

# Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Agenda 11 January 2024

2.30 pm to 4.30 pm

Remote Meeting

Via MS Teams invite

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## Date of next programmed WSF meeting

Thursday 16 May 2023 at 2.30 pm remote meeting via MS Teams

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## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM (WSF)**

**Wednesday 23 November 2023**  
**Remote Meeting Held Via MS Teams**

**The meeting started at 2.30 PM.**

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

#### **a. WSF Members**

- |                               |                                    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bryn Thomas (Vice Chair) [BT] | - HT Wolverley CE Secondary School |
| Marie Pearse [MP]             | - HT Evesham Nursery School        |
| Jo Kelleher [JK]              | - Governor, Bredon Hill Academy    |
| Annette Summers [AS]          | - Nursery Owner                    |
| Lorraine Petersen [LP]        | - Governor, Bromsgrove             |
| Vivek Shah [VS]               | - Nursery Owner                    |
| Ed Francis [EF]               | - HT Fort Royal Primary School     |
| Jay Hart [JH]                 | - HT Kingfisher School             |
| Nathan Jones (NT)             | - HT Meadow Green Primary School   |
| Phil Hanson (PH)              | - HT of Pershore High School       |

#### **b. Local Authority (LA)**

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Councillor Tracey Onslow [TO] | - Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills, Worcestershire County Council           |
| Sarah Wilkins [SW]            | - Director of Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Pupil Place Planning Worcestershire Children First |
| Chris Bird [CBi]              | - Acting Director of Resources Worcestershire Children First   |
| Rob Phillips [RP]             | - Finance Business Partner - Schools - Worcestershire Children First                                   |
| Ruth Bessant [RB]             | - Finance Business Partner - Schools - Worcestershire Children First                                   |

BT thanked member for attending the rescheduled meeting, originally planned for 9 November, in which we would have not meet quorum if it had proceeded.

### **1. Apologies**

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Malcolm Richards (Chair) [MR] | - Governor, Bromsgrove  |
| Mel Barnet [MB]               | - Director of All Age Disability Services – Worcestershire Children First |
| Caroline Brand [CBr]          | - Schools Finance Manager – Worcestershire Children First                 |
| Tim Reid                      | - Church of England Board of Education                                    |

Jeff Robinson (Previous Governor, Malvern Hills) has resigned as he has stood down as a governor. WSF would like to pass their thanks for the dedicated support for the many years of service that Jeff has contributed to schools, Worcestershire Association of Governors, and WSF.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

CBi as a Volunteer Foundation Director of Our Lady of Magnificat Multi-Academy Trust and a family member who runs a nursery provision.

**3. DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTERESTS WITH ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

None

**4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (21 September 2023)**

Minutes agreed.

**5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**a. Agenda Item 8 - WSF membership vacancies**

RP confirmed that there are two potential new members. This is being followed up by the Chair. One is from Worcestershire Association of Secondary Headteacher (WASH), and the other new member proposed is a headteacher of an Alternative Provision (AP)

SW to discuss latest position with RP so that we can fill vacancies in membership and feed back to WSF at the next meeting.

**b. Agenda Item 10 c – Unity guaranteed funding 2024/25**

RP confirmed that this is still being worked on and relates to the 3.4% based on the previous year's funding.

**6. Indicative Dedicated School Grant (DSG) rates for 2024/25**

RP updated WSF on the latest position of the indicative DSG. There has been a further update since the meeting in September, due to the Department for Education (DfE) error in calculations using incorrect pupil information. The quantum of funding is the same as previously notified by government, but the rates were inflated due to the error.

**7. School Block Changes**

RP updated WSF that due to agenda item 6 this only affected the school block funding which is where the error was and supplied the latest information relating to the potential funding rates.

BT said his understanding, from information being published, is that this worked out to about £20,000 for an average primary school and £50,000 for a Secondary school.

RP confirmed that, even though the individual factors have changed, the funding floor has remained the same.

## **8. Early Years Consultation - Worcestershire**

RP confirmed that Worcestershire Children First (WCF) officers had met with members of WSF before the consultation went out. He would like to pass his thanks to them all for their time, support, and suggestions.

The consultation is live at present and closes at 5 PM on 14 December.

## **9. WSF Required Decisions**

BT confirmed that this item was resolved on the 9 November via email, as we were unable to meet due to quorum. RP confirmed that we had sufficient agreement from member that all have been agreed. Allowing the local authority to continue with the de-delegation of services, and central block.

## **10. WSF Constitution (Verbal)**

This item was agreed to be deferred until the next meeting when the Chair will be present to lead on this.

## **11. Financial Support for Local Authorities Support Schools in Financial Difficulty 2023 to 2024**

BT started this item by giving some context around the fact the Government had put aside £40 million to support schools in financial difficulty. The Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has retained £20 million to support academies and £20 million has been allocated to Local Authorities (LA) Worcestershire was the third highest with £1.56 million. The allocation is based on the value of deficits as a proportion of maintained schools' income above 1%.

RP advised that several schools have already requested a portion of this funding also It was agreed that the LA should not start allocating any of the funds until a fair and transparent policy for allocating the funds is agreed.

RP also confirmed that WCC would only be able allocated funding to maintained schools in all sectors, mainstream, special, PRUs, nursery school. Academies would need to contact the ESFA, but we value the thought of all members.

CBI confirmed the discussion is not a proposal on how the LA would use the funds, as there is published criteria, this is an opportunity to discuss initial thoughts. The LA are looking for WSF to make suggestion on what should be included. The conditions are quite loose, but it advises that schools in financial difficulty does not necessarily mean schools who are currently in a deficit.

JH asked if there was sufficient funding to clear the historic deficits in schools?  
BT confirmed that this was not the case.

WSF discussed if this should be on an application basis, or a formula driven allocation due to schools that may not be showing a deficit but could be schools in financial difficulty but still a surplus by making cuts that this money may be able to support.

SW confirmed that the money should not be used to pay off deficits due to the teacher pay award.

MP asked if this could be used to support schools that may be about to receive large bills after the recent condition surveys that are being carried out, or involved in local projects, or sustainability projects?

PH asked if it needed to be formula driven with multiple factors and weighted towards small schools, where larger schools can benefit from economies of scale?

SW expressed that it may need to be part of a recovery plan for the school and linked to a School Resource Management Advise (SRMA) review, BT agreed that this should be part of any agreement with the school before they received any of the funding.

JH expressed that deficits may also be because of risk assessments for Health and Safety (H&S) or safeguarding issues. This also needed to be considered.

BT confirmed that any school at present that maybe requesting any funding from this allocation, should be informed that the council is consulting with WSF on this and that until the policy for allocating funding had been formulated, that no allocation would be made.

RP confirmed that there would be further feedback to WSF.

## **12. Wraparound Provision Schools**

SW gave an update on the position and confirmed that the LA was receiving revenue funding (Delivery Support Funding) and waiting for an announcement on the capital funding. The capital funding earmarked by Government is a £100m and will be shared amongst all LAs. WSF was informed that this project is being led by Nicky Burford, and that we will be bringing regular updates on this and changes to EY to WSF for the next few years, as these projects roll out.

The guidance states that any pupil should be able to attend a wraparound provision locally to their school from 8AM until 6PM. It should be self-funding via parental charges, and not fall on the school or council to fund. SW asked that RP also attached the handbook that has been published to members of WSF. This document is for the LA but will support understanding of members.

The LA has been allocated about £2.7m for this project, over the next three years. This funding cannot be used for capital projects; however, it can be used to assist with the setting up of this provision. It also cannot be used to fund future provisions. SW emphasised that this is not an easy task to build this capacity.

The LA, at present, is working on an assessment of need and capacity, as a result, they will be asking schools and other providers in the sector for information going forward and would like to thank all in advance for their support in supplying this information.

NJ raised concerns around the local geographical area of Worcestershire, and the moving of children from one school to another, if the school does not have this provision. So, would the council be looking at using some of the capital

funding for school transport. Maybe this could also be used to provide a bit of joined up thinking around transporting of pupils.

EF raised the concern of cost to parents covering this for pupils within special schools, and that this could lead to it becoming unviable for special schools to run the provision and parents believing they have a right to this provision. Especially if you have a child needing either one to one, or two to one support. This also raises where special schools are taking from a wider area which could be counted as local.

NJ also raised the problems with having to increase the hours of staff and if this could be done or staff be found who would want these additional hours. RP reiterated that this does not all need to be supplied by schools and that this could be school's working with a private childcare provider.

LP raised that this could have major impact for special schools as they have pupils with very specific needs that need to be met, which again needs specifically trained staff, which is at a cost, and is there the possibility of schools falling into legal action against the school or the LA around the Equality Act.

SW thanked member for the comments and feedback.

### **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **a. Cost of School Transport**

NJ raised the cost of Home to School Transport is becoming a major issue on the school's finances.

TO explained that a review is ongoing, which sits under highways and will feedback to WSF once completed.

### **Meeting ended.**

The meeting closed at 3.29 PM.

### **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next WSF meeting: - Thursday 11 January 2024 at 2.30 PM  
(Remote Meeting - MS Teams)

## Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Cabinet Decisions

### **1. Purpose**

1.1 to share the latest decisions from Cabinet.

### **2. Links to the meeting information**

a. 14 December 2024 – Fair Funding for Schools 2023/24 National and Local Funding Arrangements for Schools

[Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 14th December, 2023, 10.00 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

<https://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s52377/6%20Cabinet%20Fair%20funding%2014%20December%202023.pdf>

b. 10 January 2024 - Budget and Council Tax 2023/24

<https://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s52526/4%20Jan%202024%20draft%20budget%20report%20final.pdf>

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 The WSF notes and discusses the above

Chris Bird  
WCC Chief Accountant  
Worcestershire Children First  
January 2024



**Report To The Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF)**  
**Schools Block Allocations 2024/25 Authority Proforma Tool (Apt)**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 To update the WSF on the current position for the completion of the final Schools Block Authority Proforma Tool (APT) for 2024/25.

1.2 For the WSF to endorse and support the submission of the APT for 2024/25.

**2. Background**

2.1 At its meeting on 14 December 2023, the Worcestershire County Council Cabinet: -

- Approved for 2023/24 for the Local Schools Funding Formula (LSFF) as supported by the WSF to be based as far as is practicable and affordable upon the DfE National Funding Formula (NFF) parameters for Year 7.
- Authorised the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Education and Skills to make the required submission to the national executive body, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 19 January 2024 for the approved LSFF 2024/25 taking account of any impact and change on the approved units of resource, Minimum Funding Guarantee and capping arrangements as a consequence of the October 2023 census and other 2023 data changes and the final 2024/25 Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

**3. APT Current Position**

3.1 Now that the DfE have updated for all the data sets for October 2023 and issued provisional DSG allocations for 2024/25. LAs are required to submit their final APT by 19 January 2024.

