding within the system. The LA's data analysis showed that SEMH was the pressing and growing driver of EHCP's in the SEND system. The School Block Transfer report sets out more detail on how practitioners would be funded to support young people and help young people to manage and recognise triggers. The LA seeks consultation on whether SEMH would be the best use of funding and whether this is the right approach. Jane Moore noted that this would be an annual process, but the impact of this funding would not be seen until 2026-27.

The LA proposed a 0.5% Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer modelled on the current schools funding system by capping annual funding gains at individual school level. This proposal has challenges, such as some schools

having protected levels of funding which cannot be removed. There is a £1.5m cash yield from primary schools, 60% of which would see a reduction. There is less cash yield from secondary schools but 80% would see a reduction. The report models the proposal on 2024-25-year data.

The consultation on the 0.5% Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer will close on 20th October 2024. The consultation feedback will be analysed and presented to Schools' Forum on 4th November. If the LA cannot obtain approval from the Schools' forum, the LA will determine whether approval will be sought from the Secretary of State.

Recommendation: The Schools' Forum note the proposed actions.

Recommendation: The Schools' Forum consider submitting a formal response to the consultation.

Mark Mitchley claimed that the LA has failed in every attempt to reduce the High Needs deficit. Mark questioned why schools would have confidence in the LA. Jane Moore reminded the forum that the transfer would fund the needs of children within mainstream provision; the money would not fund SENA or the Education Psychology services but would fund pupils with SEMH needs. The transfer would not fund capacity issues but would redistribute funding within the overall SEND system. Jane also reminded the forum that the LA is not solely responsible for meeting high needs.

Peter Leatherland questioned the impact of a Safety Valve agreement being triggered. The LA's proposal takes money from schools to fund interventions schools are already providing without addressing the deficit. Jane Moore explained that a Safety Valve takes all responsibility on how money is spent away from LAs and schools; it takes control of changes to services and provisions. The LA has been advised to consider a Schools Block transfer by the DfE; the funding is to be used specifically to meet the needs of pupils with SEMH and reduce the future call on High Needs funding.

Carolyn Shoyer supported the position of a system-wide challenge. However, Carolyn noted that the LA has a responsibility for the sufficiency of school placements. There is a heavy reliance on expensive school provisions despite school leaders being willing to provide physical space for high need placements and work positively with the LA. Carolyn questioned how health services can be co-located into schools to positively impact SEMH to reduce the escalation of need.

Carolyn Shoyer observed the unlikelihood of the Schools Block transfer to be approved by Schools' Forum but encouraged the LA to escalate the request to the Secretary of State. The LA's message to the Secretary of State should be that funding and system reform are both required.

Rebecca Jones noted that schools work hard to ensure that budgeting is correct so that children receive the best support. Removing money from schools makes this more difficult. Furthermore, Rebecca felt that seeking approval from the Secretary of State to overturn a decision of Schools' forum undervalues the

forum's purpose. Jane Moore reflected that requesting approval from the Secretary of State is the standard process if Schools' Forum don't approve a transfer; despite this, Mrs Deborah Taylor noted that approval from the Secretary of State is not guaranteed. In addition, Jane has not criticised the position or the job that schools are doing. Jane encouraged the need to be on the same page; whilst the proposal will not benefit individual schools, it is for the benefit of children with SEN in Leicestershire.

Rosalind Hopkins queried whether there was evidence to suggest that the proposed approach and spending would have a positive impact on meeting need. After much discussion between members, Jane Moore agreed that the approach was not currently based on evidence. Jane Moore indicated that whilst the LA would like to work with all parties to make a strong case on how funding would be spent, opposition to the transfer has made this difficult. This would be the focus of discussion should the Schools Block transfer be agreed.

Peter Leatherland questioned whether there was a means to determine whether all special schools were full and what could be done to reduce the deficit. Jane Moore observed historic difficulties in moving children back into mainstream once in a special provision. Special schools are full, and each school has been expanded. However, some units attached to mainstream schools were built for specific needs which need to be reviewed to ensure they continue to do so. The LA should work with schools where units have spaces to determine how barriers can be removed to facilitate placements.

Rosalind Hopkins feared that the proposed transfer would have adverse effects on inclusion in mainstream schools. Jane Moore shared concerns but reminded the forum that the proposal has been made due to Leicestershire's funding position and the expectation of the DfE's Delivering Better Value programme.

Suzanne Uprichard determined that there is a need to understand why there are larger than expected increases in the number of children with SEN in Leicestershire. A concerted effort to understand this is required to resolve the issue. Jane Moore directed the forum to the summer ISOS Publication report which set out the challenges of the SEN system, which cannot be fixed by directing more funding into it. Instead, the report suggested that the SEN system is only fixable by understanding higher instances of SEN, capacity in schools, and the expectation of parents. **Jane will circulate the ISOS Publication report with the minutes.**

NB. ISOS Publication report: [Towards an Effective and Financially Sustainable Approach to SEND in England](#).

Rebecca Jones requested that Schools' Forum compile a response to the Schools Block transfer consultation without involvement from LA officers. **Martin Towers will circulate a form requesting input from forum members, which will be used to draft a collective response.**

7. Any Other Business.

There was no other business to be raised.

8. **Date of Next Meeting.**

The date for the next Leicestershire Schools' Forum is **Monday 4th November 2024** from **2pm – 4pm**.

9. **Actions.**

1. Alison Bradley and Jenny Lawrence will ensure that Peter Leatherland and Rosalind Hopkins are invited to any further headteacher meetings to consider the Establishment of a SEN Investment Fund and Schools Block Transfer should it be necessary to hold future meetings.
2. Jenny Lawrence to confirm with Administrations whether the 30% pass through rate covers administrative costs. Provided in minutes.
3. Jenny Lawrence to share a link with Schools' Forum to illustrate how the DfE publishes data regarding school balances. Provided in minutes.
4. Jane Moore to circulate the ISOS Publications report with the 17th September minutes. Provided in minutes.
5. Martin Towers will gather input from Schools' Forum members to draft a collective response to the Schools Block transfer consultation.

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SCHOOLS FORUM

Resetting the SEN Finance System

4 November 2024

Content Applicable to;		School Phase;	
Maintained Schools	X	Pre School	
Academies	X	Foundation Stage	X
PVI Settings		Primary	X
Special Schools / Academies	X	Secondary	X
Local Authority	X	Post 16	
		High Needs	X

Purpose of Report

Content Requires;		By;	
Noting	X	Maintained Primary School Members	
Decision	X	Maintained Secondary School Members	
<i>Individual requirements are set out in each recommendation</i>		Maintained Special School Members	
		Academy Members	
		All Schools Forum	X

Recommendations

1. That Schools Forum note the responses to the consultation on Resetting the SEN Finance System
2. That Schools Forum note and consider the local authority response to the key themes within consultation responses.
3. That Schools Forum support the establishment of a SEND Investment Fund
4. That Schools Forum approve a 0.5% transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant to establish a SEND Investment Fund.

5. That Schools Forum note the next steps of the local authority should Schools Forum not approve the proposed 0.5% transfer, notably to seek a decision from the County Councils Cabinet on 22 November 2024 on seeking Secretary of State approval.

Background

6. Schools Forum has been made aware of the High Needs overspend including drivers, mitigations and impact together with the local authority's approach to firstly the High Needs Block Development Plan which led to the significant expansion of specialist places in Leicestershire and latterly the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme to transform delivery of SEN services in schools and the local authority.
7. Schools Forum received a report on 18 June 2024 which set out the intention to seek a 0.5% transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2025/26, the reasons for it and the approach to be taken. A further report was presented on 17th September confirming the approach and setting out a consultation on the establishment of a SEN Investment Fund from the transfer.
8. This report presents the full and unabridged consultation feedback and a local authority response to some key themes within it in order to inform Schools Forum to take a decision on the consultation proposals.

Consultation Outcome

9. In total of 70 responses to the consultation, 6 were discounted as duplicate responses from the same schools resulting in 64 responses counted within the survey representing 23.3% of Leicestershire maintained schools and academies received. In addition a number of direct emails were received.
10. Of the 70 consultation responses received there were a significant number of responses that gave an identical response to some questions' 90% of responses declared their response was the official response to the consultation therefore these duplicate responses were treated as one response from the Trust or school.
11. In total 15 email responses were received including one from the Schools Forum. Of these 15 submitted, 14 were duplicative responses from schools within the same Multi Academy Trust and as each schools also submitted a formal consultation response, again these were treated as a single response.
12. The response to the proposals within the consultation can be summarized :
 - a. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to create a SEND Investment fund to enable investment in targeted actions to improve pupil outcomes?** 83% of responses strongly disagreed with the proposal, 15% either strongly agreed or agreed. The key points in the responses were the local authority's ability to administer a fund effectively and the financial impact of a 0.5% transfer.

Whilst the responses present a view of the consultation proposals as a whole they largely refer to not supporting a transfer, the LA's capacity and ability to deliver and school level affordability. These are important factors for

consideration they do not provide a Leicestershire school opinion on the specific proposal to establish a SEND Investment Fund.

- b. **To what extent do you agree or disagree that Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) should be the initial focus of a SEND Investment Fund?** 65% of responses strongly disagree with the proposal with 21% either strongly agreed or agreed. The individual responses largely gave disagreement with a funding transfer as the reason for the responses together with comments on how a fund would operate and some comments agreeing that SEMH was a pressing need.
 - c. **Do you have any comments on how a SEND Investment Fund should be delivered and governed?** This was purposely an open question to gauge schools view to inform the development of a fund and fully engage with schools on its development and operation given previous attempts to co-produce this have not proved successful. Responses again largely focused on disagreement with the proposed 0.5% funding transfer with many submitting the exact same text.
 - d. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for an annual funding transfer of 0.5% to Establish a SEND Investment Fund?** 86% of responses strongly disagreed with 9% either strongly or tending to agree. Comments refer to the uneven impact at schools with schools with higher SEN needs contributing more to the transfer. Many responses use the exact same text.
13. The full consultation survey responses are included as Appendix A and the emails received as Appendix B, please note only one copy of the 14 emails submitting the same text is included .

Key Themes within the Consultation Responses

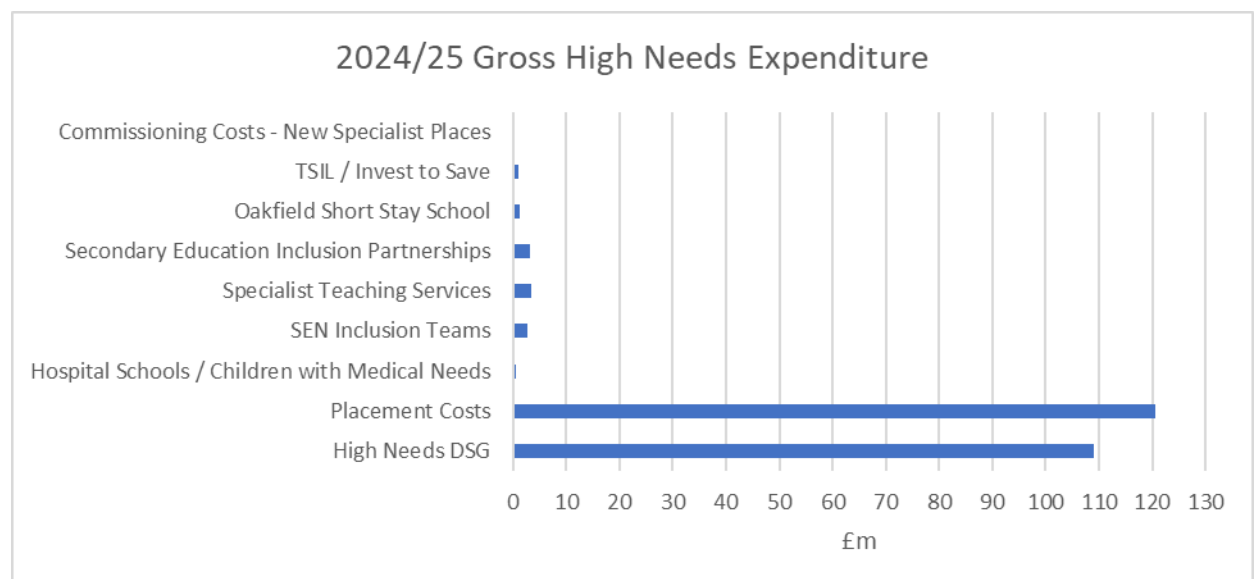
14. The key themes within the consultation and the local authority response are set out below:

- a) School Underfunding – prior to the introduction of the National Funding Formula (NFF) Leicestershire schools were funded lower than the national average. The NFF introduced a funding system where pupils with the same characteristics are funded the same irrespective of the local authority in which they are educated. Whilst local authorities remain able to set their own funding formulae, national restrictions have been tightened to ensure schools are funded by the NFF. Leicestershire adopted the NFF from its introduction in 2018 meaning that Leicestershire maintained schools and academies are funded at the values set nationally.

Schools are often supporting pupils with SEN needs by the use of Teaching Assistants (TA), research by the Education Endowment Foundation recommends prioritising TA capacity towards specialist targeted intervention as opposed to informal teaching resource. TA's also work more closely with pupils from low-income backgrounds. Indeed, expenditure on TAs is one of the most common uses of the Pupil Premium in primary schools, a government initiative that assigns funding to schools in proportion to the number of pupils on FSM, which within the

school funding system is a factor that directly correlated to the incidence of SEN. The combination of these factors means that nationally schools now spend approximately £4.4 billion each year on TAs, corresponding to 13% of the education budget. This presents an excellent opportunity for improvements in practice, with such a large and already committed resource in place. The SEND Investment Fund could kick start such a change, increase financial efficacy and deliver improved pupil outcomes. The way we are currently using the funding in the SEN system is not meeting the needs of our pupils.

- b) Mismanagement of High Needs by the Local Authority. High needs expenditure is driven by the volume of Children and Young People being assessed as having high needs through the EHCP process. As set out in the, consultation, and set out below for ease of reference, Leicestershire spends £120m on placement costs against a £109m grant income. Placement costs include special schools, independent schools, resource bases and unit and additional funding into mainstream school to support individual pupils needs. pupil needs are identified via the Education Health and Care plan. .

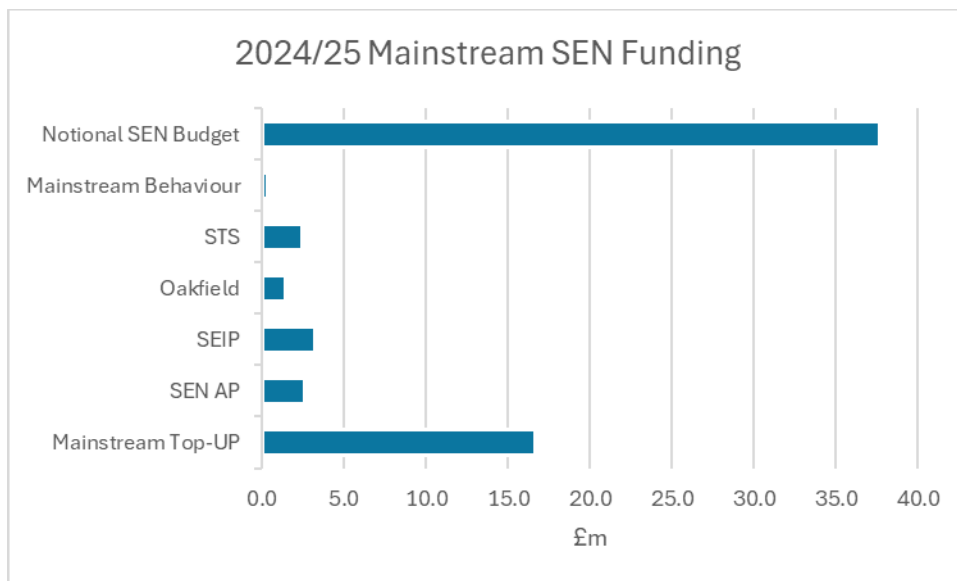


The financial position is the result of a growth in demand, c22 additional assessments per month have been received since September 2023 and has led to average annual number of EHCNA requests increasing from 1,272 to 1,533 over the same time period. This is an increase over this period of around 21% which is significantly higher than other authorities in the region. Around 55-60% of EHCNAs translate into EHCPs. We are expecting by the time we do the next SEN2 submission in January 2025 we will have over 7,000 EHCPs in place. Currently 6,981 active EHCPs are in place which is already an increase of 10.9% on the previous year to date with over 2 months of the calendar year to go.

An initial report on the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme has identified that across the participating authorities high needs expenditure rose by 23.5% between 2020 and 2022 with a growth in EHCP caseload accounting for 90.7% of the increase with growth in costs reported to be below inflation. In Leicestershire

over the same period expenditure increased by 9.1% with an increase in the average placement cost of 0.6% which is a significantly better position than authorities with significant high needs deficits.

- c) Lack of Faith in the Local Authority to Deliver. The consultation sought to set out a different approach to the funding of pupils with SEND in mainstream schools by reorganising the funding that sits across the SEN system in order to develop approaches in schools and increase capacity and support within schools with an Investment Fund ring fenced to schools. In total £64.3m of funding for SEN is directed to mainstream schools', equivalent to 59% of the High needs Dedicated Schools Grant received from the department for Education. Of this £26.6m is funded through high needs with a further £37.7m of Notional SEN provided directly to schools:



In addition to the funding set out above funding for behaviour support, excluding Oakfield and the SEIP's, is fully delegated to schools.

Additionally, the consultation sought views on how the Investment Fund should be delivered and governed in order the fund could be used most effectively with the full engagement of, and accountability to, schools within that process. This could include an option of a fund governed by schools with collective and consistent decisions taken on the deployment of all mainstream funding in the SEND system.

- d) The Local Authority is not supporting pupils with SEND. Supporting children and young people with SEND is a joint responsibility for school and local authorities. Schools should identify needs at the earliest opportunity and use their best endeavours to meet SEND needs with the local authority supporting those children and young people that cannot have their needs met in mainstream. The local authority has invested in the SEN system through the provision of capital to expand local specialist provision and also through investment in the former High Needs Block Development Plan and latterly TSIL and is supporting significant levels of overspend without any reduction in services. However, EHCP's continue to increase and the rate of growth in Leicestershire is higher than that in other local authorities. Without reducing the rate of growth in EHCP's the SEND system will remain exceptionally pressurised, and we need to think differently on how the resources we have within the system are deployed.

The key to addressing the issues currently being encountered in Leicestershire is ensuring that mainstream schools are better able to meet needs through Ordinarily Available Provision which through time will ensure more pupils have their needs met in mainstream and reducing the need for the specialist provision

- e) Political bias within the proposals. The funding framework for schools and high needs is set nationally by the Department for Education with limited local ability to change and schools are funded in accordance with the NFF.

As set out within the consultation document, and indeed in many reports to Schools Forum, the NFF contains two mandatory levels of protection to school funding. Firstly, the Minimum Per Pupil Funding Level (MPPL) means all schools receive a guaranteed level of funding for each pupil, secondly, the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) limits turbulence due to annual changes in pupil characteristics. Schools triggering either of these protections are funded at the funding floor and as such cannot contribute to the funding transfer.

The differences seen in the impact of the proposals at individual school level is wholly the result of the way the NFF funds different pupil characteristics and national decisions taken by the DfE on the investment of additional school funding.

- f) TSIL has not delivered improvement to the SEND system. TSIL is a supported and measured approach to sustainable systemic change in the SEND system TSIL has delivered more robust and consistent decision making through the introduction of more robust triage and decision making processes, the proportion of EHCNAs with Decisions to Assess and Decisions to Issue has reduced over time and is now in line with operational targets. This is also being seen through a significant year on year reduction in tribunal requests overall (as at 7th October requests were down 14% year on year), and specifically on tribunals around refusal to assess or refusal to issue.

Further evidence of the growing success of TSIL is that mediation requests are also down overall 10% year on year. Refusal to assess requests are down on previous years however requests around refusal to issue have increased slightly. Where mediation has been held, a slightly higher proportion of refusals to issue are being upheld than in previous years (2024 year to date - 9 upheld, 21 overturned against 2023 position – 5 upheld, 21 overturned).

Increased focus on the placement decisions for children entering into the SEND system in the Foundation Stage has reduced the number of early years not having an appropriate and finalised school placement for first time admission from September 2024, this includes building mainstream capacity to meet the needs and avoiding the use of specialist provision. Needs scoring for the 2025 intake for children with SEND has already been completed, and the Early Years team are working with families and early years settings to encourage early applications for school places appropriate to meet the needs of each child.

The outcome of these actions identifies benefits beginning to flow through the system which will take a number of years to flow through the system.

- g) Reducing School Budgets. The proposals do not reduce the funding currently available to schools through the NFF and would reduce any annual gain in funding at a school level between 2024/25 and 2025/26. The illustrated figures presented within the consultation documentation show how much less a school

would have gained in 2024/25 had the transfer been undertaken in this financial year.

- h) Schools with the highest incidence of SEN lose the most funding. It is important to recognise that through these proposals schools will not lose funding, the transfer will limit the level of funding gain a school will receive between 2024/25 and 2025/26. Reports previously presented to Schools Forum on the Notional SEN Review in November 2023 and School Financial Standing in September 2024 bring together a review of the Notional SEN Budget and the pupil characteristics that drive school funding. Both documents set out that there is no correlation between the number of pupils with SEN, the school funding system and levels of deprivation despite factors such as Free School Meals, Ever6 and Low prior Attainment being seen as proxy indicators of SEN. The schools contributing the most to the transfer in the documentation are those schools where changes in pupil characteristics generate more funding, that may be the result of schools having more pupils attracting the additional factors within the NFF or decisions taken by the DFE to invest additional school funding on particular funding factors.
- i) Underfunding. It is difficult to align the current financial position totally with underfunding when looking generally at the Leicestershire population. The formula for the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant does not consider the number of EHCP's in determining funding, that was a conscious national policy decision to avoid any perverse indicators that could lead to an increase in EHCP's. However, the high needs formula is not sufficiently responsive to changes in demand, funding guarantees are given on a per head of the 2 – 18 year old population basis yet local authorities are required to support SEND needs for ages 0 -25 and special school places need to be funded at £10,000 but funding is £4,660 per place within the formula.

