
DfE Changes – Update August 2017 to October 2017

Recent announcements

1. The Secretary of State for Education made a number of school-related announcements at the Conservative Party conference in Manchester:
 - Next round of £140 million strategic school improvement fund will focus on reception numeracy and literacy
 - Pilot of student loan forgiveness for teachers aimed at “the subjects and areas of the country that need them most”
 - £30 million to get teachers into schools that “struggle” with recruitment and retention
 - Additional £6 million for maths hubs
 - £12 million for English hubs in the ‘Northern Powerhouse’
 - Proposals to improve the quality of alternative provision.

National funding formula for schools and high needs block

2. The Secretary of State has addressed parliament on reforms to introduce a new national funding formula for schools. Her full statement can be viewed [here](#)¹.
3. Following detailed consultation earlier this year, the Government has published a [policy document](#)² setting out the background and principles of the new national funding formulae. In addition to this policy document the Government has also published an analysis of and its response to the [schools national funding formula consultation](#)³ and [high needs funding reforms consultation](#)⁴. The main change in the government’s proposals compared with the phase 1 consultation is the inclusion of additional funding of £1.3 billion over two years which will ensure a 0.5% increase per pupil to be applied to schools budgets in 2018-19 and 1% per pupil in 2019-20 (compared with the 2017-18 baseline). The additional funding has also been used to support the changes to the high needs formula allocated to local authorities.
4. The national funding formula policy document outlines the government’s intention to allocate funding for schools through 4 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) blocks:
 - Schools block
 - Central Schools Services block
 - High needs block
 - Early years block

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-statement-on-national-funding-formula>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-for-schools-and-high-needs>

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644668/Schools_national_funding_formula_consultation_response.pdf

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644662/High_needs_national_funding_formula_consultation_response.pdf

5. For the first time, the funding that local authorities receive for each block will be determined by a specific national funding formula. The early years block was distributed via a national formula in 2017-18 and no changes have been proposed by the government for next year.
6. The government's long term intention, outlined in the documents, is that individual school budgets will be set on the basis of a single national formula (a "hard" national funding formula). It is recognised that this would be a significant change for schools and local authorities and therefore the system allows for transition towards the hard formula. In 2018-19 and 2019-20, therefore, the schools funding system will take the approach of a "soft" formula. Under a soft formula system the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will use the national funding formula to set notional budgets for each school. These will be aggregated to give the total schools block budget for each local authority. LAs will then continue to set a local formula to distribute their schools block funding, in consultation with their local schools and their schools forum. Although it will be a local decision, the ESFA has adjusted the rules for the setting of local formulae so that the national formula can be more closely mirrored.
7. Schools Forum agreed the principle at the October meeting that Wiltshire should aim to move as close to the national funding formula as possible for 2018-19 and schools will be consulted on this option in early November. The consultation will include an impact statement for each school. Schools forum will then recommend the revised local formula to Cabinet in December 2017 in order to get the appropriate approval to change the current formula for schools in Wiltshire.
8. The policy document also outlines the government's intention to allocate funding for high needs via a national formula rather than the current methodology which is based on historical spend patterns. Whilst the proposals broadly reflect the options consulted on by the DfE earlier in the year a number of changes have been made to incorporate the additional funding that has now been agreed to support the implementation of the national funding formula for schools and high needs. According to the document the impact of the increase in funding will be that:
 - LAs that are under-funded will see gains of up to 3% per year in each of 2018-19 and 2019-20, and,
 - LAs will be protected from losing funding under the formula and will instead see minimum increases of 0.5% per head in 2018-19 and 1% per head in 2019-20, compared with planned spend in 2017-18.

Wiltshire falls in to the second of those two categories and will therefore be on the funding floor under the new high needs formula receiving only the minimum increases outlined above.

Primary assessment in England - Consultation outcome

9. The government has published their response to the consultation on Primary assessment in England, including assessment in the early years, the starting point for measuring the progress that pupils make at primary school, statutory end-of-key stage teacher assessment and proposals to ensure that there is a proportionate assessment system. The full response can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/primary-assessment-in-england)⁵.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/primary-assessment-in-england>

10. Linked to this was a consultation on assessment arrangements for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests. Government next steps will include removing the requirement to assess pupils engaged in subject-specific learning using P scales from the 2018 to 2019 academic year onwards, and piloting the Review's recommended approach to assessing pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning in the 2017 to 2018 academic year. Full details can be found [here](#)⁶.

Maths and English functional skills: revised subject content

11. The Government is reforming functional skills qualifications to improve their relevance and content, and to build their recognition and credibility in the labour market. The reformed subject content consultation document asks questions on the proposed content for all five qualification levels in mathematics and English. The consultation will run from 12 September until 07 November 2017 and can be accessed [here](#)⁷.

Academies Update

12. Number in Wiltshire at the end of October 2017:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Sponsored academies | 19 |
| Non-sponsored converter academies | 69 |

13. New academies in this period:

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|--|
| St John's CofE School (Warminster) |
| Aloeric Primary School |
| Ivy Lane Primary School |
| St Katharine's CofE(VC) Primary School |

£20 million improvement programme for children's social care

14. In a speech to the National Children and Adults Services (NCAS) conference in Bournemouth, Minister for Children and Families, Robert Goodwill, announced a number of sector-led improvement initiatives, backed by up to £20 million to help all councils improve their services. The programme will give councils the tools they need to build stronger services for our most vulnerable children, and will include tailored peer support for local authorities, bringing in more councils to the successful Partners in Practice programme; and the testing of 'Regional Improvement Alliances', made up of neighbouring local authorities. The full press release can be accessed [here](#)⁸.