3.2 The final APT for 2024/25 including the revised data sets for 2023 was issued by the DfE in December 2023.

3.3 An analysis of the Schools Block DSG funding detailing the estimated amount to be included in the LSFF for mainstream schools is detailed in **Table 1**. This is prior to de-delegation for maintained schools and after adjusting for centrally retained services and functions already approved by the WSF and those prescribed by the DfE.

**Table 1: Analysis of Schools Block 2024/25**

DETAIL	£'000	£'000
<b>Schools Block Allocation</b>		
Primary Unit of Resource £5,005.77 x Pupil Numbers 43226.0	<b>216,379</b>	
Secondary Unit of Resource £6,428.44 x Pupil Numbers 31,154.0	<b>200,272</b>	
+ Premises Costs Historic Costs Allocation	<b>7,505</b>	
<b>= Total LSFF Quantum 2024/25</b>		<b>424,156</b>
+ Pupil Growth Fund DfE Formula Allocation		<b>2,050</b>
<b>= Total Schools Block DSG</b>		<b>426,206</b>
<b>Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) Allocation</b>		
<u>Centrally Retained Budgets (Previously Approved by WSF and WCC Cabinet)</u>		
Contributions to Combined Services – Early Intervention Family Support	492	
Co-ordinated School Admissions	592	
Servicing of the Schools Forum	56	
Former ESG Retained Duties for All Schools	1,339	
<u>DfE Designated Centrally Retained Budgets</u>		
Licenses and Subscriptions – DfE Actual	802	
Mainstream Grant for Teachers Pay and Pensions for Centrally Employed Teachers	29	
<b>= Total Centrally Retained</b>		<b>3,310</b>
- Central Services Schools Block (CSSB) Allocated		<b>3,310</b>
<b>= Projected Surplus/(Deficit) on CSSB</b>		<b>0</b>

3.4 For the LSFF net amount allocated in 2023/24 was £405,862m. A comparison of the position compared to 2023/24 is detailed in **Table 2**: -

**Table 2: Comparison of LSFF Actual 2023/24 and Estimated 2024/25**

DETAIL	£'000
<b>LSFF 2023/24</b>	<b>405,862</b>
<u>Adjustments</u>	
Prior Year – pupil growth fund, growing school, rates, and premises.	(468)
Additional DSG for NFF Year 7 for Schools Block October 2022 and for Increase in Pupil Numbers October 2023	20,811

<b>= Estimated Amount for LSFF 2024/25</b>	<b>426,205</b>
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3.5 Although this seems a significant increase, this was expected. With the mainstreaming of the Mainstream Additional Supplement Grant (MSAG). Also, the net decrease in pupil numbers of -149.5 (Primary -554.5; Secondary +405). The LSFF 2024/25 together with the requirements of LSFF to be based as far as is practicable and affordable upon the National Funding Formula (NFF) data set and unit of resource parameters for Year 7 together with the mandatory DfE sector Minimum Funding Levels (MFLs). We also have the new mandatory Mobility factor to fund.

3.6 Also, in the Schools Block DSG, there is provision made for Pupil Growth Funding (PGF). However, there are continuing substantial basic need requirements due to increasing numbers which are now impacting particularly in the secondary sector as well as funding required for the continued effect of the New North Worcester Primary Free School. So, it is anticipated, all the PGF will be required in 2024/25 either as part of the LSFF or the PGF.

3.7 The WSF are reminded that the budgetary impact for each individual school will depend upon: -

- How their individual pupil numbers and all other data varies between October 2022 and October 2023.
- The Schools Block DSG increase between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The impact across all schools.
- The impact of the LSFF for the NFF parameters for example the MFG requirement and any associated capping level for affordability, together with the mandatory DfE sector Minimum Funding Levels (MFLs).
- The impact and affordability of the Minimum Funding Levels (MFL) per pupil for the total budget: –
  - Primary increasing from £4,751.58 2022/23 to £5,005.77 in 2024/25.
  - Secondary increasing from £6,107.94 2022/23 to £6,428.44 in 2024/25.
  - Hybrid MFL rates for schools with 'non-uniform' year groups.
- The MFG of between +0.0% and +.05% per pupil in 2024/25 and as any associated affordability cap.
- The MFG no longer must be applied only to the extent that it offsets the cost of the MFG, since that could prevent LAs from coming close to the NFF.

3.8 The WSF are advised that: -

- The increase in the Schools Block reflects both the effect of the NFF, the streamlining of MGAS and a decrease of -149.5 pupils in mainstream schools between October 2022 and October 2023.
- Although overall numbers have decreased, there are also some significant variations with increases and decreases for individual schools, which will result in budgetary impact for those schools.
- Given the additional resource from the NFF in the Schools Block and the LSFF being based as far as is practicable on the NFF parameters, including the per pupil Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protection, most schools should see increases in 2024/25.
- However, **the MFG is a per pupil not a cash protection**, so the LSFF even when based on the NFF parameters, cannot protect schools from the effect of data changes between 2022 and 2023.
- Consequently, some schools will see reductions in funding due to these data changes mainly due to significant reductions in pupil numbers. Nevertheless, all schools in the

DfE NFF parameters will be subject to at least the MFG per pupil increase on their 2023/24 baseline.

3.9 The Schools Block DSG is calculated using the pupil numbers from the October 2023 census using the DfE NFF guaranteed units of funding per sector. The December 2023 Cabinet approved units of resource for the LSFF were set based on the DfE NFF Year 7 parameters.

3.10 Given the DSG settlement and the APT were confirmed just prior to the end of the Autumn Term 2023, assessment, and the impact on the APT of all the above together with the data changes for 2023 has been made. This has been based upon the units of resource agreed by the Autumn Term consultation and County Council Cabinet on 14 December 2023, the DfE NFF parameters for 2024/25, the recently provided DfE data sets for 2024 and other required local data sets.

3.11 The results of the impact of the revised DSG and new data sets is attached at **Appendix A** to this report to enable final submission to the ESFA by 19 January 2024 as required.

#### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 The WSF notes the issues detailed and the estimated amount available for the LSFF for the Schools Block Funding for 2024/25.

4.2 The WSF considers the issues detailed in **Appendix A** for the APT Units of Resource and the potential aspects for the impact on the Schools Block DSG.

4.3 The WSF supports and endorses the submission of the APT final Schools Block Funding 2024/25 to the ESFA by 19 January 2024 as required.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner - Schools  
Worcestershire Children First

January 2024

**SUMMARY OF CURRENT POSITION ON THE  
LOCAL AUTHORITY PROFORMA TOOL (APT) 2024/25**

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1 To share with the WSF the current position on the APT.

1.2 To discuss with the WSF the APT outcomes and next stages.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 As detailed in the **Agenda Item 8** report the LA has been working on the APT for final submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 19 January 2024.

2.2 The main work so far has included: -

- Validating all the 2023/24 baseline information by school has been transferred correctly by the ESFA.
- Adjusting for further academy conversions since 2023/24.
- Verifying as far as practicable the main October 2023 census data for example pupil numbers.
- Securing the up-to-date local data for inclusion for example exceptional premises, rates etc.
- Including in the APT the approved local funding formula units of resource for all formula factors in 2024/25 based on the DfE NFF rates, the DfE MFG and sector MFLs.
- Assessing the quantum of funding available from the School Block DSG 2024/25 arising from the School Funding Settlement in December 2023.
- Assessing the affordability or otherwise of the LSFF based upon the DfE NFF Year 7 parameters.

**3. CURRENT POSITION**

3.1 The current APT position is detailed in **Annexes A and B**.

3.2 As detailed in **Agenda Item 9** the estimated quantum for the LSFF in 2024/25 is £424,156m excluding the Pupil Growth Fund.

3.3 The current APT position using the approved units of resource, other data, and the Year 7 NFF parameters for the MFG, Capping and the sector Minimum Funding Levels is £424,448m – an over **allocation of £0.292m**.

3.4 The WSF are reminded as in 2023/24 in 2024/25, the parameters based on the NFF cannot be fully replicated through the APT due to some of the starting baselines used by the ESFA. Therefore, the draft APT uses the all the DfE advised NFF rates, applied MFG floor per pupil, no capping level and the mandatory sector MFLs.

3.5 The WSF are further reminded the **MFG is a per pupil not a cash protection**, so the LSFF even when based on the NFF parameters, cannot protect schools from the effect of significant data changes between 2023 and 2024 e.g. reductions in pupil numbers and other data sets such as FSM, low prior attainment, etc. This data is controlled and supplied by the DfE in the APT and cannot be changed.

3.6 As a consequence some schools will see reductions in funding due to these data changes. Nevertheless, all schools are subject to at least a +0.05% per pupil increase because of the MFG in the LSFF being based upon the NFF parameters.

3.7 The WSF are advised the new DfE data sets must drive the LSFF allocations and cannot be amended. Varying from this approach is not permitted – as in previous years the DfE data sets are mandatory. These prescribed data sets are then applied to the approved NFF year 7 units of resource together with any local factors and are assessed to compare to the LSFF quantum available. If there is an affordability issue the options available are: -

- Reducing the DfE NFF Year 7 unit of resource levels in specific areas e.g. AWPU, FSM.
- Reducing all the DfE Year 7 NFF unit of resource levels by the relevant percentage.
- Introduce a funding cap at level to draw back the overallocated funding.
- Fund at NFF Year 7 unit of resource levels with the impact being a Schools Block in deficit. However, given the overall DSG position, the DfE would not expect LAs to have the Schools Block in deficit, in order to mirror the NFF factor values precisely.

3.8 The WSF are further advised the APT is draft only and it is not final until the ESFA have approved the APT following their detailed compliance checks – this will take some time following submission. As a consequence, school by school data is never shared at this time as is not available until all maintained schools and academies have received their allocations.

#### **4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION**

4.1 Currently there is an **over allocation predicted of £0.292m. The draft APT now includes:** -

- The effect of all the DfE NFF Year 7 units of resource including the MFG and the mandatory MFLs together with the majority of WCC local factors.
- The effect of Year 7 for the new North Worcester Primary Free School. This is a call on the DSG and must be funded on estimated numbers not included in the October 2023 census.
- The sparsity factor is calculated totally by the full DfE NFF model to support the DfE policy for additional funding provided in this area. This year also a change on the method of calculating the distance so now taking into consideration travel distance rather than as the crow flies.
- Split site funding has changed to a formulaic method in 2024/25, with DfE insisting one school is a split site for a school that we have previously paid exceptional premises for, we have made it clear to the DfE that they are either one or the other with them insisting they are split site we have removed the exceptional premises factor for this school.

4.2 This currently has been taken from the growth fund. However, it is estimated after this the Year 7 NFF on current estimate is affordable from the Schools Block quantum for 2024-25.

