



Education Governance: Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education – A Consultation

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- ☐ Individual
☒ Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

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Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

Consultation questions

Question 1

(a) What are the **advantages** of the current system of funding schools?

Respondents to this question were proportionally in favour of the current model, common themes being the ability of Schools to deal with issues affecting their localities and allowing flexibility in the budget.

- “Each school gets to manage their own restricted school budget”
- “It ensures that all schools get an equitable amount based on roll and pupil need”
- “Local democratic decisions allow some local flexibility but it needs to be underpinned by a fair and transparent staffing formula with additionality for equity and innovation; PEF funding means that we can look at needs in specific schools and use this to try and help/support children”

(b) What are the **disadvantages** of the current system of funding schools?

There were a wide range of responses to the disadvantage of the current system ranging from underfunding of ASN and lack of staffing flexibility to analysis of the deprivation measures.

- “You need a national staffing formula as a baseline and then create systems to ensure equity.”
- “Areas of high unemployment receive greater proportion of funds, although often the working families have less disposable income. Therefore, it is debatable which children are in greater need of the extra funds”
- “You have to play departments off against each other when education should be priceless”

Question 2

(a) What are the benefits to headteachers of the current Devolved School Management schemes?

As in question 1 most respondents found positives in the benefits of the current Devolved School Management schemes and the ability to target resources at closing the gap at a micro area level.

- “Can put funding in place that reflects the individual school needs?”
- “HT actually already have a reasonable level of control over the controllable budgets but the issue is with the level of resource and inequities across schools locally and nationally. There has been very slow recognition about the need for targeted funding to aid in closing the gap although I note that money isn't the only factor in improving outcomes”
- “None. They are teachers not business managers”
- “There is a danger if changing from the current system that Scotland is taken down the path that England has gone down with self managed schools. With families competing for selection to schools they 'think' will meet their child's needs better than another. Often an uninformed choice”

(b) What are the barriers that headteachers currently face in exercising their responsibilities under Devolved School Management? How could these barriers be removed?

A lack of knowledge regarding the policy framework and need for training were highlighted in the responses received as barriers to exercising responsibilities of Devolved School Management. A lack of time and business management skills were also expressed as concerns.

- “Lack of understanding of the underpinning policy framework especially in relation to Social Justice, HTs need far greater and more theoretical understanding of policy”
- “The level of resource and some restrictions on flexibility to employ, recruit and retain. That said there has been some flexibility allowed through PEF”
- “Training in devolved school management would be beneficial”

Question 3

How can funding for schools be best targeted to support excellence and equity for all?

Respondents to this question highlighted additional resourcing and funding requirements from Schools and more discussion about how funding is managed based on various factors.

- “By increasing the funding “
- “By pushing excellence and equity you don't necessarily get it right for every child”
- “Further engagement with community to ensure authentic partnership working”
- “Level of resourcing improved overall to improve level of controllable budgets”
- “Governance through project boards in schools to support use of funds “
- “Transparent systems to support funding of equity based additionality factors”
- “Innovation funding and support of school based research and collaboration”
- “More discussion about how much funding is available in general and how this can be divided for schools. “
- “PEF seems to be a good system”
- “Would prefer additional staff to funding. Funding not high enough to cover additional quality teaching staff “

Question 4

(a) What elements of school spending should headteachers be responsible for managing and why?

The common theme from this question was encouraging more discussion was had around Educational budget but that Properties budgets should be protected on an “as and when” basis. Again additional resources for teaching staff were highlighted as an area of benefit.

- “All but staffing because staffing must be there and should not use that money for other things”
- “All non fixed costs. However a review of fixed cost control should be considered if local solutions could provide savings that could be retained in schools. I have seen some work done on this and it may not be viable. HT should be more

involved in relation to capital budgets not just revenue budgets.”

- “All, but with the support and guidance of all staff who work in the school as well as advice from their management “
- “I don't think change to this is necessary. It's lack of funds that is the problem.”
- “None - they should be in charge of teaching and not running a business”
- “Resources, staffing - pertinent to education of children. “
- “Teachers posts, (not individual salary rates) so they can fill posts if needed?”