In term of general population need, despite pockets of deprivation, Leicestershire is deemed a low need authority. In terms of DSG, benchmarking shows Leicestershire low in terms of the population that triggers additional funding yet high in the number of EHCP's. Whilst the overall funding position is a factor in the rates able to be paid there is evidence to suggest 'band creep' i.e. the proportion of pupils with 25+ hours of support and indeed pupils in the higher bands in special schools have grown which may be the systems response to funding rates, this position is also now being recorded nationally.

Simply demand and funding are out of line, previous research by the ISOS Group for the Local Government Association however sets out that additional funding alone is not the answer to the current problems.

Every opportunity to lobby for fairer funding have been and will continue to be taken, there is little chance of sufficient new Government funding to address the national deficit position. Whilst there is only limited ability to influence funding, the ability to influence demand is within the gift of schools and the local authority. The proposals presented within the consultation offer the best approach for a co-produced approach to the problems within the SEND system through aligning responsibility appropriately and utilising the funding in the SEN system to influence future demand.

- j) Support and Training for Schools. The manner in which schools make provision for pupils with SEND is for individual schools to consider. Support services and

training are available in the LA through the Inclusion Teams and Specialist Teaching Services. The consultation documentation sets out that this would be an appropriate use of the SEND Investment Fund.

It has been recognised that the specificity within the mainstream schools for equivalent hours can be a barrier to innovation and lead to pressure for 1:1 adult support for pupils which may not be appropriate to their needs. To respond to this the local authority is developing a Banding and Tariffs model for funding EHCP's. This based on banding descriptors that have been co-produced with schools and follow the principles set out with the DfE's Change Programme.

- h) Evidence base for SEMH. SEMH is a prevalent need within EHCP's and Inclusion Service workload. The proportion of EHCPs with SEMH as a primary need has increased from 10% to 14% between 19/20 and 23/24. As of 21/10/24, there are 804 pupils of statutory school age with SEMH identified as a primary need on their EHCP. SEMH is also a significant secondary need, making up another 9% of cases where this has been recorded, bringing the total of EHCPs recorded with SEMH as a primary or secondary need to at least 23%.

SEMH is also identified as a primary need for significant numbers of children and young people identifying as requiring SEN support. Schools are finding this a very challenging area to manage, and we have seen an increase in suspensions and permanent exclusions as a result. Increased pressure is being placed on our pupil referral unit at Oakfield Short Stay School (Primary) or our Secondary Education and Inclusion Partnerships (SEIPs).

In September 2024, the Inclusion Service held the cases of 189 pupils missing out on education and 164 children with medical needs. Referrals into the service for these children are due to poor mental health in the majority – children with anxiety are missing school and needing support to attend. The longer they are out of the classroom, the more work is required to reintegrate them. Additionally the caseload for both Oakfield and the SEIP's is also growing.

Providing local interventions on school sites and providing in school support, would enable CYP who are struggling to regulate their behaviour to achieve some successes on their own setting, rather than seeing this as something that happens externally to school. This will enable them to maintain their connection to their school and be able to integrate fully when work has been completed and also reduce the cost of in school support.

Inclusive Schools

16. The SEND and AP Improvement Plan sets out a vision where children and young People's SEN need are met within an environment of high-quality services and support in mainstream settings, alongside swift access to more local state specialist settings, where required. The National Audit Office further sets out that schools are not incentivised to be inclusive.
17. The DfE use school level data collected through the annual SEN2 data collection of a measure they feel shows how inclusive schools are by comparing the number of pupils receiving SEN Support or have an EHCP. The Leicestershire data suggests on inclusivity measure of 15.7% and with a range of 3.3% to 56.3%. Whilst accepting this can be viewed as a measure of identification rather than a willingness of schools to meet needs it does suggest that pupil outcomes and schools individual approaches to SEN very different across Leicestershire. Increasing the cohort of SEN pupils in mainstream by better equipping schools and practitioners to meet

needs and reducing the need for specialist provision will result in pupils having the same educational experience as their peers in their communities.

SEMH and the SEND Investment Fund

18. As identified in earlier sections of this report SEMH is the primary focus of the proposed SEND Investment Fund given its prevalence within the Leicestershire EHCP population but also within inclusion support services such as Oakfield and the SEIP's, Children with Medical Needs and Children Missing Education. Additionally, although not represented within the consultation results, schools refer to this being one of the most pressing needs and a significant factor disrupting the deliver of education in schools.
19. The DBV programme has also identified that:
 - 4 in 5 children and young people with SEND are not being supported in the most effective way.
 - Children and Young People with SEMH are more prominently represented in Independent Special Schools and Alternative Provision
 - A greater use of mainstream support or the use of Resource Bases would improve outcomes
 - Support is being accessed too late
 - A significant barrier to effective support is the lack of existence or usage of specialist support services.

The local position in Leicestershire and the research undertaken in DBV authorities presents a compelling case for change which can be effectively supported by using current resources differently and at an earlier point in pupil's educational journey, meet need earlier and more effectively by the use of consistent and evidence based actions this reducing pressure in schools and within the SEND system.

The Focus of Leicestershire's SEND Investment Fund

20. In the absence of an ability to work with school leaders to develop the focus of the SEND Investment fund the local authority has developed the initial focus of the fund which will enable capacity to be built within mainstream schools to address the SEMH issues as seen locally and indeed nationally. The fund will ensure that funding remains within the mainstream sector who will benefit from its activity and will ensure the co-production of sustainable solutions to improved pupil outcomes to the benefit of all children and young people, and their parents and carers in Leicestershire whilst being an effective use of funding. Without an investment fund the local authority would have no option other than to seek a transfer purely as a financial transaction to reduce the ever-growing deficit.
21. Currently, high numbers of children with SEMH as an identified need are coming to panels through a request for assessment. This is because there is a limited offer for supporting these children outside of the SEND system. Children with anxiety present with attendance issues. Where these are severe, they are support through the Children with Medical Needs process. This offers them tuition in their own home. There is an increase in the number of children being sent to alternative provision by mainstream schools. While this supports some of their needs, it makes reintegration

very challenging and can lead to reduced academic progress due to missed time in school.

22. We will introduce a system of in-reach support for schools that upskills staff working with children who have SEMH needs. This would comprise of staff going into schools to support teachers and support staff through observations, modelling and solution circles. Staff would be comprised of existing local authority staff, seconded staff from schools in similar circumstances schools and newly recruited staff. From local authority practice in Walsall and Bedford, there is evidence that seconding school staff has a dual benefit to both the releasing school and the school being supported.
23. In addition to the support for staff, we will deliver an offer of bespoke in-school intensive support for children and young people outside of their classroom. This would be co-produced with schools. It would take place at the times within the time where triggers are observed. The provision would seek to help CYP manage their emotions but would have an academic focus to develop the skills that their peers are working on in the classroom. There may be an additional focus in the sessions – such as art, craft or music to engage children and promote the skills that they need to secure.
24. The offer will support parents to fully understand what support mainstream schools can be expected to provide. They would also present parents with data around the attainment and progress of CYP placed in specialist provision compared with those who remain at a mainstream school. Successes could be highlighted and celebrated to raise awareness of what is possible for CYP.
25. There will be an additional offer of an online clinic that staff could attend to share their issues and seek advice. Schools could nominate the staff that they wish to benefit from these clinics. These would be bookable and complement existing forums and practitioner advice. Clinics would have a specific focus: KS1&2, KS3 and KS4. Parents and carers express worries around a lack of understanding in schools of mental health disorders in children and young people.
26. The SEND Investment Fund will deliver:
 - A reduction in the number of EHCNA requests. In Walsall and Bradford, in in reach support for schools using seconded school staff resulted in a ~30% reduction in EHCNA requests.
 - A reduction in the number of young people being referred to the SEIPs – these are children at KS3&4 who have been excluded or are at imminent risk of this.
 - We envisage a reduction in the number of young people being referred to Oakfield Short Stay School – these are children at KS1&2 who have been excluded or are at imminent risk of this.
 - Children with SEMH needs are often placed on part time timetables or suspended. This leads to a loss of their sense of belonging to their school and denies them their right to a full education. By providing bespoke in-school intensive support for children and young people outside of their classroom, children will have the respite that they need whilst still remaining in school and accessing a full-time education.

- Pupil outcomes at KS4 for YP in alternative provision are limited to core subjects and a vocational offer. By enabling students to remain in school, their chances of gaining 5+ GCSEs are increased significantly.
27. A Steering Group of school leaders will be established to determine the governance arrangements that will give schools full confidence in the use of the SEND Investment Fund including determining priorities and focus, the performance indicators to support it's use with a focus upon pupil outcomes but also the financial benefits for both schools and the Local Authority. Links with the TSIL programme will be established to ensure consistency in direction of travel and build on the benefits now being delivered across the SEND system.

Uncertain Government Policy

28. There is current uncertainty with respect to government policy for the future of SEND and how it will be funded in the future. However, the unsustainability of the current system appears to have been recognised. It is uncertain at the time of writing this report what the outcome of the Chancellors Budget on 30 November will mean and whether there will be additional High Needs Funding, an update will be given at the meeting.
29. Over recent weeks there have been a number of media reports alluding to a broken SEND system, it is uncertain how the Government may respond to these. Whatever any change in policy may be to gain change in such a complex system is unlikely to be delivered quickly and impact may not be seen for a number of years. Taking the introduction of the NFF for mainstream schools as an example, the first stage of that were in 2018/19 and it is still not fully implemented. Whilst it may be likely to gauge the Governments direction of travel from the 30 October budget, there is little possibility of a short-term fix, as such the local authority has no alternative to puch forward with these proposals.
30. The High Needs Financial Plan includes an overall cash increase in High Needs DSG of 3% annually which is the advice previously given by the DfE. As set out throughout this report the financial pressure is significant, placement spend exceeds the current grant and centrally funded services such as Oakfield, the SEIP's, Specialist Teaching services are, just as schools, coping to deal with inflationary pressures that are not recognised within the grant allocation.
31. The previous government published details of the Schools NFF and indicative DSG allocations annually in July, this set parameters and gave planning assumptions on which to determine local funding strategy, with final allocations published in December. This has not happened for 2025/26 as such it is impossible to set out any financial impact on the current proposals arising from the 2025/26 funding settlement. Given that October school census data is integral to the distribution of the settlement there is a possibility that no detailed information will be received until December.
32. There are two potential impacts arising from the Governments Budget:
- a) There is an increase in the NFF allocation resulting in additional mainstream school funding. In this situation the local authority would continue with the proposal for a funding transfer of 0.5%, the financial yield would increase and the value of the SEND Investment fund would increase. As set out in the consultation the implications for individual schools would differ from the illustrations within, the

methodology for the transfer would be unchanged but capping and scaling percentages would be adjusted to deliver the 0.5% transfer resulting in the impact at individual school level being less than set out in the consultation illustrative impact.

- b) High Needs DSG may increase above the 3% contained within the financial planning assumptions. In this case the local authority would continue with the proposals to transfer 0.5%. The 0.5% transfer would remain with the funding yielded from that ring fences for the SEN Investment Fund and additional DSG allocated to the general financial pressure in high needs.
33. The local authority will follow the principles set out above in its budget submissions to the County Council and to the DfE in terms of setting school budgets. The final position will be reported to Schools Forum in the annual Schools Budget report in February 2025.