4.3 The WSF are requested to consider the detailed comparative analysis of the APT between January 2023 and January 2024 provided in **Annex B**. The key issues are: -

- There is a significant increase in the funding allocated via the AWPU. This is a consequence of an increase in the AWPU rate to reflect the NFF Year 7, together with the increase in pupil numbers between October 2022 and October 2023.
- The new mandatory change to Split Site factor within the LSFF.
- Since the NFF was introduced, the DfE have recognised that the different data sources used for the NFF and for local formulae mean that it is not always possible for LAs to follow the NFF precisely.
- Instead, the DfE expect LAs to manage the fact that they will use more up-to-date data than the NFF by adjusting their local formulae factor values to make their formulae affordable.

**4.4 On the above basis, it is recommended to allocate the LSFF in 2024/25 using the DfE NFF Year 7 parameters as approved by Cabinet on 14 December 2023.**

**Summary Of Final APT 2023/24 Compared To Draft APT 2024/25**

<b><u>FORMULA COMPONENT</u></b>	<b><u>2023/24</u></b> <b><u>APT</u></b> <b><u>£'m</u></b>	<b><u>2024/25</u></b> <b><u>APT</u></b> <b><u>£'m</u></b>	<b><u>Variance</u></b>  <b><u>£'m</u></b>
AWPU	303.1	317.8	+14.7
Deprivation - FSM	20.4	22.9	+2.5
Deprivation - IDACI	11.0	11.1	+0.1
Low Prior Attainment	26.6	27.7	+1.1
EAL	2.0	2.4	+0.4
Mobility	0.2	0.2	0.0
Lump Sum	29.1	30.5	+1.4
Sparsity	1.6	1.7	+0.1
Split Site	0.6	0.3	-0.3
Rates	3.8	3.8	0.0
PFI	3.0	3.3	+0.3
Exceptional Premises	0.1	0.0	-0.1
NFF Minimum Funding Levels (MFLs)	2.7	2.4	-0.3
Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)	0.2	0.2	0.0
<b>LSFF Prior to Capping</b>	<b>404.4</b>	<b>424.3</b>	<b>+19.9</b>
Capping	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>404.4</b>	<b>424.3</b>	<b>+19.9</b>

Schools Block DSG Quantum	403.9	424.2
(Under)/Over Allocation	0.5	0.1
Funded To PGF	0.0	
Pupil Nos	(0.5)	(0.1)
Premises/		
Rates	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Net	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>

**LSFF Formula Parameters**

**DfE NFF rates for 2023/24 and 2024/25: -**

All Formula Factor DfE NFF Units of Resource

Minimum Funding Levels (MFLs)

Primary	£4,405	£4,610
Secondary KS3 and KS4	£5,715	£5,995
KS3 Only Pupils	£5,503	£5,771
KS4 Only Pupils	£6,033	£6,331

Floors and Ceilings Per Pupil

Minimum Funding Guarantee	+0.05%	+0.00%
	on 2023/24	on 2024/25
Capping	no cap	no cap
	in 2023/24	in 2024/25





**Report To The Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF)**  
**Provisional School Funding Settlement 2024/25**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 To advise the WSF on the provisional School Funding Settlement for 2024/25.

**2. Provisional School Funding Settlement 2024/25**

2.1 On 19 December 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) published details of the provisional School Funding Settlement 2024/25 for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Summary details can be found on the following link: -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2024-to-2025>

**3. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2024/25**

3.1 The DSG settlement includes: -

- The DSG schools block allocated based on the new National Funding Formula (NFF) schools block primary and secondary units of funding 2024/25 announced in July 2023.
- The Central Services Schools (CSS) Block allocated on the DfE NFF.
- The High Needs (HN) Block allocated based on the DfE NFF announced in September 2017.
- The Early Years (EY) Block allocated on the DfE NFF arrangements introduced in 2023/24 with changes for the changes in age ranges starting in April 2024.

3.2 The 2024/25 provisional allocation is detailed in **Table 1** under the notional DSG blocks. **This is prior to the recoupment deduction for Academies and non-LA maintained specialist providers.** It also compares the provisional allocations to the 2024/25 DSG latest settlement.

**Table 1: Provisional DSG Gross Settlement 2024/25**

<b>DSG Block</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 Indicative July 2023 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 Updated January 2024 £'000</b>	<b>Variance 2023/24 to 2024/25 £'000</b>
Schools	403,723	424,331	424,156	+20,433
Pupil Growth Fund	2,139	Not Advised	2,050	-89
<b>S-T Schools</b>	<b>405,862</b>	<b>424,331</b>	<b>426,206</b>	<b>+20,344</b>
Central Services	3,332	3,315	3,310	-22
High Needs (Updated 12 January 2023)	86,087	89,607	90,173	+4,086
Early Years	37,326	Not Advised	59,336	+22,010
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>532,607</b>	<b>517,253</b>	<b>579,025</b>	<b>+465,418</b>

**Notes**

**1A.** Schools Block 2024/25 set by DfE as part of NFF policy September 2017 for Year 7 based upon: -

- The October 2023 pupil census against the Primary and Secondary Units of Funding (PUF) and (SUF) confirmed in October 2023.
- Provides for NFF year 7 parameters including mandatory sector Minimum Funding Levels (MFLs), additional October 2023 pupil numbers and historic premises related factors allocation £7.505m.
- Reflects the change in pupil numbers October 2022 to October 2023 of -149.5 (Primary -554.5; Secondary +405).

**1B.** Pupil Growth Fund £2,050m now on DfE formulaic basis in its Seventh year. Reflects change in pupil numbers between October 2022 and October 2023.

**1C.** Central School Services Block (CSSB) 2023/24 NFF formulaic allocation for centrally retained statutory services £2,818m plus historic commitments £0.492m (**reduced by a further 20% by the DfE from 2023/24 allocation by £0.154m as part of their national policy**).

**1D.** Early Years Block 2023/24 provisional based upon Schools, Early Years and Alternative Provision census data for 2, 3 & 4-year olds from January 2022. The final allocations will be updated based on January 2023 and January 2024 census data. Reflects an increase to the allocated hourly rates for 2-year-olds and 3- & 4-year-olds. With additional funding for the DfE assumption for take up within the changes of children's eligibility announced in the Autumn Statement in 2022.

3.3 An analysis of the difference between the NFF 2024/25 for the **Schools, CSSB and High Needs Blocks only** between the **initial allocations in July 2023 and the revised allocations in December 2023** is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

3.4 The main aspects of **each block** are as follows: -

**3.4.1 Schools Block**

- There is an overall decrease in pupil numbers of 149.5 between October 2022 and October 2023, which shows a decrease in primary (-554.5) and an increase in secondary (+405.0). This is detailed in **Table 2**.
- The budgetary impact for each school will depend on: -
  - How their individual pupil numbers and other data varies between October 2022 and October 2023.
  - The impact across all schools and the MFG and any capping that might have to be applied.
  - The amount of Schools Block Funding to be allocated in the Local Schools Funding Formula (LSFF) – this is discussed further under **Agenda Item 8**.

**Table 2: Pupil Number Variations 2023/24 and 2024/25**

Phase	2023/24 October 2022 Census	%	2024/25 October 2023 Census	%	Note
Primary	43,780.5	58.7	43,226.0	58.1	<b>2A</b>

Secondary	30,749.0	41.3	31,154.0	41.9	<b>2A</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>74,529.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>74,380.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Note**

**2A.** There is no longer a reduction adjustment made for pupils in Specialist Provision in mainstream schools. For each LA, the DfE transferred in 2018-19 a relevant amount to the Schools Block DSG from the High Needs Block DSG to fund the additional pupil numbers.

**3.4.2 High Needs Block**

- The allocation of £90.173m reflects the increase in HN DSG allocated in 2024/25.
- The estimated net HN DSG in 2024/25 is £78.629m which is an increase of £3.402m on 2023/24 of £75.227m. This reflects the proposed place deductions from the HN block for SEN units in academies, maintained post 16 and NMSS providers is detailed in **Table 3. These are subject to change during the year.**

**Table 3: Estimated HN Place Deductions**

DETAIL	2023/24 Provisional December 2023 £'m	2024/25 Provisional January 2023 £'m	Variance £'m	Note
<b>HN DSG Gross</b>	<b>86.087</b>	<b>90.173</b>	<b>+4.086</b>	
Place Deductions				
SEN Units Academies Pre and Post 16	(0.816)	(0.804)	<b>0.012</b>	
Special Academies Pre and Post 16	(7.582)	(8.250)	<b>(0.668)</b>	
Alternative Provision	(0.950)	(0.990)	<b>(0.040)</b>	<b>3A</b>
Academies Post 16	(0.012)	(0.000)	<b>0.012</b>	
FE Providers	(1.500)	(1.500)	<b>(0.000)</b>	
<b>S-T Deductions</b>	<b>(10.860)</b>	<b>(11.544)</b>	<b>(0.684)</b>	
<b>= HN DSG Net</b>	<b>75.227</b>	<b>78.629</b>	<b>+3.402</b>	

**Note**

**3A.** Currently this is only included at the 2023/24 level and does not reflect further adjustments to be made for the any future academy conversions, the full year effect of September 2023 AP places deductions and new AP place deductions from September 2024. So, there will still be a budget pressures for AP in 2024/25 and subsequent years.

3.5 The next steps in terms of the DSG notification are detailed in **Table 4.**

**Table 4: Next Steps Timetable**

Date	Action
19 December 2024	2024/25 Schools Block and Pupil Growth Fund 2024/25 Central School Services Block

	2024/25 High Needs Block 2024/25 Early Years Block Provisional allocations all announced by DfE
Early to Mid-January 2024	Further consideration by LAs on the 2024/25 Schools Block Local Schools Funding Formula (LSFF)
19 January 2024	LAs submit final APT for Schools Block LSFF formula 2024/25
February 2024	ESFA publication of 2024/25 HN places at institution level
28 February 2024	Deadline for LAs to confirm School Budget Shares to maintained schools and specialist providers
31 March 2024	Deadline for ESFA to confirm General Annual Grant (GAG) to academies open by January 2024
April 2024	ESFA confirms 2024/25 DSG to be paid to LAs after recoument for academies and deductions for HN places in academies and post 16
June 2024	Early Years Block updated for January 2023 Early Years pupil numbers
June 2024	Early Years Block updated for January 2024 Early Years pupil numbers

#### **4. Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) Funding**

4.1 The DfE have confirmed the funding rates for the PPG have increased from 2023/24 to 2024/25. These are set out below for both financial years: -

- Primary Pupils £1,455 to £1,480.
- Secondary Pupils £1,035 to £1,050.
- Looked After Children £2,530 to £2,570.
- Children Ceased to be Looked After £2,530 to £2,570.
- Service Children £335 to £340.

4.2 For 2023/24 the eligibility criteria for the pupil premium will remain unchanged, but **the DfE will be using October 2022 school census data to calculate pupil premium allocations**. Exceptions to that include alternative provision and pupil referral units where eligibility will continue to be based on the January census.

#### **5. Other Grant Funding**

5.1 The DfE have announced that the Teacher Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) will continue for financial year 2024/25 before being mainstreamed within the School Block within financial year 2025/26.

