

Response ID ANON-GVX1-MHKZ-Z

Submitted to **Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education - A consultation**

Submitted on **2017-10-10 11:12:43**

Question 1

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

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

There is a clear methodology applied to the allocation of funding from Government to local authorities and a consequent link in the line of accountability in relation to statutory duties. There are however 32 varieties of the formula which links the level of funding arriving at local authority level to the per capita allocation to schools hence there is neither equality nor equity at the point of delivery within Scotland or across local authority boundaries.

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

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

Given the system of governance within which headteachers currently operate School Leaders Scotland sees little to recommend the system of DSM which has evolved over the last 27 years. If anything it has become increasingly opaque, inflexible and less than able to respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing social environment and education system. It is difficult to find equality in the current system and impossible to find an explicit approach to equity across Scotland. Bearing in mind the five themes which underpin next steps it is difficult to see it being anything but irrelevant and unfit for purpose in that context.

Question 2

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

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

Headteachers have confidence that an amount of funding and support from local authorities will be devolved to them according to a formula reflecting identified priority and need at authority level. The level of confidence in the appropriateness of the level of the Funding year on year and the quality of support is to varying degrees an issue across Scotland.

Headteachers are aware of the statutory expectations on local authorities for the delivery of the service and of the implications of that at school level.

Headteachers recognise the importance of the allocation and distribution of need based funding to local authorities according to specific needs factors and within defined bandings.

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

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

Headteachers understand that they are nominally and notionally in control of 90% of the budget allocated to their school but are equally aware that this is not taken account of by the job sizing toolkit and that their access to managing the budget is in fact severely limited. Virtually all funding passes through the school books with the Headteacher having no access to, or control over it.

The current system does not enable, far less empower, headteachers to be responsive in addressing specific and changing need within their school community. Allocation of resources on the principle of entitlement on an authority wide basis restrains and restricts rather than empowers, and does little to support longer term strategy, planning and targeting of need. The very restricted access which headteachers have within a system in which they are supposed to have control over 90% of the budget exacerbates this.

Varying degrees of top slicing by local authorities as well as financial claw back procedures further impede the strategic planning process and the targeting of identified need at school level.

Actual distribution of resources to headteachers within a structure of accountability and support with the power to commission services when and as required has the potential to enhance the quality of education and educational support at the point of delivery.

Question 3

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

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

School Leaders Scotland fully supports the existence and continuation of a level of governance between Scottish Government and schools. We do however see the clear need for reform of the current system to create a fitness for purpose which is lacking in terms of capacity and capability to support young people's learning. Further we seek the creation of a system which has a transparent equality of resource provision across Scotland which at the same time empowers headteachers to deliver equity. We see much in the Pupil Equity Funding approach which would support this vision.

We are fully in support of a needs based approach to determining funding levels and accept that this will, by the very nature of variations in need, create funding variation across Scotland. A transparent system which makes clear the rationale in the level of funding to individual schools would be welcomed. We are in agreement with the findings of the Accounts Commission on the effectiveness of targeting resources and in providing headteachers with the power to deploy them flexibly in supporting need at the point of learning delivery.

Question 4

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

What elements of school spending should headteachers be responsible for managing and why?:

While we are aware that Scottish Government has stated that it has no appetite to pursue a fixed national funding model we do see a value in whatever system derives from this review of a National Minimum Fair Funding Formula allied to a National Minimum Staffing Standard.

We are in support of a Headteachers Charter and the powers/responsibilities as stated. We would value further discussion in relation to:

- statutory duties of Headteachers within the charter
- line of accountability for Headteachers
- support mechanisms for school leaders

To better empower Headteachers and their leadership teams to be effective leaders of learning School Leaders Scotland advocates that they be given power to control

- appointing their own staff (teaching and support) and determining the staffing structure above the statutory minimum level to meet the specific challenges and opportunities which exist within their school community
- supplies and resourcing of the learning environment of the school

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

What elements of school spending should headteachers not be responsible for managing and why?:

We support the devolution of the maximum level of funding to school level. We do however see the importance of certain services remaining with local authorities and being commissioned by schools . Human resources functions, legal services, specialist support services such as Psychology Service.

We see the local authority remaining as the employer.

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

What elements of school spending are not suitable for inclusion in a standardised, Scotland-wide approach?:

We agree with the list as set out in 1.4

Question 5

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?:

For the reasons previously outlined we feel that it would be difficult to find any advantages given the disfunctionality of the current system in providing equality and equity of educational provision for young people across Scotland.

In that we do not see retention of the current system taking things forward in any meaningful way we have no views to offer in response to Sections 5(a) 2 and 3.

2. Clusters?:

3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives?:

5(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?:

A system which perpetuates the inherent inequity will gain nothing from what will be little more than a potentially confusing structural reform. Any reform must be based on functional effectiveness at all levels, mutuality of challenge and support and predicated on the delivery of equality and equity in provision of learning as it is experienced by the child. All stakeholders in the system must be committed to an outcome based approach which is embedded in the principles of GIRFEC.

In that we do not see retention of the current system taking things forward in any meaningful way we have no views to offer in response to Sections 5(b) 2 and 3.

2. Clusters?:

3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives?:

Question 6

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 fulfil these responsibilities effectively?

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 fulfil these responsibilities effectively?:

School Leaders Scotland is acutely aware of the difficulties which currently exist in recruiting Headteachers. While we support much of what is contained within this review we frame all of our comments within the context of our wish to see :

- A review of salary for all school leaders to provide financial reward commensurate with responsibility and expectations
- A recalibration of the school leaders' pay scale
- A complete review of the job sizing toolkit which notwithstanding the outcomes of

Education Governance: Next Steps, is completely unfit for purpose.

- The appointment of trained/qualified Business Managers to all schools to support Headteachers in their role as Leaders of Learning
- The provision of high quality career long professional development opportunities for school leaders

School Leaders Scotland is acutely aware of the importance of effective and forward looking leadership in delivering quality learning for all young people. It is therefore important that the terms and conditions offered to potential leaders are such that they attract and retain the best leaders of learning.

Question 7

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

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

As stated previously we support the creation of a Headteachers charter but clarity needs to be attached to what would be a Statutory expectation of the Headteacher and to whom, and in what way, would she/he be held accountable. The production of the report of the Joint Steering Group on Regional Improvement Collaboratives for Education is a useful step in the right direction in addressing these concerns. Given the expectations of Headteachers in the future it would have been useful to have had SLS involvement in the discussion which led to the report.

Throughout our response to Education Governance : Next Steps we stressed our concern over multiple accountabilities and emphasised the need to build on the good practice which currently exists within the system in seeking the creation of a system of Intelligent Accountability. Clarity of the measures of accountability to be applied, removal of unnecessary duplication of accountability and the establishing of clear lines of accountability is essential to support headteachers within any revised system.

Question 8

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

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

School Leaders Scotland sees much that is to be welcomed in this document in that it has the potential to enhance the provision of effective learning for young people throughout Scotland. We would hope that the consultation results in a period of engagement with all stakeholders in the pursuit of outcomes which :

- are reasonable and attainable
- flow from strategies which are articulated, robust and evidence based
- have power and accountability exercised at the level best suited to achieving desired impact
- promote and support actions which are effective in enhancing the educational experience of Scotland's young people.

About You

What is your name?

Name:

james thewliss

What is your email address?

Email:

jim.thewliss@sls-scotland.org.uk

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

School Leaders Scotland

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

Publish response with name

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

Evaluation

Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Please enter comments here.:

Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.: