Schools Forum Report

Schools Block De-Delegation proposals 2024-25

29/11/2023

**Executive Summary**

This report sets out a the de delegated services for the financial year 2023-24, and asks Schools Forum to agree maintaining the services for the 2024-25 funding year

**Details of recommendations and timescales for decisions:**

Schools Forum are asked to consider and agree the proposals for 2024-25 mainstream de-delegation, and new special school equivalent charging

1. **Background**
   1. At budget setting time each year, Schools Forum will be asked to approve the de-delegation of funding for centrally provided support based on a per pupil formula, considered to be a fair way of accounting for the size of the school and its budget.
   2. The final de delegation budget will be determined once the October 2023 pupil numbers are confirmed in the Authority Pro-Forma Tool (APT), which is used to calculate the schools’ budgets.
   3. The overall rate of uplift provided in the National Funding Formula (NFF) is 1.9% per pupil, this is a reduction from the rate included in the October 2023 Schools Forum de-delegation paper, as a correction has been issued after a national error was corrected.
2. **Proposals for 2024-25**
   1. The local authority is proposing to use the National Funding Formula (NFF) baseline increase on 2023-24 settlement of 0.5% plus a 1.4% uplift of 1.9% for de-delegation. The 1.9% excludes the additional transfer of the Maintained Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) also added to the 2023-24 Schools’ Budget baseline.
   2. The 2023-24 de-delegation rates are listed in table 1 as well as the proposed per pupil funding actual 2023-24 and proposed 2024-25

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 1  De-delegation budgets | 2023-24 per pupil rate | de-delegation total | 2023-24 per pupil rate x 1.9% | proposed de-delegation 2024-25 |
| Contingencies | £15.89 | £445,571 | £16.19 | £454,037 |
| Free school meals eligibility | £4.10 | £114,968 | £4.18 | £117,152 |
| Staff costs supply cover (TU) | £5.23 | £146,654 | £5.33 | £149,440 |
| Behaviour support services | £4.40 | £153,064 | £4.48 | £155,972 |
| School improvement services | £11.77 | £330,043 | £10.70 | £300,000 |
| **total De Delegation** |  | £1,190,301 |  | £1,176,601 |
| Education Services | £28.89 | £810,104 | £29.44 | £825,496 |
| **Total** |  | **£2,000,405** |  | **£2,002,097** |

* 1. The de-delegated services are for maintained primary and secondary schools only, services offered to schools under de-delegation arrangements are:
     1. **School specific contingency** (including schools in financial difficulties and deficits of closing schools) provides for unforeseen expenses in schools during the year. Without a central fund, individual schools facing an unforeseen significant cost may find themselves unable to operate within their delegated budgets. Individual schools may not by themselves be able to build up sufficient contingency to cover this.
     2. **Behaviour support services** are offered to schools dealing with challenging behaviour; mental health and parental conflict; and increase in complexity due to lack of specialist advice. The team also providing training and support for attendance issues. The funding is both statutory, via bought-in service level agreement (SLA), and the de-delegated budget supporting the provision. The de delegation total will meet the cost of the SLA
     3. **Free school meals eligibility** – the education service has a service level agreement (SLA) with the Housing Benefit service, who manage the eligibility assessment/checking of pupils for free school meals and notifies individual schools on a regular basis of their pupils’ eligibility. Providing this service centrally means that efficiencies can be gained. Administration at individual school level would be burdensome as entitlement checking would have to be done manually. The service also conducts campaigns on behalf of schools, resulting in increased take up.

The de delegation total will meet the cost of the SLA

* + 1. **Staff costs supply cover (for trade union and public duties)** is manged as part of the TUFA, which ensures that representatives are available to enable schools to participate in collective bargaining and consultation processes. By accompanying staff to formal meetings enables Schools to progress formal actions under HR Procedures.

Holding the budget centrally enables schools to share the costs of supply cover to support the TU facilities time agreement and ensures that individual schools who employ TU reps are not disadvantaged.

* + 1. **School improvement** services are provided for schools following the phasing out of the Schools Moderation and Brokering grant. This allows the local authority to monitor and support performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision and provide intervention to raise standards and is fully passported to THEP. The de-delegation of this budget has been capped to lead to an overall standstill position in total de-delegation from mainstream schools.
  1. Schools block “de-delegation” does not apply to **special schools or PRUs** funded from the High Needs block, but the DfE have an expectation that similar services should be offered to special schools on a chargeable basis. Not having done this in the past has led to confusion in the central support offer, therefore we are proposing to extend the same services to special schools excluding behaviour support - which is accounted for in the place /top-up funding of the High Needs base.
     1. From 2024-25 the charge for special schools would use the mainstream rate (weighted x 3) multiplied by the number of places rather than pupil numbers. The weighting is less than the overall funding differential between mainstream & special phases, but more in the region of DfE grant funding differential. The charge will be fixed for the year.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2**  Proposed Special school equivalent  de-delegation charges for 2024-25 | proposed multiplier 3 | places (S251 budget 23-24) |
| Contingencies | £48.58 | £47,847 |
| Free school meals eligibility | £12.53 | £12,346 |
| Staff costs supply cov | £15.99 | £15,748 |
| School improvement services | £32.10 | £31,641 |
| **total De Delegation** | **£109.19** | **£107,555** |

* + 1. Using the notional de-delegation rate for mainstream schools in this paper, and the 2023-24 place numbers the notional charge per school would be:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3**  Special school notional charging totals | Places  (2023-24) | notional charge |
| Beatrice Tate | 125 | £13,649 |
| Bowden House (res & day) | 62 | £6,770 |
| Pheonix | 470 | £51,321 |
| Stephen Hawkings | 104 | £11,356 |
| LEAP | 224 | £24,459 |
| Total places | 985 |  |
| **totals £** | **£9,850,000** | **£107,555** |

* 1. Other services that are allowed to be included in the de-delegation umbrella are listed below. LBTH have not sought to de-delegate these, allowing schools to make individual arrangements should they wish.

* Staff costs supply cover (for example, long-term sickness, maternity)
* Insurance / Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA)
* Museum and library services
* Licences and subscriptions; except for those charged under the Central School Services Block.