Conclusions

34. The feedback from the consultation overwhelmingly opposed undertaking the schools block transfer and there was little support for the development of a SEN investment fund. Whilst this feedback was clear, demand is growing at a faster rate than anticipated within Medium Term Financial Strategy which is unsustainable, cost reductions are outstripped by this demand which is out of line with that being encountered in other local authorities. Whilst the High needs position is a concern nationally as well as locally, local actions are necessary and one of those to be considered is a more targeted use of the funding across the SEND system through a transfer of funding. This is a process that has been successfully undertaken in other authorities albeit most, but not all, with the support of their schools and with Schools Forum approval. There simply is no more funding that can be introduced to address the current problems, and the financial position is totally unsustainable.
35. This leaves the Local Authority with no option but to progress with a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs block of the Dedicated schools Grant and use that funding to establish the SEND Investment Fund. Undertaking this will allow for targeted actions to be co-produced with school leaders and increase capacity and support for schools to deliver actions which will reduce demand on the SEND system in a structured and using evidence-based actions.
36. The local authority has sought fully engage schools in developing these proposals:
- Schools Forum on June 18 received the local authority's proposal for the SEND Investment Fund which set out a desire for that to be co-produced with schools. It sought the engagement of school leaders and the Schools Forum in developing that fund including how it would be managed and governed.
 - A meeting held was held with school leaders on July 1 where a clear view was expressed that schools would not wish to be engaged in its development. The DBV programme identifies a number of issues that can be addressed by a more consistent approach to meeting needs, developing support and training for practitioners that can result in pupils receiving appropriate and consistent support, learning from evidence based good practice, can deliver better outcomes for pupils. The local authority will retain the establishment of a SEN investment Fund from a funding transfer, not only as a financial adjustment as recognised by schools in the consultation responses but as a whole system change in the way funding is used across all Leicestershire schools as a tool to improve pupil outcomes.

- Schools Forum on 17 September received a report setting out the intention to progress with a transfer with
 - The consultation sought views from schools on the principles of the proposals and also how such a fund could be established
 - Schools Forum on 17 September receive a report clearly setting out that there was no direct correlation between the SEN population in individual schools with the pupil characteristics that generate the school budget and their financial standing
37. Schools Forum are recommended to agree the establishment of a SEND Improvement Fund funded by a transfer of 0.5% of funding (c£2.6m) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. Schools Forum will also be asked to set out the reasons for those decisions.
38. Should Schools Forum not approve a transfer the County Council's Cabinet will be asked for a decision to request Secretary of State approval at its meeting on 22 November. This is outside the timeline set by the DfE for submission of the necessary documentation to support the request, as such this will be submitted in advance of the Cabinet meeting and either confirmed, amended or withdrawn in accordance with that decision.

Resource Implications

39. The financial position of the High Needs Block is shown the table below research undertaken by the Local Government Association identifies that additional funding alone will not resolve this and action urgently need to be taken to reduce demand. As can be seen the transfer does not resolve the financial position but it begins a process of understanding that the local authority alone cannot resolve the financial problem and co-ownership of the issues and future actions. The financial position is not one of financial mismanagement but a outcome of extreme demand within the SEND system which makes it inefficient both at school and LA level.

	2024/25 £,000	2025/26 £,000	2026/27 £,000	2027/28 £,000
High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant	-109,176	-112,430	-115,781	-119,233
Placement Costs	120,579	133,297	147,279	162,705
Other HNB Cost	11,665	12,265	12,265	12,265
Commissioning Cost - New Places	162	37	0	0
SEN Investment Fund - Schools Block Transfer		-2,600	-2,700	-2,800
SEN Investment Fund - SEMH		2,600	2,700	2,800
Total Expenditure	132,406	145,599	159,544	174,970
Funding Gap Pre Savings	23,230	33,169	43,763	55,737
TSL Programme Defined Opportunities	-3,788	-10,976	-19,195	-27,666
Increase in Local Specialist Places	-2,480	-5,995	-9,868	-13,803
Impact of SEN Investment Fund - Reduced EHCP's		-2,600	-2,970	-3,360
Total Savings	-6,268	-19,572	-32,033	-44,829
Annual Revenue Funding Gap / Planned Deficit	16,963	13,597	11,730	10,908
2019/20 Deficit Brought Forward	7,062			
2020/21 High Needs Deficit Brought Forward	10,423			
2021/22 High Needs Deficit Brought Forward	11,365			
2022/23 High Needs Deficit Brought Forward	6,683			
2023/24 High Needs Deficit Brought Forward	5,650			
2024/25 Unplanned Deficit	3,488			
Cummulative High Needs Funding Gap	58,146	71,743	83,473	94,381
Surplus (-ve) / Deficit Other DSG Blocks	-8,060	-8,057	-7,557	-4,957
Dedicated Schools Grant Surplus (-ve) / Deficit	50,086	63,686	75,916	89,424
High Needs Spend as % of High Needs DSG	122%	130%	139%	148%
Surplus / Deficit as % of Total DSG	7%	9%	10%	12%

As can be seen the expectation is that for 2025/26 the SEN Investment Fund delivers benefits equal to the investment through reduced EHCP number which scale upwards from 2026/27

40. There is uncertainty with respect to SEND funding over the medium term, earlier sections of this report set out the actions that the local authority will take should the 2025/26 funding settlement be outside the assumptions factored into the financial position presented in this report.

41. To set the context of the financial challenge the cumulative deficit forecast for 2024/25 equates to a Council Tax increase of 14% rising to 23% in 2027/28.
42. The DFE's Change Programme is the direct response to the SEND and AP Improvement Plan, it is uncertain whether the new Government will continue in the same direction. It is however clear that the speed of any reform through the Change Programme will be a longer term as such transformation of SEND services and indeed how funding within the SEND system is used is essential.
43. Currently a Statutory Accounts Override is in place meaning that local authorities do not have to offset the cost of the deficit by making cash provision, this is due to end in March 2026. The Government's approach to this is again uncertain but without some further intervention the high needs deficit is a real risk to the overall financial position of the local authority.
44. For schools the impact of the transfer would be 0.5%, c£2.6m less of an increase in funding for 2025/26, the transfer would not reduce current funding levels.

Equal Opportunity Issues

45. A number of comments throughout the consultation responses refer to schools with higher number of SEND pupils being impacted by the proposals and the disproportionate impact of the transfer across Leicestershire Schools. It should be noted that a transfer with the establishment of the SEND Investment fund would ensure that all funding stayed within mainstream schools, a transfer taken directly to the High Needs Block would also ensure that funding stays within the SEND system and meet the ever-growing costs of placements.
46. Within the nationally set financial framework for school funding the only option of removing funding from the Schools Block to High Needs is by capping per pupil funding gains between years. Given that per pupil funding is protected at a level only slightly above the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) as the only universal funding received by all pupils, funding gains are delivered within the NFF additional factors which are largely related to deprivation measures. There is no correlation between the level of pupils at individual schools recognised as having SEN needs and the pupil population as recorded on the School Census upon which the NFF is based.

Background Papers

Schools Forum 18 June 2024 – Resetting the SEN Finance System

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=7734&Ver=4>

Schools Forum 17 September 2024 – SEN Investment Fund and Schools Block Transfer

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=7957&Ver=4>

Schools Forum 17 September 2024 – School Financial Standing

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=7957&Ver=4>

Schools Forum 21 November 2023 – 2023/24 Notional SEN Review

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=7631&Ver=4>

Department for Education - SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan>

National Audit Office – Support for children and young people with special educational needs

<https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/support-for-children-and-young-people-with-special-educational-needs/>

Department for Education – Delivering Better Value in SEND Phase1 Insight Summary

https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/63b6e5debb4b0114060dc226/66421eaae18cb50ccc378780_66421a046d5569ec0ad11674_DBV%20-%20Phase%201%20Insights%20Summary_Website%20v1.0_Final.pdf

ISOS Report for the Local Government Association - Have we reached a 'tipping point'? Trends in spending for children and young people with SEND in England

<https://www.local.gov.uk/have-we-reached-tipping-point-trends-spending-children-and-young-people-send-england>

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School Funding Consultation 2024

This report was generated on 21/10/24. Overall 70 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

This report excludes data for the following questions: Q1a (role), Q1c (organisation/school postcode)

Please provide the following details: (Name of organisation / school:)

The Hall Primary School

The Cedars Academy

HALLAM FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kirby Muxloe Primary School

Martin High School

ellistown primary school

The Merton Primary

Townlands Primary Academy

Newbold Verdon Primary School

Swallowdale Primary

Woodland Grange Primary, LE2 4TY

Wigstaon Academies Trust

Redmoor Academy

Red Hill Field Primary School

Brockington College

Highcliffe Primary School

Broom Leys Primary School

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Loughborough

Success Academy Trust

Thomas Estley Community College

Thrussington Church of England Primary School

Ashby School

John Ferneley College

Woodbrook Vale School

Discovery Schools Academy Trust

Asfordby Captains Close Primary School

Welland Park Academy

Parkland Primary School

Bradgate Education Partnership

St Thomas Aquins Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Gaddesby Primary School

Broomfield Primary School

Heath Lane Academy

Kibworth Mead Academy

School Funding Consultation 2024

Please provide the following details: (Name of organisation / school:)

Church Hill Infant School

Limehurst Academy

Ivanhoe School

Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School

Hallbrook Primary School

Lutterworth College

Brocks Hill Primary School

Farndon Fields Primary School

ST BOTOLPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Townlands C of E Primary Academy

Gartree High School

Stafford Leys Primary School

Bosworth Academy

Swinford CE Primary School

Huncote Community Primary School

Badgerbrook Primary

Manorfield C of E Primary School

Parkland Primary School (Discovery Trust)

Mercenfeld Primary School

Croft Church of England Primary School

St Peter's C of E Primary School

Badgerbrook Primary Academy

Foxton Primary School

Little Bowden Primary School

OAK Multi Academy Trust

Croft Primary School

Roundhill Academy

Sherard Primary School Mowbray Education Trust

The Grove Primary School

Ab Kettleby Primary School and Somerby Primary School

Hastings High School

Iveshead School

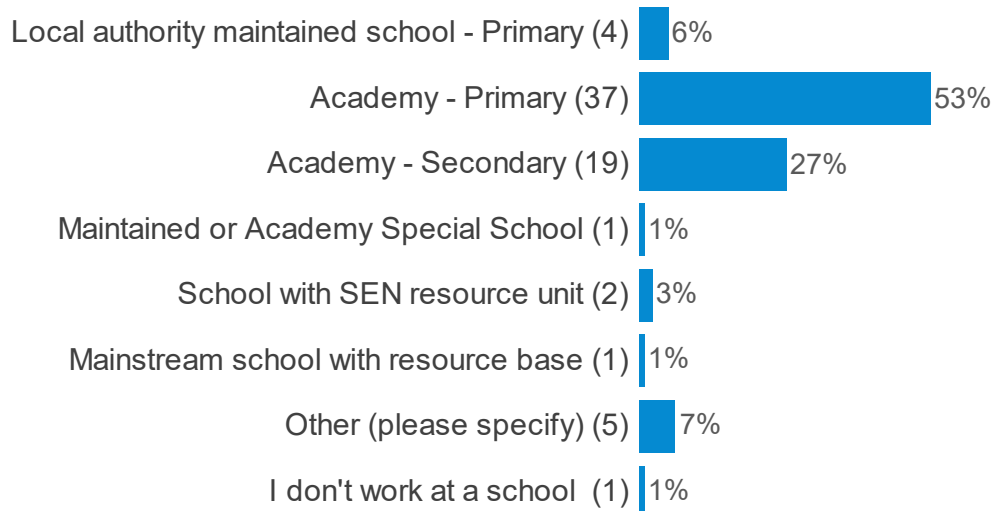
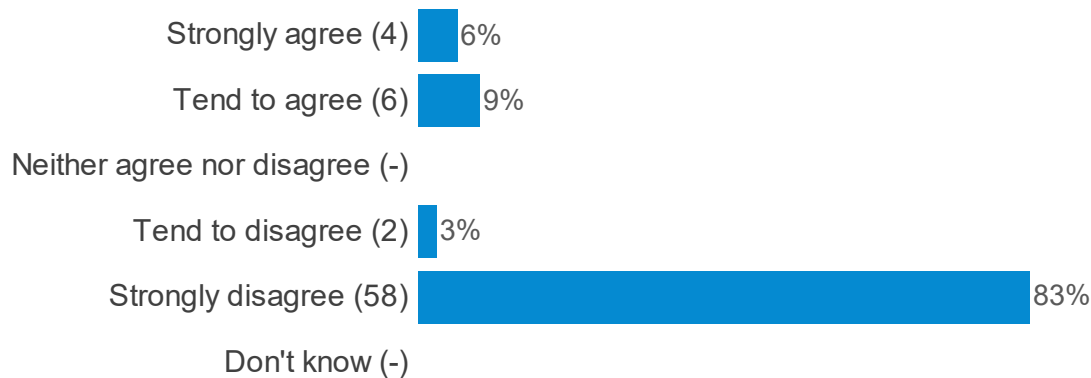
Enderby Danemill Primary School

Brownlow Primary School

Embrace Multi Academy Trust

OAK Multi Academy Trust

School Funding Consultation 2024

Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?**What type of school do you work at?****To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to create a SEND Investment Fund to enable investment in targeted actions to improve pupil outcomes?****Why do you say this?**

There is a huge need for support for pupils in school who are currently supported by [REDACTED] but need more intervention before that point.

Schools do not have the financial capability to support such a fund.

We struggle with the limited funding as it currently stands. We do not have enough funding to support the children in school who do have moderate to severe SEND needs. we cannot afford the resources that they need or provide the 1-1 adults that should be supporting them. It would cause a further crisis in school if any of our limited funding was reduced even further. Staff are stretched to maximum capacity and this has a negative impact on their wellbeing.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

Schools budgets are stretched already and we are already being underfunded nationally and for SEND costs from the LA. To ask schools to pay for this development (however needed) is not appropriate or justified as schools have already absorbed multiple costs from the LA already such as attendance management).

Schools do NOT have the financial capability to support the fund but we do appreciate that something needs to be done.

In principle this is a good idea. However, it would all depend where the money is coming from. Taking it from already cash strapped schools with high numbers of children with SEND needs is not the answer

Schools are already massively underfunded, especially in regards to SEN and money given directly to schools is much more effective.

For most children with SEMH their is an underlying need of Autism - this causes anxieties and therefore behaviours. I would suggest the investment would be in Autism rather than SEMH. We also feel that, as shown in the diagrams provided in the consultation, there is a huge amount of funding wasted on Independent schools rather than the development of places in the Local Authority. This is not sustainable and pulls provision away from areas such as SEMH and Autism. This needs addressing first.

We get so little for our SEND children as it is, the amount paid to support EHCP children compared with any other county that I have spoken to is ridiculous so we already have to use so much of our budget to prop up and staff services that aren't able to be covered for and this looks to take more of that money away from us which will make this even harder. If I have the money, at least I can see what I am doing with it.

I have no faith in the LA being able to organise itself to do anything sensible eith the money they levy.

This is because I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

I agree that their needs to be investment in this area however i am concerned that it will take away from other areas of SEND support that are equally underfunded.

You are creating a fund without any significant extra spend even though SEN has risen at an alarming rate.

The whole reason for this consultation is that things have been mismanaged for years (as recognised by the LA itself, not a personal view or comment). Schools' budgets are already extremely tight and top slicing any school to create a SEND investment fund will be punitive and will put a number of schools in a deficit position, or an even greater deficit position.

Increased pupils with special needs in mainstream schools, needing specialiaist support and resources to enable all pupils to make high expectations and succeed.

I have not yet been convinced that the funding available within the high needs block is well managed and promptly accessed according to need.

This involves taking £50,000 from our [REDACTED] which will mean restructuring our provision for children with SEND particularly SEMH as we won't be able to continue to employ the staff who deliver this or create the provision around it. I believe this will adversely impact on the outcomes and provision for our children with SEND. The proposal is to take 0.9% of our income and that seems particularly unfair given the large % of children with SEND needs we host - therefore transferring money away from our SEND provision not towards it.

SEMH needs are becoming more prevalent in mainstream and can have an impact on other pupils' learning

I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this fund effectively based on current evidence

We do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

We do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% block transfer.

This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively. It also disproportionately affects school with the highest number of disadvantaged school. It also affects the schools who currently CANNOT balance budgets due to falling pupil numbers

School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

Many of our schools will be significantly and negatively impacted by the proposal. It will, in reality, feel like another budget cut. In particular, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] would be badly hit and this would result in redundancies. This will not support our pupils-especially those with SEMH.

At a time when schools are desperately underfunded, especially in terms of SEND resources, it is unfathomable to consider a significant reduction in funding. The only way we have been able to ensure that provision is where it needs to be is to work on school-based innovation in this area. Such approaches have been successful and represent the only viable way forward; they need more resource rather than less. Regrettably, there is no evidence to suggest that the pooling of more school resource at authority level will lead to an increase in the efficiency and/or efficacy of provision.

Impact on where the money is coming from— just bother budget cut to schools?

Budgets are so tight in the first place that any further loss would significantly impact the provision we are already trying to provide to our SEND pupils.

We do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

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It is predicted to leave my school with a variance of over £9000 in a school where we are already struggling to run financially.

This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

Whilst in principle a SEND Investment Fund could be used to support targeted actions we have seen no evidence that the LA can deliver this aim. We do not believe that the LA has the capacity, expertise or knowledge to utilise this fund effectively. We strongly believe that this money remains with schools who do have the track record to deliver pupil improvement.

I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

School have requested support from the LA regarding SEND pupils multiple over recent years and it has regularly not been provided - often not responded to at all. This proposal will cut the funding to schools further and when the LA are failing our children with SEND currently, taking more money from schools will only make it harder for them to provide the necessary support that they currently do. We do not feel that the proposal will improve things for our SEND children, or children across the county. We strongly oppose the proposal.

Uncertain that the LA being able to administer this effectively.

This is because I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively and it will prove detrimental to our schools whose budget will be significantly impacted by the additional 0.5% transfer.

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This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

This is because I do not have confidence in the LA being able to administer this effectively and it will prove detrimental to our schools whose budget will be significantly impacted by the additional 0.5% transfer. Whilst it isn't set to have an impact on our school budget this academic year, future impact is likely and the impact is huge for other schools and their budgets. It is an unreasonable and unfair request.

We do not have faith that the LA will administer this effectively.

Schools do not have sufficient funds to do this, additional funding is needed to meet the needs of our pupils, simply moving money around within our heavily restricted budgets will not work.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

This is because I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively and it will prove detrimental to our schools whose budget will be significantly impacted by the additional 0.5% transfer. It will have a significant financial impact on the school I lead and the additional amount of over £3K shown for the school I lead is an unreasonable and unfair request.

This is because I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively and it will prove detrimental to our schools whose budget will be significantly impacted by the additional 0.5% transfer. It will have a significant financial impact on the school I lead and the additional amount of £15879 shown for the school I lead is an unreasonable and unfair request. Due to our budget already showing deficit as we have a much higher than average level of children with funding and this funding not meeting need and being supplemented by our school budget.

This proposal is not in the best interests of schools . The provision for SEND in Leicestershire is inadequate , underfunded and not competently lead by the Local Authority . The schools selected to have their SEND funding cut is discriminate and unfair . The schools with the most SEND need , FSM take up and lower results have been targeted , those school within a more affluent area have not been part of this proposal. The schools with the highest needs for SEND cannot currently meet the needs of their pupils so this cut would further exacerbate this already difficult problem. Further to this the SEND provision in Leicestershire is badly run causing months of delays with applications for EHCPs and Higher Needs funding , this is further putting addition strain on school staff and budgets, as schools have an obligation to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This proposal to top slice SEND budgets at source is not in my opinion going to solve the problem, the LA SEND department and restructure which has been in the pipe line for a considerable amount of time has had no impact on the SEND provision . So basically the money this new initiative has used has not been VFM . The LA have not been transparent in any aspect of this initiative , how would this money from this new proposal be used, how will it improve the service , what would be the benefits to schools? As the LA do not have a good track record regarding SEND provision this proposal is not in any way a good initiative, it would be detrimental to schools that have been targeted to have their funding cut. My next thought is , is this also part of a political agenda by the LA meaning schools in a Labour Ward are the ones who would have their funding cut while schools in a conservative ward are less likely to.o.

Absolutely cannot happen. It will disproportionately disadvantage our school and pupils. Other solutions must be found. We will challenge using all available options should this go ahead.

We agree that SEMH needs seem to be very prevalent at the moment. We have a number of children with anxiety and who need additional support to attend school, and also to learn to regulate their emotions. In some cases, early intervention could help prevent these difficulties worsening and becoming longer-term SEND needs.

No evidence that this approach will improve outcomes or help schools

This is because I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively and it will prove detrimental to our schools whose budget will be significantly impacted by the additional 0.5% transfer or nearly 3% in our instance. It will have a significant financial impact on the school I am the SENCo of and the additional amount of £18549 shown for the school I lead is an unreasonable and unfair request.

This is because I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively nor consistently to schools.

This is because I do not have confidence in the LA being able to administer this more effectively or efficiently than our own provision.

This is because I do not have confidence in the LA being able to administer this more effectively or efficiently than our own provision.

I do not have confidence in the LA being able to administer this more effectively or efficiently than our own provision. There have been times where funding has not been granted for children who clearly are in need and we end up doing ourselves with our own resources anyway. We will never see this money again!

Because we do not have faith that the LA are able to administer this effectively.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

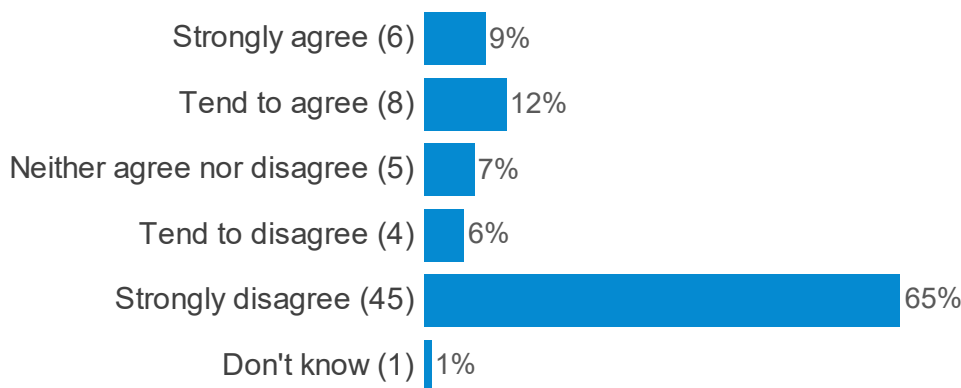
This is because I do not have confidence in the LA being able to administer this more effectively or efficiently than our own provision.

This is because we do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively.

I do not have confidence in the LA being able to administer this more effectively or efficiently than our own provision.

This is because I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this effectively and it will prove detrimental to our schools whose budget will be significantly impacted by the additional 0.5% transfer. It will have a significant financial impact on schools across our trust and the additional amount of £113,000 for the trust schools I lead is an unreasonable and unfair request.

Unfortunately the local authority has not demonstrated success in projects or SEND and has significant areas that it should focus on without diverting it's attention to a matter which is most effectively devolved to the school level. Historic projects of this nature that I have seen have failed to bring any real positive impact and schools are far more able to utilise the funds to ensure strong impact not least because of they are under a high level of scrutiny from Ofsted and for trust schools, expectations and support from their trust teams.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) should be the initial focus of a SEND Investment Fund?**Why do you say this?**

It is increasingly challenging presentation in schools.

Agree there is a serious need for SEMH support but do not agree to there being an Investment Fund

There is a huge need for this however this should be funded from another budget- not top sliced from the meagre budgets schools receive. We work hard to support the children in school with the limited funding we have. We cannot be expected to, nor do we have the capacity, to work any harder. We ask so much of our staff as it is. The health and wellbeing of staff at all levels must be taken into account. A top slice of school funding would be devastating.

We do NOT agree that an investment fund is a suitable way forwards but we DO agree that the SEMH needs in Leicestershire are a priority .

This would certainly have the greatest impact, as a child with SEMH needs without the correct support can have far reaching consequences for not just the child but the other child in the school and staff - more so than for other needs

Schools have different priorities and whilst SEMH is of huge importance many schools are struggling to meet the needs of learners with other difficulties.

It should be around autism primary as this is paramount in every school.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

SEMH is the biggest challenge facing our children at the moment and preventing them from accessing the curriculum and provision which they need.

I can't see all of the facts you deal with to know the needs in full. For us, this doesn't represent the wide ranging needs of my SEND children

I do not believe the LA should take the money in the first place.

I do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

With the increase in SEMH need in mainstream schools plus the impact this has on the pupil and the cohort/ whole school I understand why this is the initial area for investment however in our school we have [REDACTED] EHCPs and [REDACTED] SENIF in a mainstream school of [REDACTED] pupils which is financially unsustainable. Not all of these pupils have SEMH needs but obviously all have complex and enduring needs such as global delay, physical disability and ASD. Is the suggestion that these other areas of high need will receive less funding in order to focus on SEMH? All 4 broad areas of need are severely underfunded at EHCP level as well as at K level. It is not fair to take funding from one area to increase funding to another. All areas of need are equally valid and should be funded as so.

There should be extra money set aside for this for school counselors and chaplains and schools where children are not put under ridiculous amounts of pressure to attend and pass written exams.

Improve SEMH provision when first apparent in a pupil to prevent further development of need

I don't agree with a SEND investment fund, therefore I cannot agree or disagree what its initial focus should be.

We are experiencing a high rate of referrals for pupils to the Mental Health and Support Team and nursing teams and completing ELSA referrals in school at a higher rate in the last 5 years.

I do not believe that this SEND investment fund should be created from the transfer of money which can better be used within our schools to meet these needs and I believe that there will be detriment to children with SEND SEMH if it is transferred from school funding into this LA administered fund

I do not believe there should be this fund: This involves taking £50,000 from our [REDACTED] which will mean restructuring our provision for children with SEND particularly SEMH as we won't be able to continue to employ the staff who deliver this or create the provision around it. I believe this will adversely impact on the outcomes and provision for our children with SEND. The proposal is to take 0.9% of our income and that seems particularly unfair given the large % of children with SEND needs we host - therefore transferring money away from our SEND SEMH provision not towards it.

See previous question

I do not believe the LA should take the 0.5% transfer. I do believe that SEMH is a huge and rising challenge for schools and requires a robust and integral response.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% block transfer.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have said that places for SEMH are not required. We have a specialist provision that is changing to a CI base because of the lack of spaces. Therefore this makes no sense. We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

I fundamentally disagree with the investment fund.

Based on my previous response, I do not believe that the investment fund should be established.

Agree but disagree with the funding proposal.

We do not think the LA should take 0.5% from schools to fund this.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

We do not believe that the LA should make the 0/5% transter

I do not believe the investment fund is the best way of tackling this issue.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

SEMH is a complex area requiring the joined up thinking of many agencies, not least CAMHS and community paediatrics. The LA alone does not have the expertise to meet need, as shown by the huge delay (beyond the legal requirement) in EHCPs and waiting lists for specialist education. To provide this money to meet this need is futile at this stage and the money is better remaining within schools.

I do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer as they have not demonstrated they capacity to appropriately manage existing funds.

We do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

We believe that the focus should be individualised for each pupil. Currently the LA are not meeting their statutory duty for children with EHCPs and this should be a priority.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer and that a SEMH should be the initial focus

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

I disagree with the use of the 0.5% transfer so therefore unable to comment.

We do not believe that the LA should go ahead with the 0.5% transfer

We are seeing an increase in the need for mental health support in schools, however not all pupils with mental health needs are SEND pupils and so additional funding is needed to meet the needs of these pupils.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

SENd cobblers all areas of needs for a pupil SEMH is just one aspect of this, while yes it's important so are all the other areas of SEND covered in the code of practice

See previous answer.

Any investment fund should support schools properly to support all SEND students

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

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I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe that the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer because there is no evidence it would have an impact and would remove focus from areas of SEND that the authority needs to focus on at this time.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any comments on how a SEND Investment Fund should be delivered, monitored and governed?

It should be a swiftly accessible intervention with personalised support directed at individuals and groups of children.

Again, schools cannot afford to support this fund. The deficit is not the 'fault' of schools so they haven't benefited from it to be able to support it.

By experts who have worked in schools and understand the challenges that schools face.

We fundamentally disagree with the proposal. Government funding needs to support and the LCC needs to better manage its resource to effectively support schools.

Money needs to be within schools to help them meet the needs of learners.

I believe it should be invested in the baseline services of SEN places rather than a fund. If it were to be as a fund, the amount provided seems minimal in comparison to the requirements in schools. We would need to fund experienced staff and teachers to manage the right support for SEN

There needs to be a very fair and clear process so that all children are having the support that they require.

I do not believe the LA should take the money from schools for these reasons: • Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all • We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

A working party of a diverse range of stakeholders needs to be established to ensure the delivery of the fund is fair and equitable. A panel of independent Governors should be established to ensure that delivery and monitoring are rigorous and the funds are giving impact. Impact monitored - school data - behaviour, referrals, pupil progress and attainment, staff voice, parent voice, pupil voice, Governor voice all taken in to account.

You shouldn't be INVESTING in SEND you should be SPENDING money on special schools which are designed for SEN pupils instead of shoving them in schools which are clearly the wrong setting and where they disrupt the learning of other pupils. You should be training special education teachers properly and staffing schools or units where their relevant training can be maximised.

I do not agree with a SEND investment fund therefore do not have any comment about how it should be delivered, monitored or governed.

Any support through resources greatly appreciated within schools to use as needed.

I do not believe this transfer should be made. It will badly impact on our [REDACTED] schools with high levels of SEND who have set up new complex staffing structures and inhouse provision to manage these needs inhouse and will require these to be dismantled and their green shoots of positive impact to be lost, impacting adversely on our students with SEND. We should instead look at best practice within local schools and mirror it across other schools without transferring the funding. We have already had to find solutions ourselves.

I do not believe it should be put into place: This involves taking £50,000 from our [REDACTED] which will mean restructuring our provision for children with SEND particularly SEMH as we won't be able to continue to employ the staff who deliver this or create the provision around it. I believe this will adversely impact on the outcomes and provision for our children with SEND. The proposal is to take 0.9% of our income and that seems particularly unfair given the large % of children with SEND needs we host - therefore transferring money away from our SEND provision not towards it.

We do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer

We do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer. Fundamentally opposed.

We do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% block transfer. We do not have confidence in the LAs ability to administer such a fund.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any comments on how a SEND Investment Fund should be delivered, monitored and governed?

We do not believe this is a sensible or practical way forward when it affects the most vulnerable schools disproportionately

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

Based on my previous response, I do not believe that the investment fund should be established.

With great consideration of those that are on the ground, supporting pupils and seeking advice.

The SEND fund simply should not come out of current budgets. We can't get dyslexia diagnosis, paediatrician appointments, CAHMS appts, school nurse visits - the list is endless. I do not agree with the proposal.

We do not believe the LA should take 0.5% from schools

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

No

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

Need more detail of what is being proposed to be able to comment

It would need to have a very clear explanation of how my reduction in school budget would be equally, or actually better, matched in terms of access to a service. I would have huge concerns about who was put in charge of the delivery of this when the funding can be so closely matched to my individual pupils currently whereas this would be tackling a much larger issue. My funding would be swallowed up. It would need monitoring and potentially governed by the key stakeholders which are the schools and parents.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We strongly believe that the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer. At this stage, before asking for the money, the LA should have a detailed plan to share as to how this money will make a difference. To ask how the fund should be delivered, monitored and governed shows a lack of forward thinking. If we look at the previous years the LA has invested significant funds into TSIL that outwardly appear to have made things worse not better we believe it is foolhardy to ask for more investment with no clear plans to share or risk assessed what effect losing the funding from schools will have.

I do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

We should not be losing this money out of our school finances

We do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

We strongly oppose this proposal!

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer and the financial impact on my school's budget is unfair.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

I don't agree with the 0.5% transfer so unable to comment.

We do not support the LA making this transfer of 0.5%.

The SEND investment fund needs to be funding additional to the school's existing budget and not come from within it.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer and the financial impact on my school's budget is unfair

School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any comments on how a SEND Investment Fund should be delivered, monitored and governed?

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer and the financial impact on my school's budget is unfair.

The LA control of the SEND fund should be more transparent and school should have more say in how this fund is monitored and governed. School Headteacher are at the 'chalk face' along with SENDcos, these are the personnel that should be involved in delivering , monitoring and governing the SEND investment fund, they have the most upto date knowledge and expertise.

We would welcome the suggestions in the consultation document e.g. practitioners coming in to school to provide support, model good practice, run small groups. We would hope that the governance, delivery and monitoring could be flexible - as different schools will have very different needs - with a simple referral / action / review process. We would also hope that the fund would not be too restrictive e.g. we would have a range of children who might need support, some of whom will already be on the SEND register, but some of whom will have a pastoral need and so won't have SEND status - and so we would not want the fund to be restricted to SEND children. Our SEMH and ELSA interventions would normally run for 6-8 weeks, and so we would hope to run any provisions from the fund in a similar way, with a short review at the end of the 6-8 weeks, and a decision on whether to continue or whether the need has been met.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer or indeed nearly 3%. The financial impact of the £18549 on our schools budget will be devastating and will result in poorer provision for our pupils.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer particularly given the disproportionate impact that it would have upon our school.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

I object to the transfer because: • It appears that schools with the most SEND need will pay more and I think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have, on average, lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least which suggests that they already require additional resourcing. • We do not have confidence that the LA has the capacity or organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision in a way that is at least as good as the schools' own arrangements. • The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

We do not believe that the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

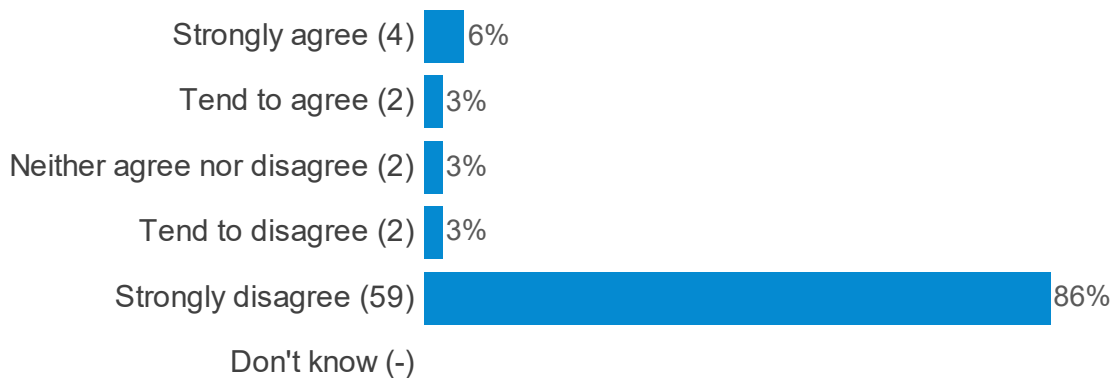
We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer.

I do not believe the LA should make the 0.5% transfer and the financial impact on our budgets across the trust schools is unfair.

I do not believe this would be of any benefit nor have any real impact. Therefore is should not go ahead in the first place because the LA needs to focus on its core SEN obligations and schools are best placed to put appropriate context related interventions into place.

School Funding Consultation 2024

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for an annual funding transfer of 0.5% to establish a SEND Investment Fund?**Why do you say this?**

This could save future costs such as EHCPs and placements at Short Stay Schools.

Schools are struggling with the poor budgets they currently receive. Any funds transferred away from the school would cause a crisis.

We are currently in a huge deficit budget de to our high numbers of SEND needs and underfunded EHCP's. We are predicted to lose an additional £5000 as part of this plan. This would very much be a step backwards for our school's SEN strategy and would be detrimental to the children in our care

I feel this is not the best allocation of funds and doesn't fulfill a long term strategic direction

- Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair
- Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all
- We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties
- The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least
- The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least
- We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision

I object to the transfer because: - Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair - Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all - We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties - The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least - The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least - We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision - The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

In principle investment has to improve the current failing situation. However it will very much depend on how the funding is allocated and not at the expense to meeting other SEND needs.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul never works. Stop owing the furniture while the place burns down.

Schools are already underfunded, this money should come from elsewhere

Many schools are already facing financial constraints, some have been forced to set deficit budgets. This proposal will send more schools into deficit, others into a greater deficit position.

This will greatly support schools with groups in schools and activities to enhance pupils with SEND and their access to curriculum and quality first teaching.

I do not believe this transfer should be made. It will badly impact on our schools with high levels of SEND who have set up new complex staffing structures and inhouse provision to manage these needs inhouse and will require these to be dismantled and their green shoots of positive impact to be lost, impacting adversely on our students with SEND. We should instead look at best practice within local schools and mirror it across other schools without transferring the funding. We have already had to find solutions ourselves.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

I do not agree with this proposal: This involves taking £50,000 from our [REDACTED] which will mean restructuring our provision for children with SEND particularly SEMH as we won't be able to continue to employ the staff who deliver this or create the provision around it. I believe this will adversely impact on the outcomes and provision for our children with SEND. The proposal is to take 0.9% of our income and that seems particularly unfair given the large % of children with SEND needs we host - therefore transferring money away from our SEND provision not towards it.

I do not fully understand how funding is distributed currently

I do not have faith in the LA being able to administer this fund effectively

We object to the transfer because: • Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all • We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision • The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

• Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all • It affects the schools who have falling numbers the most therefore is unfair • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision • The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

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As stated previously, at a time when schools are desperately underfunded, especially in terms of SEND resources, it is unfathomable to consider a significant reduction in funding. The only way we have been able to ensure that provision is where it needs to be is to work on school-based innovation in this area. Such approaches have been successful and represent the only viable way forward; the y need more resource rather than less. Regrettably, there is no evidence to suggest that the pooling of more school resource at authority level will lead to an increase in the efficiency and/or efficacy of provision.

Reduced funding in schools

School budgets as previously stated are strapped and we are not able to fully provide what our children need now! Pulling funding will massively impact the school and my pupils. This is simply not an option.

We object to the transfer because: • Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all • We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision • The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

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School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

Schools are finding the current financial situation very difficult. The notional SEN budget and wider budget cannot meet the needs of an increasing number of pupils with SEN Needs at the moment. Taking money from the school will lead to staff being unable to move forward for the sake of the child.

We object to the transfer because: • Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all • We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision • The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

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Although if this happened, it should of course be ringfenced. I do not see how this is beneficial compared to the money being at a school level.

• Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all • We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision • The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

The plans for this fund are poorly defined. The LA has been dysfunctional for many years and most particularly in the area of high needs. This has been demonstrated through two Ofsted inspections and, in the last two years, the failure of the TSIL project to deliver any visible improvements for high needs pupils, their families or schools. EHCP timeframes are longer than ever (some taking three times the legal timeframe or more to be finalised) and Element 3 funding for high needs pupils is risible (nearly half that provided in Leicester City). The LA has spent years blaming 'middle class parents' and the 'unrealistic expectations of schools' for their own failings. While there is a national crisis in SEND, Leicestershire has been unable to co-ordinate efficient and effective delivery of even their most basic statutory responsibilities. The statement that the fund would 'only used for activities that will improve pupil outcomes' suggests the rather insulting view that this is not what schools are already desperately trying to do with the limited funding we receive in the face of colossal incompetence on the part of the LA.

BECAUSE IT DISPROPORTIONALLY AFFECTS SCHOOLS AND SOME OF THESE SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY DOING A GREAT JOB WITH THEIR SEND AND IT APPEARS BEING FINANCIALLY PENALISED AS A RESULT.

Why is this being directly taken away from schools

School have requested support from the LA regarding SEND pupils multiple over recent years and it has regularly not been provided - often not responded to at all. This proposal will cut the funding to schools further and when the LA are failing our children with SEND currently, taking more money from schools will only make it harder for them to provide the necessary support that they currently do. We do not feel that the proposal will improve things for our SEND children, or children across the county. We strongly oppose the proposal.

We do not believe the LA should not make the 0.5% transfer

School Funding Consultation 2024

Why do you say this?

I object to the transfer because: Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and this is unfair. Some schools will pay a significant amount from their school budget and others nothing at all – this is unfair and has not been thought through with regard to key ideas, delivery, monitoring and governance of such a fund. The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least - this is detrimental both for those schools and the pupils who attend them. I do not believe that the LA has the capacity or organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision. The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children or those schools which would have a significant impact on their budget and financial position.

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School's budgets are so stretched as it is, they do not have the funds to do this. If this happens then other areas of education will suffer as a result.

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As previously stated this proposal is discriminatory and ill thought through , schools with inadequate budgets cannot meet the needs of the pupils on role currently with SEND . The LA provision of SEND is badly and incompetently managed. As most authorities do have problems with SEND funding Leicestershire Authority have the most issues caused through bad management.

Difficult to answer without knowing all of the context for SEND funding, but a ring-fenced 'pot' of £2.6m/0.5% initially seems an appropriate amount.

Funds will disproportionately reduce funding for schools with students with the most vulnerable children and there has been no evidence that the proposal will improve outcomes.

This will be catastrophic to our school.

School Funding Consultation 2024

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I do not believe that such an investment fund will benefit our schools across the trust in a productive and impactful way for children and young people.

This is a diversion from the need of the LA to improve the core areas of SEN focus. The money is unlucky to be well used given historic evidence and schools are much better placed to identify appropriate interventions for their students. Anything which removes money to support schools in this endeavour should be avoided. This proposed transfer should not go ahead.

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

It is a ridiculous notion that school budgets are targeted to be reduced further. Please listen to the voice of staff on the ground. Any move of this kind would be hugely detrimental.

This is a national conversation and a sticking plaster approach will not solve it. LAs are underfunded and as such have been not meeting their school place funding obligations for years now (including not increasing high needs funding for years despite associated staffing costs increasing substantially). Schools cannot continue to carry this.

We are deeply disappointed by this proposal as it demonstrates how little schools are listened to by LCC. We simply cannot function if we lose any more money. We carefully manage all our sending are seem to be held to account for every penny we spend. It is a shame the the LCC has not been held to the same levels of accountability over the years.

Please don't rob Peter to pay Paul.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

None

I would suggest investing in long term programmes/provision that support children with a focus on Autism rather than SEMH. SEMH is frequently a result of Autism or social care needs/family support

Removing money from schools is not the way forward here when Leicestershire schools are already one of the worst funded per pupil head in the country. Sorry, I cannot support this at all.

How can it be fair for the schools with heaviest need to pay most and those with less SEND need to pay most?

I object to the transfer because: - Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair - Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all - We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties - The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least - The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least - We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision - The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

Funding formulas for SEND provision need to be looked at on a national level as no one area of SEND funding should take priority over another.

Oh, I have so many more comments and suggestions but nobody wants to hear them. SENNA is not fit for purpose and everyone knows it.

Designated person to support schools or cluster of schools rather than a generic department email.

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Work with MATs to provide cheaper places. Better co construction of ideas need to be created

School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

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I wish to continue to work with the LA to look at how to best use the scarce resources available, and I continue to recognise the paucity of central government funding to authorities in this area. That said, it is widely recognised that out of county placements and the broader management of the High Needs Block have played their parts in bringing us to the present situation; it is not appropriate to disproportionately penalise some schools financially to try to rebalance this.

provide the full amount of funding to schools who have SEN in the first place. The LA is not meeting its current SEND duty as it is.

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Whilst I appreciated that the number of SEN pupils requiring significant support has escalated quickly the reality is that schools are doing their best to meet the needs of some complex pupils with very little budget. The notional budget does not go far enough to support schools in meeting specific pupils needs and there are many pupils in mainstream education that are not suited to it and they need a specialist setting but there is a shortage of these places.

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no comment

School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

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In addition to doubts about the LA's strategic and organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision (as evidenced over a number of years already and via Ofsted outcomes), this proposal is grossly unfair because: Schools with the most SEND need will pay more Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all It appears to be biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children Please just trigger the 'safety valve' option. It is clear that it is in the interests of the children and young people in Leicestershire would be best served by external involvement to ensure that Leicestershire organises itself effectively.

DIRECTLY TARGET THOSE SCHOOLS THAT CLEARLY DON'T HAVE THEIR FAIR SHARE OF COMPLEX SEND PUPILS OR WHO FAIL THEM BY NOT MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The funding needs increasing in schools not decreasing, this is not good news

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I will be writing to the Secretary of State to state to share our strong opposition on behalf of our school.

Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all. We notice that schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • Does the LA have the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision

I strongly disagree with the proposals and negative effect it will have on school budgets and provision for SEND pupils.

I object to the transfer because: Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and this is unfair. Some schools will pay a significant amount from their school budget and others nothing at all – this is unfair and has not been thought through with regard to key ideas, delivery, monitoring and governance of such a fund. The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least - this is detrimental both for those schools and the pupils who attend them. I do not believe that the LA has the capacity or organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision. The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children or those schools which would have a significant impact on their budget and financial position.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

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We reject this proposal on the grounds of: · Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and we think this is unfair. · Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all which is unfair, · We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties. · The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least. · The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least. · We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision. · The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children.

Schools need additional funding to meet the increasing SEND needs. Money is needed for additional staff to provide the support needed and investment is needed into staff professional development so that they are able to meet the increasing mental health needs of their pupils. We need to invest in schools in order to provide all pupils with the high quality education that they deserve. The NHS is often unable to provide mental health support for children not at crisis point and so the pressure on schools to meet mental health needs increases. Schools are largely unequipped to meet these needs. Training and resources are needed.

The most inclusive schools have always been the schools affected the most significantly financially. Our notional budget doesn't cover what it should, even with the top up. Hourly rates have not risen in line with pay rises, even though there are still hours on plans. Due to this our reserves have been depleted and we are in deficit, yet we would be asked to contribute nearly £16000. Nearly █% of our school has SENDIF funding or EHCP's and more than █ come from out of our catchment area because we have the skills and desire to support the most challenging children. We are proud of our inclusivity and yet we will be crippled financially by this. It seems unfair and will not support those schools who go above and beyond to support our young people with SEND.

To ensure that SEND provision in Leicestershire is sorted a working party of professional Headteachers and SENDco should be formed. This working party could then completely overhaul the provision with knowledge, expertise and professionalism

We would certainly welcome any possible further support with meeting SEMH needs, and are supportive of any action that will help with early intervention, e.g. to prevent seemingly 'simple' cases of anxiety becoming more complex and hard-wired. The idea of support from practitioners to provide training / support for school staff is very appealing. We would welcome practical support in particular on how to support a child's SEMH needs, including working with the parents/carers to understand the root causes, and how home-life can also impact on a child's SEMH.

The County LA have not increased their SEN funding to schools for too long, other LA's have increased funding numerous times. SEND funding is late, incorrect and its impossible to get hold of anyone at the LA to sort out issues this has not improved.

I object to the transfer because: Schools with the most SEND need will pay more and this is unfair. Some schools will pay a significant amount from their school budget and others nothing at all – this is unfair and has not been thought through with regard to key ideas, delivery, monitoring and governance of such a fund. The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least - this is detrimental both for those schools and the pupils who attend them. I do not believe that the LA has the capacity or organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision. The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children or those schools which would have a significant impact on their budget and financial position.

School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

I strongly object to the transfer because: • Schools with the most SEND need such as [REDACTED] will pay more and we think this is unfair • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all • We believe it is biased to protect Conservative wards over other parties • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision • The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

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We object to the transfer alongside many other schools because: • Schools with the most SEND need will often pay more when they need this funding the most. • Some schools will pay tens of thousands and others nothing at all - based on the underfunding of Leicestershire schools. • The schools that are scheduled to pay most have higher levels of FSM than those paying least • The schools that will pay most have on average lower attainment outcomes than those that pay least • We do not believe that the LA has the capacity of organisational ability to work with schools to improve SEND provision • The LA has not carried out an impact risk assessment to measure the impact on vulnerable children

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School Funding Consultation 2024

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

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This is against the evidence base of the school improvement and pupil outcomes. The schools know the most impactful interventions and are able to work with other schools where this brings benefits. The proposal has no evidential basis and would take away focus on the fundamental SEND work that the LA needs to focus on at this time. This proposal should not proceed.

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Email Response 1

The concerns raised include the Local Authority's effectiveness in managing SEND provision, the financial impact on schools, and the fairness of the proposed funding deduction. Many respondents highlighted issues such as delays in EHCP processing, inadequate SEND budgets, and the potential disproportionate effects on schools with higher SEND needs. There is also a call for more details and transparency regarding how the funds would be managed and utilized to ensure they benefit the schools equitably.

Overall, the feedback suggests a need for a more comprehensive approach to address systemic issues in SEND provision, with a focus on ensuring that any changes support schools and their most vulnerable students effectively.

The consultation responses can be summarized as follows:

1. **Concerns Over Local Authority (LA) Effectiveness and SEND Provision:**
 - There is a general lack of confidence in the Local Authority's SEND initiatives, with respondents questioning the evidence for any positive impact. Delays and inefficiencies in EHCP processing, coupled with inconsistent decision-making, have created significant challenges for schools.
 - The existing SEND budgets are already inadequate, and schools are struggling to manage the increasing number of students with complex needs. Many fear that reducing funding would further compromise their ability to meet these needs.
2. **Financial Impact on Schools:**
 - Schools are concerned that the proposed 0.5% block funding deduction will disproportionately affect those with higher levels of SEND needs and low Free School Meal (FSM) percentages, which are often small, rural schools.
 - Respondents argue that taking more money from schools, which are already under financial strain, would exacerbate the problem. They suggest that the LA's proposal does not account for the financial reality facing most schools.
3. **Fairness and Equity Issues:**
 - There is a perceived disparity in the proposal's financial impact across schools, with some facing significantly larger deductions than others. Schools serving vulnerable populations or with higher SEND needs feel particularly disadvantaged.
 - Some responses suggest that schools with lower attainment outcomes and higher FSM levels would be unfairly burdened, while others would be minimally affected.
4. **Inadequate Detail and Lack of Confidence in LA's Plan:**
 - Several responses indicate that the proposal lacks sufficient detail on how funds would be used to benefit schools. There is also skepticism regarding the LA's capacity to manage additional funds effectively, given past issues with SEND administration.

- The absence of a clear business case, accountability measures, and impact assessments raises doubts about whether the initiative would bring any real improvements.
- 5. Alternative Approaches and Need for Further Information:**
- Some respondents suggest that focusing on inclusion in mainstream schools and addressing systemic issues would have a better long-term impact.
 - While there is recognition that SEND requires more resources, many stakeholders need more convincing evidence and details before supporting the proposed changes.
- 6. General Skepticism and Calls for Broader Reform:**
- Many believe that the proposal merely shifts the problem rather than addressing the root causes of inadequate SEND funding. There is a call for broader reforms to the current SEND funding system.
 - Respondents emphasize that schools should have more autonomy in deciding how to allocate funds to support their pupils effectively.

Overall, the responses highlight deep concerns about the proposal's financial implications, equity, and the LA's ability to deliver improvements in SEND provision.

On the survey, in response to the question, “Do you have any other feedback on either the school block transfer or our forum in general that you would like me to work on/improve?”, the feedback highlighted several key areas for consideration:

1. Timing and Distribution of Paperwork:

- Multiple respondents indicated dissatisfaction with receiving meeting documents on the morning of the meeting, as this does not provide sufficient time to review and engage meaningfully.
- It was strongly suggested that paperwork, especially for substantial items like the block transfer proposal, should be distributed at least a week in advance.

2. Meeting Format and Accessibility:

- While remote meetings were considered convenient, there was a preference for in-person meetings, at times, as they were seen as more productive potentially.
- Suggestions included making the chair's and vice chair's contact details available to facilitate discussions before meetings.

3. Attendance and Engagement:

- Concerns were raised about member attendance, suggesting a policy on how many times a member can miss or send apologies before further action is warranted, given the forum's limited annual meetings.
- Positive feedback was also given for the increased clarity and focus of recent meetings, with appreciation expressed for the chair's leadership.

4. Impact of Funding Decisions:

- There were concerns about how funding changes might affect the most vulnerable groups, questioning whether targeting schools could contravene the Equality Act.
- Calls were made for a plan based on impact and evidence before committing to decisions involving funding reductions.

5. School Forum's Effectiveness:

- Some respondents felt the forum was functioning as a "tick-box exercise," with little effect on decision-making by the Local Authority (LA).
- The need for a space that allows more robust discussions was emphasized, as some felt feedback was met with defensive responses from the LA.

6. Recommendations for Future Actions:

- The possibility of seeking independent advice, especially from other local authorities experienced with similar challenges, was suggested.

7. General Appreciation:

- Despite concerns, there was acknowledgment of the chair's efforts in enhancing meeting quality and focus.

The feedback indicates areas for potential improvement while also recognizing progress in specific aspects of forum operations and leadership.

Email Response 2 – Multiple Copies Received

To Whom it May Concern,

We are writing to you as concerned members of the xxxxxxxx in response to the consultation whereby Leicestershire Local Authority is seeking to transfer 0.5% of the DSG into high needs. We wish to express our disagreement with this proposal in the strongest possible terms and believe that it will be detrimental to all pupils, but particularly to our most vulnerable students who need the support the most.

Xxxxxxxx has always tried to work productively and harmoniously with the LA running various specialist provisions including an SEMH Unit, Language and Interaction Unit and Hearing-Impaired Unit. We have recently opened an Alternative Provision Centre at significant cost to the Trust, showing our commitment to inclusion and SEND. Whenever we have been asked to support or contribute to best practice, we have done so willingly. We are therefore saddened that we have reached this stage.

We vehemently object to the proposal for the following reasons:

Per capita, Leicestershire receives lower funding than any other authority. Consequently, and mindful that the authority cannot fund below the minimum national funding level, the LA have disproportionately targeted schools with the highest number of challenging pupils to pay most towards the 0.5% top slice. This is neither fair nor equitable and we note with dismay that there is a strong correlation between schools with the highest level of free school meals having to pay more. We are concerned that the LA have not considered an impact risk assessment on the vulnerable groups in the schools affected by the transfer. If one has been considered then we would question why it has not been shared.

Within the consultation you ask for our input into the delivery, monitoring and governance of this fund. Surely this should have been provided and shared before this consultation so that any decision can be made based on detailed information. The LA plans are ill defined and opaque, and it has been impossible to get an understanding from officers as to what this means.

For some years, the Local Authority has not met its statutory duty regarding SEND, but particularly when dealing with high needs. Current waiting times for an EHCP are over a year. We all acknowledge there is a national problem with how SEND is funded and that the system is in crisis, but it is worse in Leicestershire due to the authority's lack of capacity in this area.

For the past two years, the authority has worked through the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme. Despite repeated questioning, the LA has been unable to demonstrate any evidence of successful impact. As users of the system, all we can see are longer waits for EHCPs and greater disarray and dysfunction than there was before TSIL.

Providing more money, through taking it away from those schools that need it the most, is not the answer for a broken system, nor do we believe that the LA has within it the experience, capacity and structures that would enable transformational change. Instead, this request has the appearance of desperation from an LA that has overspent and underdelivered on SEND.

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