

Formula Funding Review – Outcome of Schools Consultation

1. Introduction

This paper provides a summary of the responses and comments received by stakeholders in response to the 'Schools, Early Years and High Needs Special Educational Needs (SEN) Funding Arrangements 2015/16' Consultation which took place between 2nd and 13th October 2014.

2. Recommendations

Schools Forum is recommended to take the following action:

- a) Note the comments and responses made by schools
- b) Decide which funding model should be submitted to the EFA on 31st October 2014.

3. Consultation Feedback

In total, 21 responses were received. The breakdown was 8 responses from the Primary sector, 5 from Secondary, 2 from Special, 1 from Hillingdon Tuition Centre, 4 nursery providers and a response from the Primary Forum. The question stakeholders were asked to respond to was:

Stakeholders are asked to give views on the proposal to make no changes to the school funding formula for the reasons as set out in Section 5. If stakeholders do not support this approach, they are asked to submit an alternative proposal, bearing in mind the tight deadlines set by the DfE for the submission of the required returns on 31 October 2014 and 22 January 2015.

Stakeholders were asked their opinion on accepting Schools Forum's decision to not amend the funding model.

The following table summarises the responses received from stakeholders:

Response	Numbers	%
Agree	16	76.2%
Disagree	2	9.5%
Do not know	3	14.3%
Totals	21	100.0%

The 'Agree' votes came from 7 Primary schools, Primary Forum, 3 Secondary schools, the Hillingdon Tuition Centre and 4 Nursery Providers. The 'Disagree' votes came from 1 Primary School and 1 Special school.

All of the responses have been provided for review, the key points raised are noted below:

Early Years

- Consider increasing the Early Years factors in line with inflation.
- Review the application of the Quality factor.

Schools

- Concern around the differential between the primary and secondary AWPU, where it is felt that the difference should be much less.
- Concern around applying retrospective adjustment for pupil mobility.
- Review deprivation funding factor to take into account significant increase in Pupil Premium.
- Review the need for the highest LAC funding factor in the country
- Consider introducing a different lump sum for each sector
- Review Mobility Factor

High Needs

- Support for the proposal to review top-up funding
- Seek further clarity on the £6,000 SEN funding allegedly built into school budgets
- Concern around the high level of Therapy costs incurred
- Concern around retaining a standstill budget

Pupil Premium

- LAC Pupil Premium should be fully devolved to schools.

Other

- Impact on school budgets of changes to Teacher's Pensions increases.
- Impact on school budgets of changes to NI Employers' Rebate.

Summary

It can be concluded that the majority of respondents are in favour of the decision made by Schools Forum's to not amend the funding model for 2015/16. However, a number of issues have been raised by a number of schools which could be considered as part of a review of the funding formula for 2016/17. It is also clear that the approach to effectively cash limit the funding rates for Early Years and High Needs funding is having a direct impact on nursery providers and schools, where there appears to be a consensus that the rates for Early Years, in particular, are reviewed and increased with effect from 1 April 2015.