(b) What elements of school spending should headteachers **not** be responsible for managing and why?

The majority of responses to this question highlighted concern over becoming School Business administrators spending all their time dealing with properties issues instead of concentrating on Education provision. Training for Headteachers on management of budgets and ringfencing of properties issues were common themes.

- “All of it. They are not business managers”
- “Fixed costs that would add workload or require more staffing and or time. E.g. Water, power”
- “Salaries should be fair across the country.”
- "Staffing Is there training for HT's to manage large budgets? How do they do this and manage other elements of the school eg pupil behaviour, learning and teaching, building relationships?"

(c) What elements of school spending are not suitable for inclusion in a standardised, Scotland-wide approach and why?

Additional Support needs and properties management were again common themes in all responses to non suitability for inclusion in a standardised approach.

- “ASN as all schools need to be taken into account”
- “Facilities & decor & furniture”
- “Local fixed costs or costs best negotiated centrally by expert staff. Capital building works.”
- “Staffing... Ratios realistically should be based on postcode/poverty, addition support needs & school”

Question 5

(a) What would be the **advantages** of an approach where the current system of funding schools is largely retained, but with a greater proportion of funding allocated directly to:

1. Schools;
2. Clusters; or
3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives?

This question provoked mixed results from respondents some preferring individual School models whilst others preferred Clusters or Regional improvement collaborative.

- "Cannot see any advantages"
- “Clusters can work together”
- "Dead against 2 and 3. Cluster models have been considered before and I was involved in a DSM review which highlighted huge issues in decision making

across Primary and Secondary schools. Regional collaborative s are too big and there is no reason to restructure at such a crucial time. It is political rhetoric and will not improve anything. How will the funding be equitable across different demographic regions both urban and regional. Disaster!!”

- “More money could go directly to schools but there will be difficulties managing that without council involvement.”
- “If some things purchased on a regional basis, more clout? Sometimes if units are too small they waste time and money searching/ negotiating? “
- “They might actually get the money to directly benefit the children “

(b) What would be the **disadvantages** of an approach where the current system of funding schools is largely retained, but with a greater proportion of funding allocated directly to:

1. Schools;
2. Clusters; or
3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives?

Concerns were raised in responses around equitable sharing of budgets between Schools and multiple Schools having to deal with similar issues individually when pooled resource may be a better approach.

- “Competition between schools “
- “Fairness when pooling resources form range of sized schools “
- “It may not be shared out fairly”
- “One size does not fit all funding in schools across wider groups would mean more admin time and negotiation rather than directly relating to pupil needs”
- “Usual wastage from uninformed inexperienced staff”

Question 6

The Scottish Government’s education governance reforms will empower headteachers to make more decisions about resources at their school. What support will headteachers require to enable them to fulfill these responsibilities effectively?

Training and support of all areas from Headteacher to operational staff and Parent forums/Council were all highlighted as required as was additional business support for each School.

- “Better training and awareness of budgets and how they work.”
- “Business managers”
- “Head Teachers already do. Bring in a national staffing formula and fund schools properly. The rest is political rhetoric.”
- “It would be very easy to start blaming societies problems
- “Support from all staff in the school to help them understand where the need is”
- “Support of cluster managers and parent forums. Parent Councils should be given more input into consultations.”
- “Support with finance and budgeting more staffing to allow HT time to do this “

Question 7

What factors should be taken into account in devising accountability and reporting measures to support greater responsibility for funding decisions at school level?

Again the common theme here was Business support and Additional Support Needs requirements.

- "Business managers with accounting background would be highly beneficial."
- "Employ business managers and let head teachers focus on children"
- "Additional support & poverty"
- "They are already there. Give Councils more money to help deliver instead of rearranging the deck chairs"
- "Age of school, State of school, Current facilities compared to other local schools"
- "ASN, Number of staff "

Question 8

Do you have any other comments about fair funding for schools?

Comments within this section have the common theme of too many cuts to education and public services.

More clarity would be welcome overall in terms of what is actually being proposed.