

Appendix 6 – Qualitative and Quantitative consultation responses

Details below present the qualitative feedback received during the consultation process from various stakeholders

Big Mouth Forum

A discussion took place at the Forum meeting, and why the changes were being proposed. Forum members agreed it is important students know what support they can access and the different type of options Young Person A said it is important TAs give young people the opportunity to learn independently and encourage a child not to rely on their support. It is also nice when others also receive support, some young people who need help might not get the chance to have a personal TA.

With school funding some of the money needs to go on providing the right activities within courses and the other half of the money needs to be spent on teaching assistants. All staff need to go disability awareness training. It is important teachers know the young person's interests and the activities they enjoy because this will help the child to learn. Young Person A said students will need support to decide the right path for them. Young Person A said he had a good experience when the teachers gave him options. Young Person B said that some children may not ask for help. Its important staff check that the child is ok

Comments received

Given the large number of responses it is appropriate to capture a range of these received, which are presented below and provide context of the potential changes to the school from the settings perspective.

Ellesmere school (53 responses from all staff and governors)

'At present we have a number of students who need high levels of support to reach their potential but are funded in the same way as other students with less complex needs. This is clearly not equitable. Higher levels of staff supporting complex students mean that other students receive less support.'

'It seems fair that funding is banded to be more personalised as we strive to create personalised curriculums, but current staffing levels holds us back.'

'More flexibility to be able to more effectively and fairly meet student need, having a secondary impact on wellbeing, outcomes and variety of provision'

Keyham Lodge and Millgate Schools (77 responses from all staff and governors)

'Obviously, it is important that all SEN pupils across the city get the funding they need to be successful and to thrive. However, this should not mean reducing the funding of pupils at Keyham and Millgate schools. Our students come from some of the most deprived backgrounds economically and socially, and this must be recognised in this proposal. They require a high level of both therapeutic and academic input in order to succeed, and to take away funding that would undoubtedly affect the level of input that is available to students would be unfair.'

'The pupils we have at Keyham Lodge are so individual, with such varying needs that the only way for them to succeed and have a chance of becoming valuable members of society is to give them a broad spectrum of experience now.'

For instance, there is a pupil who is on an equestrian pathway at the school who has very complex needs, who couldn't function in a school environment at all. Who at present is on course to leave Keyham Lodge with an industry recognised qualification.

Who has after all of the riding lessons and training from various sources has just completed a week's work experience at a large riding yard with the most glowing of references!'

'The proposed changes will mean significant cuts in funding for our school and for our students. The students we teach are some of the most vulnerable and underprivileged in the country. Without a well-funded network of support, starting with school, these students run the risk of experienced deficits in their progress which will never be caught up. I strongly disagree with the proposed funding cuts and the potential impact it will have on our students' lives.'

Netherhall School (42 responses from staff and governors)

'We agree to standardised per pupil funding for non-teaching costs subject to a revision to the formula that recognises that Nether Hall School has a high proportion of pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).

This will also recognise that these vulnerable pupils have feeding, mobility and medical needs, which require additional resource leading to higher non-teaching costs.

These do not apply to the City's other special school, which form part of the review, and therefore the proposed standardised rate is not appropriate for Nether Hall School.'

'While we agree with the banding and weighting method to determine the allocation of teaching funds, we would like to propose a number of small changes that makes it more suitable.

'We believe that funding should be allocated based on the actual numbers in each band and the current cohort of pupils. The current proposal uses averaging over a previous year, and this is too broad.'

We also believe that the money should be allocated for each child rather than averaged. We would also like to see the banding to be independently moderated.'

'While we welcome the additional funding that the proposed funding rate gives to us, it will not be enough and Nether Hall School will continue to be underfunded by around £250,000 per year.

Each year, the School has been accepting more pupils with some of the highest and most complex needs in the City. However, the funding it has received has not kept up with the significant costs involved. As a result, it has been underfunded for the last three years'.

Oaklands School

'Standardised funding would ensure that every school is funded based on the number of pupils which would have a massively positive impact on many schools who are currently running with minimal staff.'

'As a leadership team including our governors, we are supportive of the proposed model, not simply because it provides financial improvement for Oaklands, important though that is, but because we see it as the first steps in a process that will eventually deliver a fair, transparent and

sustainable funding allocation to all of the special schools. We were pleased that all the special schools were fully consulted and Head teachers heavily involved in the robust examination of the existing funding issues to produce the resultant proposed model.

'Clearly, there will always be issues over funding and it has to be accepted there is no magic pot to solve all issues. We initially need to establish a fair allocation of the current funding and to then identify additional resources required to ensure our children receive the best provision individually. At that point we are in a position with evidence to lobby Government for additional monies'

West Gate School (66 responses from staff and governors)

'Pupils who attend Special Schools deserve the rights to appropriate funding to meet their individual needs, currently the proposal is like a lottery, some schools gain and some schools loose, how does this help to fund the best possible education for their individual needs.'

'I do agree with a banding system, it can work, but then to average it out seems to nullify the idea of a banding system itself. I appreciate that there is no perfect solution. But I am struggling with how this benefits any one student when the scale is so large between one student and another, especially here at West Gate'

'I care passionately about the pupils I teach and I know what a detrimental impact our present financial situation has on every aspect of our day to day practice, and how our pupils are affected by this. I do not have enough staff to support the complex day to day needs of my pupils appropriately, and the school cannot afford to buy the resources so desperately needed to effectively support learning. In the past we have come to terms with the fact that the funding system is unfair and we have learnt to accept this and do our best to cope, but why should we? Why should some pupils not receive adequate funding to meet their needs?'

School by school responses to the proposals

This section highlights the key points raised from each of the schools during the consultation, both through City of Leicester Special Schools (CLASS) meetings, Governor meetings, and individual school meetings.

Ellesmere College

Ellesmere have increased its pupil numbers from xx to xx over past xx years. It has historically been the lowest funded school in the city and moving into deficit

The school argues it is no longer a Moderate Learning Difficulty school, but provides provision for SEMH and SLD, therefore under the proposals any child in the city will be funded at the same level regardless of the school they are educated in.

In their response they highlighted the inequity of funding with the current model, in that all students are funded the same regardless of their needs. Furthermore, schools designations have changed, including Ellesmere additionally, whilst trying to be flexible and including more complex pupils within the school the school moves into deficit.

The school confirmed they have worked for 18months with CLASS to develop banding descriptors, including staffing as the main cost indicator, with a detailed description of need sitting below this. The school recognises the banding will be moderated every 12 months and weighted averages updated to reflect cohort changes.

Keyham Lodge

Multiple representations have been made staff, parents and governors across the federation of Keyham and Millgate School, the details below are a combination of these responses.

The governors have confirmed they cannot accept the funding review in its current form, arguing it is flawed, not equitable and not based on the needs of individual children. The governors note their concern the consultation only reviewed 6 schools, that pupils attending the school are born deprived, are vulnerable with mental health problems and that the schools provide security, hope and aspirations.

The governors also highlighted the schools flexibility in the past to take on additional pupils, however with the proposed cuts would not be able to support this resulting in potentially increased Out of Area placements which would have significant impacts on pupils.

They commented 'it is incorrect to imply that leadership skills and staffing levels, as reflected in a "standardized level of non-teaching costs", are the same for every special school, because of the significant differences in the level of challenge presented by each cohort of students. It would be better to remove this from the equation and increase the weighting of each band accordingly. Because Band 5 and 6 predominate in the KLMS cohort, it would provide additional funds to recruit and maintain leaders with that extra element of skill and expertise; and employ adequate numbers of staff'.

Another key point raised was weighting places on leadership costs, the school argue nationally other SEMH schools also provide more leaders than teachers. To note here the two schools employ 21 leaders, whilst there are a total of 25 leaders across the four other schools within this consultation.

In further responses received from the school highlighted wider comparator schools beyond the region, stating the LA should consider wider comparators than those used as examples within the consultation details.

It is suggested by the school there are a greater number of pupils with significant needs which couldn't be met within the 6-band proposals, due to complexity of need. Also due to sexual and criminal cases within the school requiring the school to find alternative provisions and deliver bespoke 1:1 education.

Furthermore, the school highlights the number of pupils its supports via the pupil premium, thus those in receipt of free school meals at primary (78%) and secondary (77%) age ranges.

The school have been clear if no changes are made they will adjust their offer that is financially viable and to ensure their staff safety, which will result in a number of Annual reviews being completed as they do not believe they will be able to continue to educate children to the same degree after April 2021 and reduce future numbers of pupils in future years.

Millgate School

It should be noted this school is for boys in the City and offers an informal residential/ respite provision for pupils, however this is not formally commissioned by the council, nor is it noted as a requirement on pupils EHCPs.

In correspondence the school state the residential provision in 2013 was funded separately, however the LA finance decided to add the total amount of residential provision on to each students average place value which resulted in the difference of funding between the schools

The school in its response have highlighted the complexity of need for its most vulnerable students, through support and interventions the school. The school also highlighted some of the mental health issues its pupils have, and additional resolved provided by staff due to wider CAMHs shortages locally.

Nether Hall School

A formal response received from Nether Hall can be found in appendix (). The school welcomed the funding review, due to *'funding allocated to Nether Hall no longer reflects the cohort of pupils it serves, and the school has been significantly underfunded for the last two years'*.

The school acknowledged the proposals identify a funding increase, however the changes proposed still do not address the school's deficit issues. There is particular concern regarding standardised rate for non-teaching costs, due to an increase in pupils with complex medical and wellbeing needs.

The school highlights a number of unwelcomed outcomes it would like considered including staff reductions, health and wellbeing of staff and pupils, acceptance of new pupils during the academic year.

The school makes representation the proposals review the funding of six special schools instead of the wider High Needs Funding Block. Also there are no comparator schools for Nether Hall and the standardised per pupil funding for non-teaching costs are unfair due to additional medical and care costs for pupils with complex needs at the school.

The school argues a banding system is acceptable, however money should be allocated for each child rather than averaged and bands should be moderated, with addition funding available for pupils with the most complex needs.

The school have suggested the current proposals would lead to a funding deficit of £200k - £300k, however by addressing non-teaching costs and adjustments to banding allocation this would mitigate this funding issues.

The school make representation regarding their cohort of pupils and the funding implications, in that they have a higher number of PMLD pupils, with 41% requiring daily health and medical care. These numbers highlight the need for additional non-teaching staff, which is not comparable to the other schools involved within the consultation. As a result the school have significant additional non-staffing costs in areas including use of the Hydrotherapy pool, mid-staffing premises costs.

The school have suggested funding should be awarded on the actual numbers in each band, and of the current cohort and requested for fairness moderation is completed independently. With the averaging not considering changes in the pupil profile at the school.

Oaklands School

Welcomed the consultation in *'responding to our long-stated concerns about the ongoing difficulties created by an historic funding system in the City that has not been fair or equitable for our children'*. The school remain frustrated that the historic underfunding will not be addressed.

The school confirmed they agreed with a six band system for identifying teaching need to ensure equity across the school. The proposed model will ensure ...which ever school they attend, the funding allocated is fair, transparent and to the benefit of all our venerable children.

The school note their concern that the moderation of pupil banding will not take place before the proposed implementation, therefore are seeking assurance this will take place in 2021/21 and the propose model is equitable and transparent.

The school have requested new pupils starting between April 2021 – April 2022 are funded according to their band rather than the school average, to ensure the school can effectively meet pupil needs.

“Having attended a number of consultation meetings and read several documents I have been impressed with the work that has gone into this new funding model. I have been a governor at Oaklands School for eight years and for the first time I feel our children will have a fair share of funding. Thank you to the team who have worked hard on developing a funding model that is transparent and works towards equal shares for all children within the high needs sector.” School Governor

West Gate School

Welcomed the consultation, *‘to ensure parity and fairness, which has become lost in recent years’*. The school caters for pupils aged 4 – 19-year olds, with complex and challenging needs including severe learning disabilities (SLD), social emotional and mental health (SEMH) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Identified as inadequate in 2018, requiring the school to academize, however this remains unresolved at present.

The school have been accruing a deficit budget since 2016, the council provide some additional support through the funding and skills agency with an independent advisor to review funding and develop a budget. The advisor concluded the school required additional funding to function to meet the needs of the pupils and staffing.

Whilst the funding proposals increase the rates for the school to £23,537, this remains less than was a recommended £26,000 by the advisor. Staffing budget runs at 107% rather than expected 86 – 90%. The school suggests it’s base level of funding will not be addressed with this funding review. The school have limited non-classroom staff, and cannot appoint newly qualified teacher due to their Ofsted rating, therefore employ experienced teachers, to ensure safety, safeguarding and for teaching and learning to be effective.

The school highlighted in their response it received a reduced capital budget due to its deficit budget, however an agreed grant of approximately £650,000 has been agreed the regional schools commissioner to meet the needs of the pupils.

Overall the school welcomes the consultation and the proposed increase in funding, however believed this does not reflect the needs of individual children and argue that pupils with similar needs should not be funded differently based on the school in which they are placed.

There remains a request to look at the uplift in some of the other schools, with concern if the school is not funded appropriately, there will be reduced staffing, levels of supervision which may effect children safety, development and wellbeing.

Schools Forum

An additional meeting was held to enable School Forum members to understand and discuss the proposals with the council and some of the special schools, who also made representation. The Forum submitted a formal response to the consultation (appendix 6). The opinion from a majority of the members was to agree with the proposals, recognising it as a fairer system and that children would be funded appropriately and not according to the schools they attended.

The Forum, however noted some key concerns, notably the need for more places, expertise and resources to support SEND children should have been taken into account in a greater way rather than a pure financial focus. A proposal had suggested a review of the overall High Needs Block. Concerns were raised over the complexity of the proposals.

The forum supported the need to complete moderation of the banding levels to ensure provision across the schools is not replicated, also in recognition the pupil cohort had changes over time. This exercise would also provide clarity and understanding of the needs of young people within the special schools.

Social emotional and mental health (SEMH) was also highlighted as a priority, with expansion of existing support and provision. Mainstream schools currently provide extensive provision to include pupils, however recognise there comes a point when they can no longer support these young people. The forum argues, the Leicester Partnership Schools should not be used to education pupils with SEMH needs.

The Forum agreed to support the proposals, with caveats that there is a written and agreed transition plan for schools who funding will be reduced; the rate change does not increase the cost to the High Needs Block, due to young people being sent out of the city or the funding reducing the capacity of the special schools to educate young people.

Additional queries raised during the engagement period included the possible impact on the allocation of funds should one or more of the schools move to academy status, with a request for a response and commitment form the council to ensure this is not detrimental to LA maintained schools

Quantitative Responses

Standardise Funding Proposal

Response ● No ● Not Answered ● Not sure ● Yes

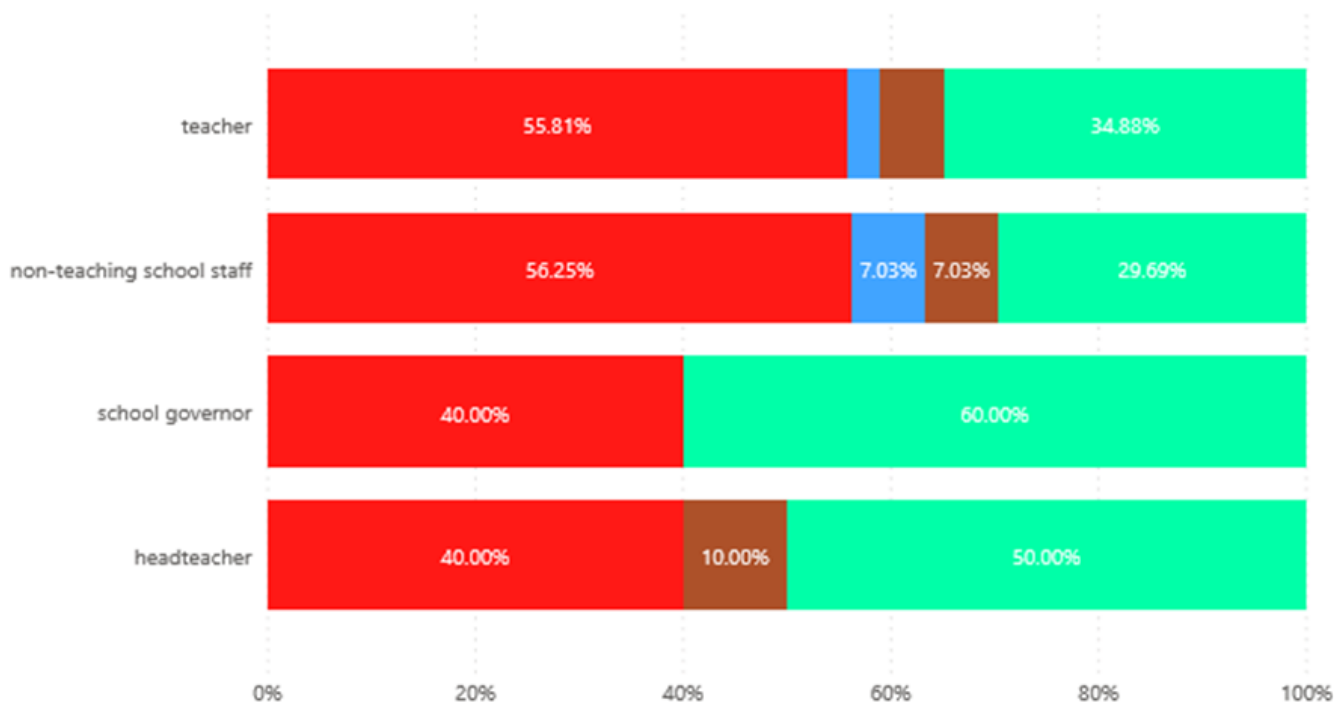


Chart 1: Breakdown of all response received from professionals relating to the standardised funding rate.

Six Band System for Identifying Pupil Teaching Need

Response ● No ● No opinion either way ● Not Answered ● Not sure ● Yes

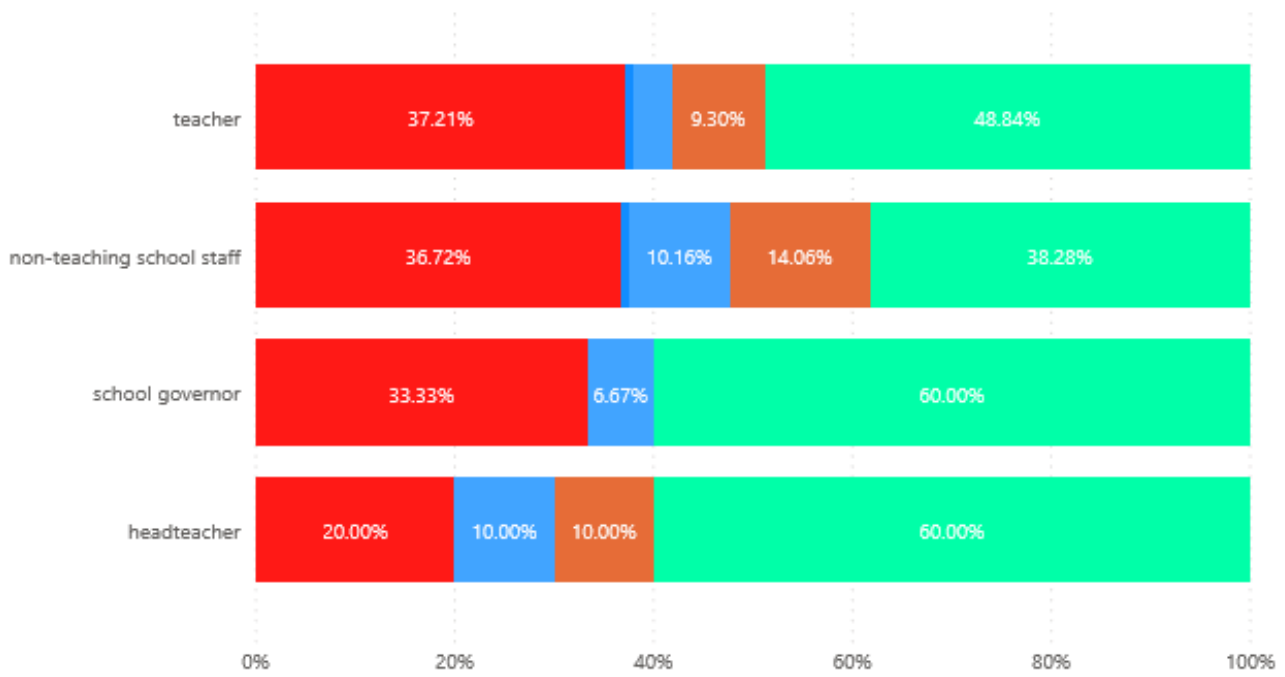


Chart 2: Breakdown of professional's response to proposed 6-band weighting funding.