



Department of
Education

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To: Principals and Chairpersons of the Board of
Governors of all grant-aided schools

CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS ON POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS COMMON FUNDING FORMULA

The purpose of this letter is to seek the views of your school on possible changes to the current Local Management of Schools (LMS) Common Funding Formula.

The legislation governing school funding arrangements requires the Department to consult with all schools in advance of making any significant changes to the operation of the current funding formula. We want therefore to hear your views on the proposed changes to the current LMS Common Funding Formula (CFF) set out in this letter, before any final decision is taken on whether they should be implemented in the 2010/11 financial year.

Please see the enclosed Consultation Document that outlines the proposals for factor changes which are:

- a) that the AWPU weighting for primary school pupils should be increased from the current weighting of 1.05 to 1.06; and

- b) that grant-aid funding for preparatory pupils should be withdrawn with effect from 1 September 2010, subject to the outcome of a separate Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).

These proposals have been subject to the outcome of equality screening and have previously been subject to deliberations with the main education partner bodies represented on the LMS Steering Group. The Education Committee has also been advised of the proposed changes.

To help schools assess the proposals, the enclosed consultation documentation includes an outline of current funding arrangements and an illustration of the potential funding impact that would have arisen from the proposed changes had they been applied in the current financial year.

It is important to note that calculations in the consultation documentation are based on pupil numbers and other school data used for CFF purposes in 2009/10. The actual impact of proposed changes for funding in 2010/11 will depend on:

- the overall level of funding available for distribution to all schools in 2010/11; and
- the profile of pupils and schools being funded in 2010/11.

Any changes to the current funding arrangements will be subject to Ministerial approval and will only be made after careful consideration of the responses to consultation and having regard to the potential impact that the introduction of such changes would have on the budget shares across all schools. Any approved changes would then be implemented for funding allocations from the 2010/11 financial year.

Consultation arrangements

A Response Form is provided to enable your school to submit your views and comments on the proposed changes to the CFF. Comments on any other aspects of

the current Common Funding Scheme can be submitted using section 2 of the Response Form.

Your school is asked to make a single response, signed on behalf of the Board of Governors, and to forward a completed Response Form to your relevant Funding Authority (see the listing below) **on or before the closing date of Thursday 25 February 2010**.

As each Funding Authority is consulting directly with its schools, controlled and maintained schools must return their **responses directly to** the appropriate **Education & Library Board**. If these schools have any queries on any aspect of this consultation exercise, these should also be directed to the relevant Education and Library Board.

Voluntary grammar and grant-maintained integrated schools should return their responses directly to Schools Finance Branch in the Department of Education. The Department will deal directly with any queries from these schools on any aspect of this consultation.

You should be aware that, under the current Open Government Code and the Freedom of Information Act, your response to this consultation might be made available, on request, to the public.

Equality Issues

The Department has undertaken two Equality and Human Rights screening exercises on the potential changes in the CFF that may be applied from next year.

The proposed increase in AWPU weighting for primary school pupils has been adjudged not to have an adverse differential impact on any Section 75 groups nor are there any opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering the policy or working with others in government or the wider community.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is currently being carried out on the proposal to withdraw funding from preparatory departments.

If you consider that the proposed changes to the CFF arrangements do, or may have, an adverse impact, it would be helpful if you could set out the concerns that you have in the Response Form and say why you feel the proposals may have a differential impact on any of the nine Section 75 groups (a full list is available at <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/>).

It would be helpful if you could set these out in the Response Form, together with any other concerns that you have about the proposed changes. You should note that you will have the opportunity to comment on the preparatory EQIA as part of a separate consultation exercise.

The Department would like to encourage all schools to take the opportunity to participate in this consultation exercise and to let us have your views using the Response Form provided.

Please note that the relevant Funding Authority must receive all responses by the deadline of 25 February 2010.

Yours faithfully



Roisin Lilley
Head of Schools Finance Branch

CONTACTS AND RESPONSE RETURNS

Each Funding Authority is consulting directly with its schools, and you should ensure that your Response Form is submitted to the appropriate contact:

SCHOOL TYPE	Funding Authority (contact details below)
Controlled schools – nursery, primary, secondary (including controlled grammar, controlled integrated and Irish-medium)	The appropriate Education & Library Board
Maintained schools – nursery, primary, secondary (including other maintained and Irish-medium)	The appropriate Education & Library Board
Voluntary Grammar schools	Chris McRoberts, Schools Finance Branch, DE
Grant Maintained Integrated schools	Stephen Duffin, Schools Finance Branch, DE

Queries on any aspect of this consultation should be directed to the relevant Funding Authority.

Belfast Education & Library Board Gerard Brennan LMS Officer Phone: 028 90564242 GerardB@belb.co.uk	North-Eastern Education & Library Board Marbeth Kilpatrick Head of LMS Phone: 028 25662370 marbeth.kilpatrick@neelb.org.uk
Southern Education & Library Board Sandra Owens Head of LMS Phone: 028 37512508 Sandra.owens@selb.org	South Eastern Education & Library Board George Blackam Admin Officer LMS Phone: 028 90566531 george.blackam@seelb.org.uk
Western Education & Library Board Sean Rodgers LMS Finance Officer Phone: 028 82411331 sean_rodgers@welbni.org	Department of Education Stephen Duffin Schools Finance Branch Phone: 028 91279627 Stephen.duffin@deni.gov.uk Chris McRoberts Phone: 028 91279282 Chris.McRoberts@deni.gov.uk

Copies of the Common Funding Scheme, including links to relevant legislation and the Consultation documentation, can be found at the Department of Education website:

www.deni.gov.uk/schools/schools_funding/common_funding_consultations

If the consultation documentation is not in a format that meets your needs, please refer to the appropriate Funding Authority contact (details above), or directly to:

Ken Reid
Schools Finance Branch
Department of Education
Phone: 028 91279665
Email ken.reid@deni.gov.uk