15. In addition, the Department for Education has announced that [Nesta](#)⁹ will set up its new What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, with a focus on improving outcomes for children who are at risk of, or suffering from, abuse or neglect.

Corporate parenting, the local offer and personal adviser support – open consultation

16. The [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)¹⁰ received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017. During passage of the Bill and as part of legislation, the government

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/primary-school-pupil-assessment-rochford-review-recommendations>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/maths-and-english-functional-skills-revised-subject-content>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20-million-improvement-programme-for-childrens-social-care>

⁹ <http://www.nesta.org.uk/project/what-works-for-children>

¹⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted/data.htm>

committed to consulting on and providing guidance to support the delivery of the new legislative requirements. They are consulting on three sets of guidance to accompany sections 1 – 3 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, seeking views on:

- Draft statutory guidance for local authorities on applying the corporate parenting principles to care and pathway planning;
- An illustrative local offer for care leavers and accompanying guidance on the local offer for local authorities; and
- Draft statutory guidance on extending the offer of personal adviser support for care leavers to age 25.

The consultation closes on 27th November 2017. Full details can be found [here](#)¹¹.

Revised guidance for virtual school heads and designated teachers - open consultation

17. Local authority Virtual School Heads and school's designated teachers are responsible for monitoring and supporting the educational progress and attainment of children looked after by local authorities. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has extended the role of the Virtual School Heads and designated teachers to certain previously looked after children as they continue to experience educational challenges after leaving care. These new duties apply to children who leave care as a result of adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order and children adopted from state care abroad.

18. Statutory guidance now needs to be updated to reflect their new duties. The consultation seeks views on changes to two statutory guidance documents: 'Promoting the education of looked after children'; and 'Roles and responsibilities of designated teachers for looked after children'. The key proposed changes to statutory guidance are:

- an amended structure to clearly signpost information on the role of Virtual School Heads and designated teachers for previously looked after children;
- addition of information on the new role of Virtual School Heads and designated teachers for previously looked after children; and
- an increased emphasis on: mental health; training for Virtual School Heads, designated teachers and school staff; promoting school's awareness of looked after and previously looked after children's needs and proactively building interagency relationships.

19. The changes to the Virtual School Head and designated teacher role will help ensure previously looked after children receive support to help them achieve their full potential. The consultation closes on 27th November 2017 and can be found [here](#)¹².

Junior individual saving accounts for looked-after children

20. Statutory guidance on Junior ISAs for children and young people who have been in local authority care for 12 months or more has been updated. From 1 October 2017 The Share Foundation will become responsible for managing the CTFs of children who become looked after for any continuous period of 12 months or more after 1 October 2017. The Share Foundation will also

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/corporate-parenting-the-local-offer-and-personal-adviser-support>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/revised-guidance-for-virtual-school-heads-and-designated-teachers>

become responsible for managing the CTFs of children who are already looked after on 1 October 2017, irrespective of the length of time they have been looked after. This will run alongside their current responsibility for managing the Junior ISA scheme. The updated guidance can be found [here](#)¹³.

The Multi-Agency Response to Children Living with Domestic Abuse

21. The joint targeted area inspection programme published its report on 'the multi-agency response to children living with domestic abuse'. The inspectorates involved are Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, and HM Inspectorate of Probation. The Wiltshire inspection took place between 31 October and 4 November 2016.
22. The findings in this report consider the extent to which, in the six local areas inspected, children's social care, health professionals, the police and probation officers were effective in safeguarding children who live with domestic abuse. The report calls for a national public service initiative to raise awareness of domestic abuse and violence. It also calls for a greater focus on perpetrators and better strategies for the prevention of domestic abuse. Full details can be accessed [here](#)¹⁴.

Inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) Pilot inspection update

23. Ofsted has now completed seven pilot inspections; one standard two-week inspection, three short one-week inspections and three focused visits. There is one more short inspection scheduled for September; a total of eight pilots. The pilots included a mix of medium sized local authorities and large county councils. They took place in seven of Ofsted's eight regions. In the eighth region, three local authorities are testing the self-evaluation model and an 'annual engagement' meeting. These meetings are designed to help Ofsted understand context, successes and challenges and to support a proportionate approach that helps them to prioritise their work.
24. South West authorities have been invited by the Regional Ofsted Director to a training event in January in London which Terence will attend with colleagues.

Self-evaluation of social work practice

25. The National Consultative Forum (NCF) LA sub-group met recently to discuss the role of self-evaluation. It was agreed that local authorities do not need to produce a self-evaluation for inspection. Ofsted will ask local authorities to provide information from existing activities to answer three questions:
 - What do you know about the quality of social work practice in your authority?
 - How do you know this?
 - What are your plans to maintain or improve practice?

Providing self-evaluation to Ofsted and meeting with them annually will not be compulsory, however, it will help to deliver inspections that are intelligent, responsible and focused. Ofsted want local authorities to be open and

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/junior-individual-saving-accounts-for-looked-after-children>

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspections-of-the-response-to-children-living-with-domestic-abuse-september-2016-to-march-2017>

transparent to help them to ensure that their activity best supports LAs to improve.

Ofsted aims to publish the new framework and guidance by the end of November 2017.

TERENCE HERBERT

Corporate Director

Report author: Nicola McCann, EY Information and Co-ordination Manager,
Children's Services. 16/10/2017

Largely taken from the DfE website content 17 August 2017 to 16 October 2017.