5.4 The DfE have indicated information about all other grants will follow in the new year.

#### **6. Recommendation**

6.1 The WSF notes and discusses the above allocations.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner - Schools  
Worcestershire Children First

January 2024

**Worcestershire 885 - Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools, Central Schools Services and High Needs Only**  
**2023/24 Provisional March 2023 Vs. 2024/25 Initial July 2023**

	2024/25				2024/25				Variance		Comments		
	Initial July 2022		Initial July 2022		Initial July 2022		Initial July 2022		Initial July 2022				
	Units Of Funding	Units Of Funding	Pupil Nos. October 2022	Units Of Funding	Units Of Funding	Pupil Nos. October 2022	Units Of Funding	Pupil Nos.	Units Of Funding	Pupil Nos.			
	£	£'m	£	£'m	£	£'m	£'m	£'m	£'m	%			
<b>Schools Block (SB)</b>													
Primary Unit of Funding (PUF)	4,751.58	43780.5	208.027	5,005.76	43780.5	219.155	5,005.77	43226.0	216.379	254.19	-554.5	8.353	) Updated using the DfE 2023/24 PUF and SUF.
Secondary Unit of Funding (GUF)	6,107.94	30749.0	187.813	6,428.44	30749.0	197.668	6,428.44	31154.0	200.272	320.50	405.0	12.459	) With updated October 2022 pupil numbers.
		<b>74529.5</b>	<b>395.840</b>		<b>74529.5</b>	<b>416.823</b>		<b>74380</b>	<b>416.651</b>		<b>-149.5</b>	<b>20.811</b>	
Historic Premises		7.884		7.508		7.508		7.505			-0.378		See Below.
Formulaic Pupil Growth Fund		2.139		0.000		0.000		2.050			-0.090		
<b>=SB</b>		<b>405.862</b>		<b>424.331</b>		<b>424.331</b>		<b>426.206</b>			<b>20.343</b>	<b>5.01%</b>	
<b>Central School Services Block (Csb)</b>													
Formulaic CSS NFF		2.718		2.823		2.823		2.818			0.100		) Reflects DfE policy to reduce the allocations of all LAs by a further 20%.
Historic Commitments		0.614		0.492		0.492		0.492			-0.123		) Significant impact for the Early Intervention Family Support Service (EIFS).
<b>=CSSB</b>		<b>3.332</b>		<b>3.315</b>		<b>3.315</b>		<b>3.310</b>			<b>-0.023</b>	<b>-0.68%</b>	
<b>Block (CSSB)</b>													
Formulaic HN NFF		86.087		89.607		89.607		90.173			4.086		
<b>=HNB</b>		<b>86.087</b>		<b>89.607</b>		<b>89.607</b>		<b>90.173</b>			<b>4.086</b>	<b>4.75%</b>	
<b>= Total Gross Dsg Excluding Early Years</b>		<b>495.282</b>		<b>517.253</b>		<b>517.253</b>		<b>519.688</b>			<b>24.407</b>	<b>4.93%</b>	

**Notes**

This is the **Gross DSG** indicative allocation **Prior to** academy and high needs places recoupment.  
This analysis excludes the EY DSG.

Historic Premises

23/24 APT Baseline		24/25 APT Baseline		24/25 APT Baseline		23/24 vs 24/25 APT Baseline	
Split Site	0.566	Split Site	0.2985	Split Site	0.566	Split Site	0.000
Rates	3.981	Rates	3.8301738	Rates	3.788	Rates	-0.194
Exceptional Premises PFI	0.369	Exceptional Premises PFI	0.103559	Exceptional Premises PFI	0.369	Exceptional Premises PFI	0.000
Baseline + RPI(X)	£2.668 + 11.2%	Baseline + RPI(X)	£2.967 + 10.4%	Baseline + RPI(X)	£2.668 + 11.2%	Baseline + RPI(X)	0.675
	<b>2.967</b>		<b>3.276</b>		<b>3.643</b>		<b>0.482</b>
	<b>7.884</b>		<b>7.508</b>		<b>8.365</b>		<b>0.482</b>

## **Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Financial Support for Local Authority Support Schools in Financial Difficulty 2023 to 2024**

### **Introduction and context**

In July 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that it was providing up to £40 million of additional funding in 2023 to 2024, to support individual schools which are in financial difficulty.

In November 2023, the DfE allocated £20 million of the additional funding to provide targeted support for schools in local authorities (LA) which have the most significant maintained school deficits. Worcestershire County Council (WCC) is one of these local authorities. The funding was allocated to the LA based on aggregated school-level deficits as a proportion of their total maintained schools' income above 1%. As a result, Worcestershire County Council received £1.56m the third highest amount.

For the financial year 2023-2024, there are 30 maintained schools with cumulative deficits totalling £11.56m. We have 86 Maintained schools forecasting an in-year deficit totalling £7.92m

The distribution of this grant at LA level is delegated to WCC. For transparency WCC are in consultation with WSF, with the intention that the whole grant will be distributed directly to schools. The monitoring of the grant spends, and distribution, will be subject to the following protocols:

- Eligibility criteria
- Application process that includes a proportionate and transparent requirement for information
- Timeframe
- Audit and governance by WCC, WCF and WSF

### **Which schools can apply for this grant?**

The following types of school can apply maintained primary (and first), middle, secondary and all-through schools, maintained special schools, pupil referral units, and maintained nursery schools.

Maintained Schools with an historic deficit or who are forecasting an in-year deficit can apply for the funding via email to the Schools Finance Team using the attached template (Appendix A). The deadline for applications is Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024

### **Decision and Award of Grant Funding**

The evaluation of applications will begin on receipt of completed template, this will be to ensure that all the relevant information has been received. The decisions to award any funding will be made following the closing date. This will allow us to make the best use of this one-off grant funding.

It is expected that the grant funding will go towards one-off revenue costs to achieve long-term revenue savings and sustainability. The LA may apply any or all the conditions, as detailed below, if this is considered to have added value or necessity to ensure best value from the resource. This will be agreed in consultation with colleagues from Schools Finance, School Improvement and Human Resources.

- Requirement for the school to agree to a deployment of a school resource management adviser (SRMA),



- Requirement for the school to implement reasonable recommendations from the SRMA and explore DfE frameworks for schools. Undertaking Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning to produce a report on potential savings/benefits,
- Requirement to undertake enhanced financial monitoring with agreed regular submission of additional financial information to ensure that savings are sustainable.

All applications for the grant funding, including supporting evidence for example, SRMA reports, will be reviewed following the deadline for submissions. The final decision for the award of the grant funding will be made by WCC Chief Accountant and WCF Director of Education and schools notified of agreement in principle in March 2024.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner - Schools  
Worcestershire Children First  
January 2024

**Application for Financial Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty**

**1. School details**

DfE number		School name	
	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
Number on roll (October Census)			
Teacher FTE			
Support Staff FTE			
In-year surplus / (deficit)			
Brought forward balance surplus / (deficit)			
<b>Cumulative balance surplus / (deficit)</b>			

1.1 Include a copy of your school three year forward plan with the submission.

1.2 Give the reason for the financial difficulty below.

<b>Reason(s) for the claim for a school in financial difficulty:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
---

**2. Details of actions to be taken to bring the school back into a sustainable budget:**

<b>Action(s) that will bring the school back into a sustainable position and cost:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
---

2.1 This action plan supports the financial plan and details the savings and/or additional income that will need to be achieved, the key milestone dates and assumptions made.

Action taken	Date of action	Staff FTE	2023-24 £	2024-25 £	2025-26 £	2026-27 £
<b>Staffing</b>						
<b>Total staffing</b>						
<b>Non pay expenditure</b>						
<b>Total non-pay expenditure</b>						
<b>Total expenditure</b>						
<b>Income</b>						
<b>Total income</b>						
<b>Grand total</b>						

<b>Assumptions</b>
The following actions are included in the deficit recovery plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

2.2 Following submission of both this application and supporting information. The application will be checked to ensure the plan is reasonable, and meets the following:

It is expected that the grant funding will go towards one-off revenue costs to achieve revenue savings. The LA may apply any or all the conditions, as detailed below. This will be agreed in consultation with colleagues from School Improvement and Human Resources.

- Requirement for the school to agree to a deployment of a school resource management adviser (SRMA),
- Requirement for the school to implement reasonable recommendations from the SRMA and explore DfE frameworks for schools. Undertaking Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning to produce a report on potential savings/benefits,
- Requirement to undertake enhanced financial monitoring with agreed regular submission of additional financial information to ensure that savings are sustainable.

2.3 There may be individual actions included in the plan that will need to be re-negotiated during the period due to change in circumstances. However, the school agrees that overall, the school will become sustainable within the agreed period. Should the financial position deteriorate further the school agrees to communicate this to Schools Finance Team immediately.

2.4 The school understands it continues to be their responsibility to ensure the budget plan reflects the key priorities that have been identified in the school improvement plan.

2.5 The governing body will undertake all necessary activities agreed in the recovery plan and will ensure the schools budget is back in a sustainable position within the agreed timescale or earlier, should the opportunity arise. The governing body acknowledges that failure to meeting any agreed terms can lead to the withdraw of any offer of support.

2.6 The deadline for any submission is the **1 March 2024**, late submission will not be accepted.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Headteacher)**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Chair of Governors)**

## **Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Outcome of Early Years (EY) Consultation**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The local authority (LA) has needed to implement an updated Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). Due to the changes from April 2024 with the implementation of working parents being able to receive 15 hours childcare and from September 2024 children of working parents from the term after turning 9 months.
- 1.2 This also gave the ideal opportunity to consult about the factors that we use within the EYSFF and consult on how the funding rate would be calculated.
- 1.3 The EYSFF will be presented to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility (CMR) for Education. Seeking CMR for Education approval to these changes, as previously assigned to this member by Cabinet. This will allow us to implement any changes, without needing to go back to full cabinet, and allow us a speedier response. This then allows the LA to notify the sector of the funding rates and funding method more quickly.
- 1.4 As mentioned previously the decision is with the CMR for Education but we would not wish to submit a change to any sector funding without consulting with the sector and WSF, so we are able to match the needs of all areas.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Due to the changes from April 2024 with the implementation of working parents being able to receive 15 hours childcare and from September 2024 children of working parents from the term after turning 9 months, announced in the autumn statement in 2022.
- 2.2 This has come with challenges, as these are children that have not previously been funded by the LA, through the EYSFF. We are working with the sector to improve the sufficiency within Worcestershire. We also need to make sure that this sufficiency allows the businesses to continue and grow.
- 2.3 One of the biggest challenges is the unknown number of children that will need this funding, we have been working internally and with the Department for Education on this, and they have given us provisional Dedicated School Grant (DSG) for this with termly counts for this year, so the funding will match the pupils. With the previous funding children being on the normal January headcounts.
- 2.4 The LA had the approach when preparing the consultation that we needed to maximise the amount to the sector and all have a sustainable rate going forward, keeping the DSG for EY remaining balanced.
- 2.5 The EY Consultation closed on the 14 December 2023. The results of this are in Appendix A.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The consultation closed on the 14 December 2023. The response rate to this was 18% of the sector, which is a higher rate than we have previously received.
- 3.2 The results have been analysed and we are making the following recommendation based on these.
- 3.3 That all areas will have the same EYSFF, for all age groups. This will allow transparency from the under 2, 2-year-old and 3&4-year-olds for both parents and providers.

