

Response ID ANON-GVX1-MHKW-W

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

Submitted on **2017-10-04 14:56:03**

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?:

Voice considers consistency, fairness, transparency and broad equity of distribution are the key strengths under the existing system for funding schools.

Straightforward for Headteachers and their office staff.

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?:

However, the existing arrangements do mean that they are inflexible and can constrain creativity, or innovation in the way that resources are deployed.

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?:

As in 1. They mean that Headteachers know that they are being given their fair share of available resources. Headteachers can get on with leading the teaching and learning in their schools and are not distracted by the need to balance competing financial demands.

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?:

DSM often is a quite artificial arrangement where the resources are devolved on paper but not in practice. And different local authorities operate DSM in different ways. An example might be where it appears that Headteachers have DSM responsibility for a particular issue on paper but the quantum and spend of that issue are in practical terms controlled by the authority. Staffing cost being the obvious example as the reality is that local authorities largely determine the staffing arrangements for their schools and Headteachers only have a notional influence on that at the margins.

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?:

The distribution of resources and the way it is spent on our schools is not in our view the key issue. It is in fact that there are insufficient resources to allow for that equity of support. An example would be the increasing scarcity of support staff in some schools to help teachers and children with additional support needs. That is not being caused by the distribution of the resources but by the lack of them.

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?:

Everything other than staffing. Staff should still be recruited and employed by local authorities. That provides built in safeguards for both staff and the authorities. Employment for teachers should remain centrally controlled and managed under existing SNCT terms and conditions and for non teachers under local authority terms.

All other spend should be delegated to HTs within a framework that ensures they can achieve best value for money - access to procurement contracts for example

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?:

Employment - see 4(a) HTs should be capable of making decisions about their staffing requirements but the actual employment of those staff should remain with local authorities

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?:

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?:

HTs would be able to plan and think more creatively than they can at the moment about how they best meet the needs of pupils at their school.

2. Clusters?:

Funding allocated to clusters of schools might allow for innovation around deployment of resources or specialist expertise and sharing of best practice.

3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives?:

And by extension, regional collaboratives could pool resource to address key challenges within their areas - managing hot spots of problem areas in particular schools or groups of schools where they are identified

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?:

There is a risk of inefficiency at school level if resources are spent unwisely. Removing the checks and balances of the existing system has inherent risks but they might be worth taking if it encourages creativity and innovation

2. Clusters?:

Some schools may feel that they are getting a raw deal in a cluster if other schools secure a disproportionate share of the available resource.

3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives?:

And again by extension, some local authority areas may feel that others are being favoured over them when decisions are taken about allocation of funds, staffing resource or expertise.

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?:

Headteachers will need training and support to ensure that they take decisions about resources that are informed and balanced. And they may need more office based support than they have at the moment to ensure decisions are properly recorded and spend is properly evaluated and reviewed.

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?:

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?:

The aspirations behind the policy are welcome - anything that can improve the experience and life chances of all children in our schools should be embraced. But the re-drawing of the boundaries of a DSM style arrangement will not produce materially different outcomes. In the view of Voice, the issue at the heart of school improvement is the adequacy of the education provision - not the way it is distributed. And for too long that has been eroded to the point where the experience of too many of our children is being compromised.

About You

What is your name?

Name:

Dougie Atkinson

What is your email address?

Email:

dougieatkinson@voicetheunion.org.uk

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Voice the Union

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?:

Slightly satisfied

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.: