

CHANGES TO THE PROPOSED COMMON FUNDING SCHEME

The then Minister for Education, Barry Gardiner, announced on 15 February 2005 details of the new arrangements for funding schools in Northern Ireland. He also outlined that a number of changes had been made to the consultative proposals, to reflect the views expressed including narrowing the funding gap between primary and post-primary schools, increasing the AWPUs weightings for pupils in post-primary, and improving the way in which funding is allocated under the school premises and low attainment factors.

Further details of the changes made to the Common Funding Formula, following consultation are as follows:

Age Weighted Pupil Units (AWPU)

The following changes to the weightings were made:

- The weighting for pupils in years 13 –14 (6th form) in post-primary schools has been adjusted from 2.17 to 2.18;
- The weighting for pupils in years 8 –12 in post-primary schools has been adjusted from 1.67 to 1.68;
- The weighting for pupils in years 11 –12 in senior high schools has been adjusted from 1.837 to 1.848;
- The weighting for pupils in special units attached to primary schools has been adjusted from 0.75 to 0.78;
- The weighting for pupils in special units attached to post-primary schools has been adjusted from 1.25 to 1.28;
- The weighting for pupils in preparatory departments has been adjusted from 0.45 to 0.40.

Special Units

- The lump sum allocated to schools with an approved special unit was increased from £2,000 to £3,000.

Targeting Social Need

- Cash values have been set for the distribution of funding under the social deprivation and special education needs (SEN) elements of the TSN factor based on the values used for 2004/05. These will be adjusted annually to reflect uplifts in the total funding available for delegation to schools under the Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB).
- The Banding weights within the Social Deprivation element of TSN funding have been adjusted from 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 – to - 1.0, 1.25 and 2.0.
- Similar bandings have been introduced for the distribution of TSN funding to pupils in nursery schools and classes;
- For primary schools, the Warnock factor (18% of enrolled pupils) has been used to distribute half of the funding for the educational need element of the TSN factor, replacing the use of Key Stage 2 results, as previously proposed.

Premises Factor

- The resources to be allocated to schools will continue to use a set sum for each square metre multiplied by the total approved floor area for all schools – this amount will be doubled to determine the total funding for distribution under this factor. However, once the overall funding to be distributed for premises has been determined the funding will be distributed as follows: 40% on the basis of the approved school's premises area, with the remaining 60% of funding distributed on the basis of the number of full time equivalent pupils enrolled in that school.

Dual Sites

- This factor has been removed from formula funding. The eligibility criteria have been retained. It will be for each Funding Authority to determine how schools meeting these criteria, or indeed any multi-site schools, are provided with additional support, outside of their formula allocations, from centre budgets.

Note: In addition to the above, and as outlined at the time of the Consultation, annual reviews are undertaken on the values and weights to be applied to factors within the formula for funding in the next financial year. Reviews have been undertaken against all values and measures used for the Common Formula for 2005/06, including the revisions listed above. The 'Common Funding Scheme' setting out full details of values, weights and funding distribution in 2005/06 has been published and made available to all schools.