3.4 This will be made up of the following factors,

- Basic entitlement the hourly rate, this amount will change for each age range.
- Deprivation funding based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) as an hourly rate, as implemented in September 2023 for 3&4-year-olds. Same rates for all age groups.
- Early Years Pupil Premium, for eligible children on application, first 15 hours per week, only as per DfE requirements and funding rate.
- DAF (Disability Access Fund), for eligible children on application. One payment within a 12-month period as per DfE requirements and funding rate.
- Inclusion supplement (graduated response)
  - Graduated response 2 and above for 3&4-year-olds.
  - Graduated response 3 and above for Under 2's and 2-year-olds.
- At present no additional supplements are added, as these were considered but would have meant a reduction to the basic entitlement for all providers, which at this time was felt to be unsupportive in the financial climate, and create addition bureaucracy for both the sector and the LA. This will be reviewed annually and if appropriate will be consulted upon with the sector. This was agreed by 90% of respondents.
- Disadvantaged 2-year-olds will be able to start from day of acceptance, with working family entitlement starting the term after they have received an eligibility code, as is the current position for 3&4-year-olds.

3.5 The other recommendation is that the following is used as the basis for the funding rates used for the sector.

- We continue with the £0.01 per hour is transferred to the HLN block to support the inclusion supplement (graduated response)
- 1% of the LA funding rate would be used as a contingency fund, this was agreed by 83% within the consultation, this will allow us to make the rate sustainable and any underspend would be used to create a Provider Support Fund (PSF), we will be coming with further details on this to a later WSF meeting.
- 1% of the LA funding rate will be used to support the deprivation factor within the EYSFF.
- Retained for LA central use, currently the LA is able to retain up to 5% of the 3&4-year-old block for supporting the sector including the system as staffing. The recommendation is that we move away from this gradually.
  - Year 1 3&4-year-old remains at 5% with 3% in 2-year-old and under 2's.
  - Year 2 3&4-year-old reduce to 4% with 3% in the other areas; and
  - Year 3 3&4-year-old reduce to 3% matching the other areas.

The reason for this as agreed by the DfE is that LA will need to be increasing the sustainability and sufficiency within the sector.

We also believe that this will allow the sector to be able to workout the future funding rates going forward, any variance to this proposal going forward into

future years would of course be brought back to WSF and the CMR for discussion and reasoning.

We believe this is a fairer way as at present the 3&4-year-olds pay for all of this. With additional checks and administration fall on the LA for the new eligibility groups this will be necessary and kept under review.

#### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 Discuss the recommendation.
- 4.2 We request that WSF support the proposal above.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner - Schools  
Worcestershire Children First  
January 2024

## Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Outcome of Early Years (EY) Consultation December 2023

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The consultation was to gain and understand the feelings of the sector on recommendation to the funding model for Early Years for financial year 2024/25 forward.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The consultation was run, to receive feedback to support the required changes need to the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) due to the change in age range of children attending state funded nursery provision.
- 2.2 This also included wanting to be transparent with the funding levels for nursery provision and the funding rates that providers will receive going forward.

### 3. Outcome.

#### **Q1 Retained Funds - 3&4-Year-Old Funding Stream**

The DfE have suggested in their consultation that they intend to initially allow LA's to retain up to 5% of all funding streams (Under 2's, Two Year Old and 3&4 Year Old), reducing to 3% over the coming years. Any underspend in the retained funding can be used to support the sector to implement the upcoming changes and increase capacity but cannot be used for capital.

The LA currently retains approximately 4.6% of the 3&4-Year-Old Funding allocation to cover the cost of support services for providers, support services for parents and the administration of the funding. The LA proposes to reduce this percentage to 3% by 2026/27:

- 2024/25 No planned change
- 2025/26 Reduce to 4%
- 2026/27 Reduce to 3%

#### **Do you agree with this approach?**

Yes: 74% (60/81) / No: 26% (21/81)

#### **All comments (6 from Yes and 16 from No responses)**

- *I think that a reduction should be considered sooner rather than later as we are all struggling.*
- *Support services are excellent in Worcestershire and should be retained. Reducing funding would impact on the support available for settings. NEF is very complicated and the service provided in Worcestershire means I spend more time caring for the children and less time wading through paperwork and emails.*
- *Further information would be needed in order to make an assessment on how far the 4% and 3% will stretch to support the sector. Given that staff pay and other costs are steadily rising year on year it means the current retention of 4.6% is likely to be insufficient (or will slowly erode)*

*to provide a good quality service.*

- *There is very little support at the moment; if it's reduced to 3%, how will support be given to us as the provider?*
- *I don't understand how your going to be able to do this, surely you'll have more work to do.*
- *It would be preferred if the reduction could commence in 24/24*
- *Yes, but only if the local authority can continue to provide support with a lower percentage.*
- *More "Yes" than "No" but should recognise that the central team for NEF funding and related teams (e.g. FSM and Admissions) all provide valuable functions and support. Arguably if more was done for SEN, then argument for a higher percentage.*
- *The government needs to pay LA's addition funding. The hourly rates are not great and a lot of childminders and nurseries will close.*
- *The funding is not enough to support small businesses whos child/adult ratios are being increased. So any percentage being taken out of the proposed rates does not help us to continue practicing*
- *The current rate of funding (without the supplementary grant and post harvesting of 5%) is substantially below the average hourly rate for the county and therefore unsustainable for providers going forward.*
- *If money to WCC EY team reduces then the service will potentially be parred back and currently the info and quick responses to enquiries is invaluable. Patrick, Hana and Nicky really know their stuff and are keen to help.*
- *The funding provided by the government even if fully passed on does not cover the costs to deliver the service and leaves settings at a loss when providing these hours. The system is setup so that providers have to pay for the cost of childcare rather than the parent with a contribution from government, this is fundamentally unfair to providers*
- *I believe as I'm sure do parents, that funding provided for their child's childcare should be used for their child's childcare and not retained for other things. It isn't right to mislead parents this way. Their code is for their child and their child's funding. Nothing should be skimmed off.*
- *I believe that the money should not be retained at the higher rate now as settings are already struggling to stay open due to the rate they are being paid for funded children not covering the actual cost of providing the place - leaving this until 2026 could put more settings at risk of closing and there then being a shortage of places for funded children.*
- *No, This is a huge amount to retain as a total percentage when nurseries need this now to avoid further closures. Most computer systems can automate payments now, I would like to see what is involved in terms of resource that is needed.*



- *3% should be adequate now rather than gradual as there will also be a percentage kept from the new funding stream and we need as much as we can get for 3&4 year olds*
- *More money needs to go to the childminders as they/we don't get the hourly rate we charge*
- *Should drop to 3% sooner*
- *As much funding as possible should be given to early years settings to ensure sustainability*
- *It would be nice if settings were able to charge an admin fee with the increase in funding streams, although I know this is not dictated by the LA.*
- *But would rather see it reduced sooner*
- *Many parents have suffered with the support they have for their children since covid outbreak. Support for the providers should be made available. they have*
- *I still think this is a huge amount and yet again 3% of the earnings that should be passed to providers. If parents were given this direct funding there would be no need for a third party fee*
- *Really not sure. No one knows the hourly rate we will be getting so I can't answer this question properly.*

## **Q2 Retained Funds - New Funding Streams**

In line with the long-term intention outlined in the national funding consultation, the LA proposes to retain 3% of each new Early Years DSG funding stream, to support LA costs relating to Early Years, rather than the allowed 5%. Any remaining/unused funds will be used to create a Provider Support Fund for the sector.

### **Do you agree with this approach?**

Yes: 84% (68/81) / No: 16% (13/81)

### **All comments (2 from Yes and 7 from No responses)**

- *I agree, however feel that there should be some ring fencing on how the funds can be used as part of the provider support fund. I also believe there should be a cap on the maximum able to be held as part of this.*
- *But the LA need to consult with the sector on what the support should be*
- *The funding should be distributed to the practitioners*
- *A Provider support fund is too vague. What would this entail? Will this continue to support teachers pensions as it currently does?*
- *We would prefer any spare funds to go to the providers.*
- *As above I believe nothing should be retained. The funding is allocated to the child, not the LA*

- *I really feel that the money should go out to each provider to support them based on the funding children they have*
- *I still think this is a huge amount and yet again 3% of the earnings that should be passed to providers. If parents were given this direct funding there would be no need for a third party fee*
- *Really not sure. No one knows the hourly rate we will be getting so I can't answer this question properly.*

**Q3 Retained Funds - Provider Support Fund**

The LA proposed to create a Provider Support Fund to be used to support the Sufficiency Duty, as required. For example, to provide Sustainability or Short-Term Emergency Funding for providers, to fund new childcare places within areas of insufficiency and to provide support for settings who are judged as Inadequate/Requires Improvement.

**Do you agree with this approach?**

Yes: 80% (65/81) / No: 20% (16/81)

**Some comments (7 from Yes and 8 from No responses)**

- *I Important to ensure that if additional funds are given, that is not because funds have been wasted. It would be counter-intuitive to not give providers who are managing resources within their Budget more but give those who overspend more.*
- *There is not enough spaces locally, we are already nearly full for next september in our preschool room.*
- *Although the LA needs to do a much better job of this. Several settings that were judged below Good have recently closed. Sufficiency is way too low partly because of the Early Years SEND spaces that have been taken up by the school age children with SEND who did not have a place in school!*
- *Is it really going to be enough funds to do all that? It's that all the assistance available to providers who lose their income overnight if rated anything less than good?*
- *Rather than wait until people get to inadequate why not provide a help line or support line to support in the times they need it.*
- *It is important that the LA can support providers in emergency situations. However, this is only likely to benefit certain childcare facilities and many will never receive any benefit. Therefore, I would expect to see the level of fund to be capped and any surplus paid back.*
- *As long as its fair and large companies are not doing this for profit with no thought for the children's education and needs*
- *We are an outstanding nursery at full capacity, I appreciate this is a better situation than others but we still need financial support*
- *New childcare places requires new childcare providers, and there is*

*currently no decent incentive for anyone to enter the sector.*

- *We need more training and recruitment.*
- *I agree with the above however, I find it hard to agree to support settings inadequate / requires improvement, as a setting providers/ managers and leaders have a responsibility to keep standards to at least a good, this does take hard dedicated work, it is difficult to hear standards are not kept up to date and I agree funding should be reduced. This does affect and cause upset to children and families however all children deserve a level of care from setting that meets a continuous standard.*
- *I do not see how these retained funds would reach providers in actuality.*
- *To remain sustainable we need to be receiving the appropriate local rate. Which will ensure we can pay quality early years practitioners their worth.*
- *I really feel that the money should go out to each provider to support them based on the funding children they have*
- *this is difficult to agree to based on the criteria of sustainability as many of us will struggle with this - you cant fund everyone, so if we get the maximum amount of funding possible it may help with sustainability in the first place - otherwise the setting should plan for closure*
- *It should be shared between provisions equally regardless.*

#### **Q4 Deprivation Supplement**

Deprivation is a mandatory factor in the 3&4-Year-Old funding stream at present and we would expect this to be mandatory in the other age-groups going forward. If not mandatory, the LA intends to have this as a supplement across all age-groups, with a consistent funding rate in place.

The La proposes to extend the current Deprivation Supplement to each age group, utilising 1% of each funding stream. Any underspend in each funding stream will be used to support any deprivation overspend, with any remaining funds transferred to the Provider Support Fund.

Do you agree with this approach?

Yes: 85% (69/81) / No: 15% (12/81)

#### **All comments (16 from Yes and 9 from No responses)**

- *As the other age groups will be higher funded*
- *Funding needs to be high enough to keep settings sustainable otherwise the Governments plan to offer 'free childcare' will fail.ffi*
- *seems a fair way to implement this*
- *Yes, all children no matter what age, if meeting the qualifying deprivation criteria should have access to a safe and loving childcare environment*

- *Deprivation, although not an exact link to educational needs, seems a fair indicator of potential additional support needed.*
- *I agree, remaining funds will help to support providers and parents who are struggling*
- *Agree if settings are supporting deprivation in all ages, funds should be available*
- *Agree that this supplement should span all age groups going forward.*
- *Perhaps use remaining funds to go back to general fund enabling slight increase in base rate going forward*
- *Only realistic approach*
- *All ages*
- *I think it is fine as it is.*
- *I think providers need to see the detail of where this is going*
- *Good idea*
- *This support already disadvantaged children where otherwise gap between them and others will further widen.*
- *This may help providers who need to pay qualified practitioners to support 1.1 as the top rate does not cover the hourly rate.*
- *So what happens to the children that don't have the deprivation supplement attached to their funding due to the current postcode allocation system?*
- *1% is a very small amount to make a BIG difference*
- *no*
- *It should come from somewhere else and not be taken from children. All families need help with childcare and should be able to use their funding as they choose to. The choice shouldn't be made without asking parents first*
- *The post code approach to deprivation should be means tested.*
- *No*
- *No*
- *Maybe*
- *Stick to deprivation of current age group.*

**Q5 Inclusion Supplement - Early Years Contribution**

As previously agreed via consultation in 2017, £0.01 is taken from the 3&4-Year-Old allocation. It is our intention to include this contribution from all funding streams within the DSG EY block.

£0.01 from the 3&4-Year-Old hourly allocation is contributed to the Early Years Inclusion Fund; the LA proposes to extend this contribution to all funding streams.

Do you agree with this approach?

Yes: 88% (71/81) / No: 12% (10/81)

**All comments (from No responses)**

- *Im on the fence with this one, but with more children with complex needs coming through, there still needs to be a bigger pot of funding to support not only for these children but also for training, resources and support.*
- *It should be used for inclusion*
- *Inclusion supplement is needed to support settings as not enough specialist provision available.*

**Q6 Inclusion Supplement - Extend Eligible Age Range**

The LA proposes to extend the Inclusion Supplement to all age-groups, following the current arrangements:

- Graduated Response 2 - Exceptional for **funded 3&4 Year Olds**
- Graduated Response 3 - Exceptional for all funded children **under** the age of 3 years

**Do you agree with this approach?**

Yes: 90% (73/81) / No: 10% (8/81)

**All comments (2 Yes and 3 No responses)**

- The additional needs funding for under-school age works well but there seems to be a gap in terms of the continuity to support those same children once they reach school age. Anything to help that would be appreciated.
- There should be extra funding for those children.
- If settings are being asked by the government to offer funded places for 2 year olds then the criteria should be the same
- Unsure what you mean by this point! Would need more clarification, would this mean children under the age of three with a graduated response 3, would gain professional services as currently they don't get access to these services until they turn 3.
- Not sure what it means

**Q7 Additional Supplements**

The LA at present does not have any additional supplements; whilst this is mainly due to the LA ensuring that the funding base rate is maximised, it is also partly due to the current payment system being unable to easily facilitate

the supplements and/or that it would be burdensome for both the EY providers and the LA to monitor the information required. This is part of the reason we have been able to keep our retention amount below the current threshold.

Within the current funding regulations (and expected to continue into 2024/25), supplements can be paid to support:

- Rurality
- Quality (based on staffing qualifications)
- Flexibility (focused on unsociable hours/supporting shift workers)
- English as an additional language (EAL)

The LA does not propose to introduce any additional supplements, to maximise the hourly base rates.

Do you agree with this approach?

Yes: 90% (73/81) / No: 10% (8/81)

**Q8 Additional Supplements**

If you believe one or more of the supplements listed above should be introduced, please explain:

- Why it should be introduced
- How it could be implemented
- How it could be evidenced

**All comments**

- Quality. *The sector is understaffed and underpaid.*
- *EAL is an interesting problem as this makes teaching a group much more difficult. Maybe not a supplement but having some sort of centralised resources to help with this issue would be beneficial.*
- *Staff qualifications should have additional supplement.*

**Q9 Funding for Disadvantaged Two-Year-Olds - Current Additional Criteria**

The LA has a few factors that are outside of the national funding criteria for the funding of disadvantage two-year-olds. These children aren't allowed to be included on the Early Years Census return from us to the Government, so the LA does not receive funding from the DSG for their attendance.

The LA at present also allow disadvantaged two-year-olds to start accessing their funded entitlements once they have a valid code, instead of waiting until the start of the following term. These children are allowed to be included on any Census in the the following term.

The LA currently offers Two year Old Funding for children who meet the following locally determined criteria:

- Children with a current Child Protection Plan

- Children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background

There are generally less than 12 children at any one-time receiving funded hours due to meeting one of the above criteria.

Do you agree that the LA should maintain these additional criteria?

Yes: 86% (70/81) / No: 14% (11/81)

**All comments (3 from Yes and 5 from No responses)**

- *Possibly children on a CiN plan as well*
- *Have catered for children entitled and seen positive impact.*
- *Providing the number of children meeting the criteria remains low, it shouldn't create a funding gap. I would expect the criteria to be monitored annually by the LA and if increases, pressure applied to the Government to include the numbers in the census.*
- *Discriminate against children from any other background than a gypsy, roma or traveller community.*
- *We support children on a Child Protection plan but not GRT children.*
- *Child protection children yes but i dont fully agree that gypsy, roma or traveller children require this over other disadvantaged 2 years olds.*
- *Just the children on CP plans, as children from GRT backgrounds qualify under the criteria most of the time anyway*
- *Think this should be two questions. Children on care plan yes. Traveller background community avoid paying tax, so I think there should be separate funding for the travelling community.*

**Q10 Funding for Disadvantaged Two-Year-Olds - New Additional Criteria**

Do you think the LA should introduce any other 'additional criteria' to support vulnerable two-year-olds or their families?

Yes: 16% (13/81) / No: 84% (68/81)

**All comments (all from Yes responses)**

- *I am concerned these families will not be able to access childcare due to the new funding being introduced by the government. Not sure how WCF can ensure that these families get the childcare and support they need*
- *Special Educational needs*
- *Children who have parents with a disability and children who have a sibling with a severe disability*
- *some children are vulnerable even if one parent is out working all the hours, due to family situation.*
- *?*

- *Do not know, however, some children that access the 2yr Disadvantaged funding the families need the support rather than the child.*
- *Low income families*
- *Children of parents with learning difficulties who struggle to be able to work.*
- *We have many families who are not eligible as one parent working earns just above current threshold, however have no spare income and receive no additional financial help. We find these families are more vulnerable and are on the increase during the current cost of living crisis. they wont qualify for the enhanced funding either as only one parent works. Increasing the earnings threshold would be a good way to address this and enable more families to access it. this would also support our sustainability. We have had many children not start as they didn't get the funding as expected, because earnings were above threshold, but are still low, so families wait until they are 3. All children should be in nursery by 2 and this shouldn't be income based or dependant on both parents working. Health visitor should be able to identify developmental needs for a nursery placement when the development checks are carried out and if deemed to be beneficial, the child should be able to access 2 year old funding on the grounds of the early identification of a SEN.*
- *I am happy with the proposed criteria*
- *We know if support is given to children at a young age, the impact is greater. We a cohort of disadvantaged 2 year, old our remit is getting harder.*
- *SEN?*

**Q11 Funding for Disadvantaged Two-Year-Olds - Start Dates**

The LA currently funds vulnerable two-year-olds from the time of application, if the child already meets the age criteria (the term after their 2nd birthday), rather than from the term after they apply. Over 80% of providers indicated via the recent Childcare Expansion Survey that they would be happy for this to continue; the LA proposes to continue the current arrangements.

Do you agree with this approach?

Yes: 96% (78/81) / No: 4% (3/81)

**All comments (all from Yes responses)**

- *It is important these families and children get the support they may need as soon as possible*
- *The term after their 2nd birthday seem appropriate for both child and provider.*
- *IT WOULD BE BETTER IF FUNDING CAN BE ACCESSED FROM WHEN THEY TURN TWO RATHER THAN WAITING UNTIL TERM*



*AFTER. THIS CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE OF A FULL TERM FOR ALOT OF CHILDREN.*

**Q12 Contingency Funds**

Due to the uncertainty of the new cohorts of children, the funding allocations and the method of determining the LA allocations during the initial rollout of the expansion, we would like to create a contingency fund, which will allow us to smooth out some of the potential instability in take-up for the first few years until it is embedded; at this stage we will consult again.

The LA proposes to allocate 1% of each funding stream as a Contingency Fund, to enable any overspend to be managed within year. Any remaining Contingency funds will be added to the Provider Support Fund.

Do you agree with this approach?

Yes: 83% (67/81) / No: 17% (14/81)

**All comments (2 from Yes and 5 from No responses)**

- *Yes, with the proviso that any remaining funds at the end of the year are funnelled back to providers.*
- *This seems like a sensible approach providing the Provider Support Fund is kept at an acceptable level and managed for the sole purpose for which it is intended.*
- *No. The LA should pass on this 1% in the here and now.*
- *Funds should go to the providers as they already take a loss on the low funding rates*
- *Government should cover this*
- *1% doesn't sound like much, but at 1% here and 1% there we providers are going to end up with very little by the end*
- *Government should be providing the extra 1% to cover this.*

**Q13 Do you have any further comments that you wish to make regarding the proposed funding model?**

**All comments**

- *A funding offer template would be helpful to offer consistency across the county*
- *We found this consultation/terminology difficult to understand and had to have a call with Patrick O'Connor for clarification and to ensure we were making informed decisions on our votes. Could there be a virtual presentation prior to the consultation that explains the proposals in future?*
- *It would be useful to provide a report at the end of each year to providers to show them what the 3-5% cut from fees will be used for, that way you will get more support for surveys like this*

- *The earlier we are advised the rates we will get the better as how can we decide what to charge for any hours that aren't funded to enable us to stay open?*
- *Quality assurance is a problem. If you remove funding for require improvement settings it will shut them down. Funding should be in place so the setting has the chance to stay open for another inspection.*
- *This has been discussed before, however the date of funding payments can put a financial strain on settings making salary payments at the end of the month. It is also strain to fund inclusion especially when a number of children are being 1:1, there should be some consideration to take this into account, as settings are supporting so many more send children due to lack of send provision in Worcester EG a payment half way through term before monitoring forms are completed.*
- *Knowing that settings have closed in our rural area due to non sustainability I am concerned that the levels of funding received from LA and government may not be sufficient especially once the new minimum wages comes into force next April*
- *this seems a fair allocation of funds*
- *I feel that we are now being employed by the local authorities without the employee benefits. We are being told that our business would not be sustainable if we chose to not offer funding. We are being told the times we can work, the amount we are to be paid & what we can & cannot charge for. It is a real simple fix for funding to be subsidised or a monetary amount per year offered to parents. Allowing parents to find their own childcare at a cost to suit them financially. This would enable practitioners to continue offering fantastic daycare placements at differing costs & the parents choose for themselves which they prefer.*
- *If the new entitlements are underfunded then there will come a point in time when those seeking to access their entitlement will find that there are no spaces to actually book.*
- *Getting more funding for education is critical but the quicker issues can be addressed then the easier it will be to stop gaps arising. Focus should be on getting the right level of funding for all children, not just allocating %ages around.*
- *Only to state the obvious and say that the higher the rate the better for providers!*
- *I actually think that all 2 year olds should receive funding as it has become a 2 tier system: children of working parent/s and disadvantaged 2 year olds on the top layer against children who do not fit in to either of these brackets being 'left out'.*
- *Went is worcestershire always given the lowest figure? Housing and living costs in the area are high, and market rates for local jobs is low. Surely we warrant more than this is we as providers intend to make a living.*
- *There needs to be careful consideration in the hourly rate for 3/4 year old funding. The hourly rate is poor for this age range. Government offering funding to all families will mean there will be a surge in people having bigger families and there won't be enough childcare providers.*

**Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner - Schools  
Worcestershire Children First  
January 2024**

WORCESTERSHIRE  
**CHILDREN FIRST**



**Policy for the assessment, procurement and  
management of specialist equipment for education  
for children with SEND: Status, Review and Refresh –  
Worcestershire Schools Forum  
January 2024**

# Current policy: status & current position



- WCC legal review - Policy is compliant with the Equality Act and Children and Families Act and WCC Accessibility Strategy
- Some updates are required to reflect organisational changes
- There are no outstanding requests for financial support where special schools have made these requests to provide financial support for high cost equipment
- Equipment needs are assessed by Occupational Therapists (NHS)
- Schools procure equipment individually
- Schools also maintain and store equipment – issues and risks
- Where education needs and health needs overlap in terms of equipment – joint funding process including escalation
- State funded special schools have been reminded of their responsibilities to provide equipment

# Review Plan – Spring Term 2024

## Issues/Actions

The policy needs to be updated to reflect changes to the health system and to reflect the role of assessors and commissioning responsibilities where a child has Continuing Care needs. The policy will have to be ratified by NHS clinical policy group and if changes to funding equipment proposed ratified by NHS commissioners.

The policy needs to reflect the process for support or review when the funding of specialist equipment items exceeds an individual child's top up funding.

An alternative model for storage and maintenance will be proposed for Special Schools.

The policy will reflect the difference between equipment which is needed for access to education and equipment which is for health needs.

The facility for loan and trial of specialist equipment needs to be understood.

The policy needs to distinguish other support and services that assess/advise and provide equipment for children with SEND.

# WSF function

- For consultation and review of impact on DSG
- Special school impact but has relevance for mainstream
- We will bring reviewed policy back to WSF for comment

WORCESTERSHIRE  
**CHILDREN FIRST**



# **Supporting children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**

**Draft specialist equipment in schools and educational  
settings**

**April 2021**



## Introduction

This policy is concerned with Children and Young People attending Worcestershire maintained schools and academies who have complex health and/or medical needs and as a consequence, require specialist equipment in order for them to:

- Access the school curriculum/environment to the maximum extent
- Manage health and personal care needs during the school day

The policy includes information about the responsibilities of schools, Worcestershire Children First (WCF), Worcestershire County Council (WCC), Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (HWCCG) and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (HWHCT) for the provision of specialist equipment (including assessment of need, funding, storage and maintenance). The policy is subject to sign off by HWHCT clinical policies group in respect to the responsibilities of health practitioners. The timescales for this sign off are given in the action plan at the end of the policy,

Throughout the policy the term 'schools' is used for convenience to include all mainstream and special schools including maintained schools, academies and independent schools, FE colleges and early years settings.

Specialist equipment refers to 'A piece of portable equipment which, having been assessed for by a relevant professional is required to avoid substantial disadvantage to a child with a complex disability. This equipment must be specialist or used for a specialist purpose i.e. relating to that child or young person's special educational need or disability and should facilitate access to the environment / facilities / curriculum.' The process relating to specialist equipment for children and young people with sensory impairments is included in the policy in Appendix 2 as arrangements for this group are managed by WCF's Sensory Impairment Team.

Arrangements for non-portable specialist equipment are given in Appendix 1 to this policy

It is intended that this policy will ensure transparent and consistent decision making and secure value for money in this area in the short term. It is recognised however that some aspects of the policy require review and wider engagement with settings, providers and parent carers to address a number of outstanding issues. The timescales for this review are included as an appendix to this document (Appendix 3). Governance of this review process will be through the SEND Improvement Board.

## Statutory responsibilities

As part of their Accessibility Strategy, local authorities are required to set out what equipment or auxiliary aids schools and early years settings can be reasonably expected to provide from their own budget, and what is provided by the local authority.

Technical guidance for schools entitled 'Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils' (EHRC, 2015) specifies the duties of schools from the Equality Act (2010):

From 1 September 2012 the reasonable adjustments duty for schools and education authorities includes a duty to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils.'

The duty is 'to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the substantial disadvantage to a disabled person caused by a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of a school, or by the absence of an auxiliary aid or service.

A school's duty to make reasonable adjustments is an anticipatory one owed to disabled pupils generally, and therefore schools need to think in advance about what disabled pupils might require and what adjustments might need to be made for them.

This statutory duty applies to all children and young people with a disability, regardless of whether or not they have an Education Health and Care Plan.

Under the statutory duties described in the Equality Act (2010) it is likely to be unlawful for a school to charge a pupil (or his parents) for making a reasonable adjustment in any circumstances, whatever the financial cost to the school and however the school is funded. The Equality Act duty applies to all schools in England and Wales irrespective of how they are funded. This includes Independent Schools and academies

## Definitions

- **Disability:** The Equality Act 2010 states that 'a pupil has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing.'
- **Substantial disadvantage** The Equality and Human Rights Commission defines this as being "anything more than minor or trivial. Whether or not a disabled pupil is at a substantial disadvantage or not will depend on the individual situation. The pupil must be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled pupils."
- **Augmentative and Additional Communication (AAC);** AAC covers a range of strategies, equipment, systems, methods and techniques used by children and young people who have speech, language and communication difficulties. These approaches may be unaided or aided and used to augment or provide alternative approaches that utilise visual, spoken or written mediums. It can include use of eyes, facial expression, gesture, signing, symbols, communication boards or books. AAC may incorporate the integration of different systems.

## Identification of need

HWHCT Paediatric Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists will assess and advise on the specialist equipment required. This includes advising schools on equipment they need to provide to enable a child or young person to access education; the environment i.e. toileting facilities; dinner hall environment; to enable function and to promote independence as part of their holistic care in all environments. Where a child or young person attends a mainstream school, specialist teachers from the Physical Disability Outreach teams based at Regency High School and Chadsgrove School are also able to provide assessment and advice about equipment is needed and will seek the advice of a Paediatric Occupational Therapist and/or Physiotherapist as appropriate.

## Funding of equipment

When working with Children and Young People with SEND it is essential for WCF, HWCCG, HWHCT and schools to demonstrate quality and productivity and to:

- Demonstrate improvements in outcomes for individual Children and Young People
- Show value for money

Value for money is not necessarily accepting the cheapest option but about delivering the best outcome for a given investment over time. Schools and services are expected to consider whether equipment bought can be used by other children wherever possible, to avoid unnecessary repeat purchases.

## Mainstream Schools and EY settings

WCF fund Physical Disability Outreach Teams at Regency High School in Worcester and Chadsgrove School in Bromsgrove to develop and build the capacity of Worcestershire Schools and Early Years settings to fully include pupils with physical disabilities and deliver their entitlement in terms of curriculum access, physical access and personal care. Regency High School offers this service in the South of the county and Chadsgrove in the North (Bromsgrove, Alvechurch, Redditch, Kidderminster, Wythall and Rubery).

The Physical Disability Outreach teams loan specialist equipment to Mainstream Schools and Early Years (EY) settings to enable children and young people to access education. This includes support for recording and access to technology. In the latter scenario, following assessment, children are offered ICT hardware and/or software to support their access to classroom learning. Hardware such as an iPad and software such as CLICKER are issued to overcome physical issues being a barrier to learning.

Some of the equipment issued will have a dual role and will aid communication as well as recording (e.g. via switch work). Eye gaze technology will be issued only when it assists with recording, not as the child or young person's main means of communication.

Equipment issued by the Physical Disability Outreach Teams does not generally include voice output communication aids. These aids are assessed by the Speech and Language Therapy service and funded by health through the Access to Communication and Technology (ACT) Service in Birmingham.

<https://www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/patients-public/rehabilitation/act/>

Schools are expected to meet the costs under £15k of any outdoor ramps and rails in addition to maintenance of the site for a child with Physical Disabilities.

Details of the wider support offered by the two Physical Disability Outreach Teams and referral forms are available at the links below.

<https://regency.worcs.sch.uk/outreach/>

[https://www.chadsgroveschool.org.uk/web/pd\\_outreach](https://www.chadsgroveschool.org.uk/web/pd_outreach)

For mobility and standing equipment, HWHCT Paediatric Physiotherapy Service assess need and provide a prescription identifying suitable equipment to meet these needs. Funding is then applied for through the CCG, and the equipment is supplied by Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) if the child has a Worcestershire GP. Physiotherapists will work with the family to identify where this equipment is best situated (e.g. home or school).

HWHCT Paediatric Physiotherapy Service also provide an orthotics service using Dacey's as their external provider for children and young people.

Contact details for the service are available at the following link:

<https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/services/service/physiotherapy-paediatric-88/>

HWHCT Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service assess needs and identify equipment required. Funding is then applied for via ICES through the social care budget for equipment used in the child or young person's home. Slings that are issued to families may also be used in school where convenient and by agreement between home, family and the service. Slings provided for home use will be maintained under LOLER guidelines by the ICES and will need to be available for this servicing with the hoist. If families choose not to hoist at home and a child is hoisted at school, slings will need to be purchased and maintained by school. Contact details for the Occupational Therapy service are available at the following link:

<https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/services/service/occupational-therapy-paediatric-89/>

Wheelchairs are assessed for by the HWHCT Worcestershire Wheelchair Service. Specialist clinicians within this service will assess for and provide a wheelchair in line with their service specification to allow a child or young person to have indoor mobility around their home. Powered wheelchairs may be considered when a child is unable to self-propel and has the potential to drive a powered wheelchair independently and safely. There is no lower age restriction. It should be noted that if the sole or primary reason for the request of a powered wheelchair is for use around a school/college, it will not be provided by the Worcestershire Wheelchair Service, (please refer to the wheelchair service specification for more detailed information).

## **Special schools**

The cost of the majority of specialist equipment in Worcestershire Special schools needed for children and young people to access education is expected to be met from schools' budgets including place funding and Top Up Funding allocated to individual children and young people.

For mobility and standing equipment, HWHCT Paediatric Physiotherapy Service assess need and provide a prescription identifying suitable equipment to meet these needs. Funding is then applied for through the CCG, and the equipment is supplied by ICES (if the child has a Worcestershire GP). The physiotherapist would work with the family to identify where this equipment is best situated (e.g. home or school)

HWHCT Paediatric Physiotherapy Service also provide an orthotics service using Dacey's as their external provider for children and young people.

Standing frames, walkers, chairs used for mobility between home and school and slings issued to families which are also used in schools are funded from health and social care budgets.

The wheelchair service has a repair service, Rosscare, which can be contacted for urgent repairs. All prescribed wheelchairs will have this contact details on the chair.

## **Arrangements for Children and Young People living out of area who attend Worcestershire schools**

If a child or young person does not reside within Worcestershire the school should request funding for specialist equipment from the home local authority. Any disputes about funding arrangements should be taken up directly with this authority and cannot be resolved by Worcestershire Children First. Where schools experience repeated difficulties with other Local Authorities in agreeing funding and provision of specialist equipment this should be raised with Worcestershire Children First SEND casework or Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group for discussion with colleagues in these home authorities. Final decision making about arrangements for children in Worcestershire schools resident in other areas remains with the home authority however and any complaints about the approach taken should be directed accordingly.

When a child resides in Worcestershire and is registered with a Worcestershire GP but attends an educational setting outside of the county, specialist equipment prescribed by Occupational Therapists will be funded by the Local Authority where the school is located where as specialist equipment prescribed by Physiotherapists, funding will be sought through the CCG.

## **Maintenance of equipment**

Parents, carers, school staff and therapists are expected to monitor Physiotherapy equipment and notify the Physiotherapy Team with any issues. The Physiotherapy team then liaise with the ICES and the equipment company to replace or repair.

If schools have damaged or lost equipment they will be charged for replacements.

The ICES will maintain slings prescribed to the child where these are issued to the home. Appropriate insurance for specialist equipment is expected to be in place at a cost to the school.

Cleaning of equipment used in schools should be carried out on a regular basis by school staff to maintain hygiene, infection control, safety and prolong the life of the equipment.

The wheelchair service has a repair service, Rosscare, which can be contacted for urgent repairs. All prescribed wheelchairs will have this contact details on the chair.

## **Mainstream schools**

The Physical Disability Outreach Teams visit schools frequently to make sure equipment is being used correctly and that it remains appropriate. The teams undertake regular servicing

of high low chairs. It is school's responsibility to pay for servicing of hoists and lifts every 6 months and changing beds annually.

## **Special schools**

Special schools are expected to maintain any specialist equipment they purchase (including that which is assessed as being needed by the occupational therapy service).

## **Storage of equipment**

Mainstream and special schools are expected to store specialist equipment in their buildings. Equipment should be stored safely and securely to avoid damage and/or loss. Some settings have been able to fund and build specific areas within school to ensure easy access to equipment.

## **Transfer of equipment between schools**

Schools may arrange for or offer specialist equipment which has been used by Children and Young People to be passed onto another school when children move on. This is good practice where specialist equipment has been adapted for children's individual needs. Some schools also loan equipment when children transfer to another setting, which is then returned when it is outgrown. Loans are also made by some special schools to the PD Outreach teams for use in mainstream schools, when this is not being used by a child.

In some cases schools arrange for specialist equipment which has not been assigned to a specific child to be passed on when children leave and/or pass equipment onto families for use in the home. This needs to be a clinical decision made in agreement with the provider of the equipment and the child's therapy team, with ongoing relevance of the equipment established. Any decision to loan or transfer equipment between schools must be clearly recorded by the purchaser of the equipment as they may be contacted by the company providing the equipment in the event of a product recall or safety notice.

## **Links**

Equality Act (2010)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils: Equality and Human Rights Commission (2015):

[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/reasonable\\_adjustments\\_for\\_disabled\\_pupils\\_1.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/reasonable_adjustments_for_disabled_pupils_1.pdf)

## Appendix 1

### Arrangements for non-portable specialist equipment

Worcestershire Children First will fund non-portable specialist equipment such as fixed hoists where needed in mainstream and special schools for new buildings from capital funding only if such works are agreed and funded via the capital programme. Schools will entirely fund such equipment if the project does not fall within the capital programme. This will ensure that new builds are compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Where mainstream schools require fixed specialist equipment as part of adaptations to Bathroom Management Areas which exceed £15k in existing buildings these will also be funded from capital funding again, only if such works are agreed and funded via the capital programme. Schools will entirely fund such equipment if the project does not fall within the capital programme

Special schools are expected to fund improvements to fixed specialist equipment in order to remain compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

Once fixed specialist equipment has been installed, it is the responsibility of both mainstream and special schools to maintain this to a high standard.

## Appendix 2

### Specialist equipment for Children and Young People with sensory impairments

Where recommended by a WCF Specialist Impairment (SI) team Specialist Teacher, Educational Audiologist or Habilitation Specialist, the following arrangements will apply.

#### Pupils aged under 16

WCF Sensory Impairment (SI) Team purchases the following for *ALL children in ALL educational settings* and loans for use in the setting for as long as required:

- Long canes and hoops
- Symbol canes
- First Perkins Braille\*
- Low Vision Aids (magnifiers) – until Health assessment has taken place at LVA clinic and then Health will fund a permanent LVA – the team will trigger an appointment
- Small items such as bell balls, some LP/Braille books,
- Independent living skills items such as talking scales – for short term use – if required long term we will encourage setting to purchase

The SI team purchases the following types of equipment for loan to *all children WITHOUT an EHCP*:

- RHAs\*
- Soundfield amplification\*
- Specialist technology such as connect and learn\* – will encourage setting to purchase in long term but will not withdraw the equipment

The SI team supports settings to apply for Top Up Funding *for pupils WITH an EHCP* for all large equipment needs such as:

- RHAs\*
- Soundfield system\*
- Specialist Technology eg Brailenote, connect and learn\*
- Perkins Braille\* if more than one required or if the loaned item has been broken (please note – the SI team will loan an item while funding is sourced if we have one in stock)
- Large items such as laptop, Braille translation software, embossers

All pupils with EHCP will have had the opportunity to loan and trial equipment before a request to purchase is made from Top Up Funding. A specialist in the team will source, cost and provide info to SEND services and the educational setting at the appropriate time and will not withdraw any equipment in use until a permanent item is sourced.



Educational settings need to purchase:

- Consumables such as batteries for loaned equipment
- Braille paper
- Large print books etc
- Inprint 3 technology package to assist the development of language (where advised by the Hearing Impairment Team)

When an item costs over £100 (as marked with an asterisk above) is loaned to a setting, settings are asked to complete a loan agreement, whereby they will add to their school insurance policy in case of fire or theft. In the event of a loss then the setting is asked to make a replacement for long term use through their claim. The SI team will loan a replacement in the short term if there is one in stock in order for pupil to experience minimum disruption and maximum access.

## **Post 16**

Students without an EHCP attending school settings will be supported as above.

Students with an EHCP in school settings should have the equipment purchased via the plan, funded by Top Up Funding as described above.

Equipment can be loaned to Further and Higher Education establishments where traded support is commissioned from the SI team to support the young person and to ensure that equipment is quality checked and maintained.

## **Maintenance**

All repairs to equipment on loan are funded through the SI team.

## Appendix 3

### Proposed plan for reviewing current specialist equipment policy

The following proposed plan will be overseen and delivered by multi-agency colleagues from WCF (SEND and social care), HWCCG and HWHCT with representation from Families in Partnership and mainstream and school settings. Project management will be provided by WCF as part of SEND improvement work in the local area.

Issue	Proposal	Timeline
Current draft policy not yet signed off by HWHCT clinical policies group in respect to the responsibilities of health practitioners.	HWHCT clinical policies group to sign off current policy in respect to the responsibilities of health practitioners.	June 2021
Lack of detailed published information about arrangements for collaboration between PD Outreach teams and HWHCT providers	Finalise collaborative document (PD outreach and HWHCT) detailing arrangements for mainstream schools	June 2021
Lack of published written policy regarding funding of substantive changes to buildings in mainstream schools to meet requirements of Equalities Act	Publish policy: 'Reasonable Adjustments for building adaptations in mainstream schools for children with disabilities'	June 2021
Inconsistency in approach to governance, decision making and safety of passing on and loaning equipment between schools	Seek feedback on current policy and reach agreement on process with schools and health providers	November 2021
Facility for loan and trial of specialist equipment is only available to mainstream schools.	Review impact of extending current facility for mainstream schools to include special schools.	November 2021
Lack of clarity about difference between equipment which is needed for access to	Clarify difference between these two types of equipment in an appendix to this policy and establish a multiagency decision	November 2021

education and equipment which is for health and wellbeing.	making process for any equipment which falls outside of this guidance.	
Storage of specialist equipment in special schools is challenging due to a lack of space	Raise with Joint Commissioning Group for consideration during 2021-22 financial year	April 2022
Funding of specialist equipment in schools for individual pupils can exceed place and top up funding	Consider through Top Up funding review	April 2022
Concerns raised about arrangements in place for maintenance of Occupational Therapy equipment in special schools	Raise with Joint Commissioning Group for consideration during 2021-22 financial year	April 2022
Clarify assessors / providers and identify different services e.g. Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES)	Update policy and provide full information about assessors and providers	April 2022