



## Education Governance: Fair Funding to achieve Equity and Excellence in Education

### RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

**Please Note** this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual  
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

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

- Publish response with name  
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If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

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  
 No



Giving all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish is at the heart of everything we do. By bringing together a network of people working with and for children, alongside children and young people themselves, we offer a broad, balanced and independent voice. We create solutions, provide support and develop positive change across all areas affecting children in Scotland. We do this by listening, gathering evidence, and applying and sharing our learning, while always working to uphold children's rights. Our range of knowledge and expertise means we can provide trusted support on issues as diverse as the people we work with and the varied lives of children and families in Scotland.

We are pleased to be able to respond to the consultation on Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education.

**Q1 (a) What are the advantages of the current system of funding schools?**

The current model of funding schools has a series of distinct advantages.

The current model places certain duties on local authorities to provide adequate and sufficient education provision and to deliver and fund specific services such as Additional Support for Learning (ASL). Planning at local authority level provides the opportunity to identify need and plan service provision across the whole local authority population. While we recognise that funding continues to be an ongoing problem for additional support for learning, local authority-level planning does help to ensure that consistent approaches with, for example, educational psychologists, speech, language and communications therapists and other joint NHS and wellbeing services, are developed across local authority areas.

We are concerned that altering the funding structures, and in particular devolving funding responsibility to schools, could increase the element of post-code lottery in the Scottish education system with regards to the above services. This would be a significant impediment

to the Scottish Government's aim to achieve excellence and equity for all.

Of course the introduction of regional collaboratives provides an opportunity to undertake strategic planning, but we are unconvinced that the benefits of this would be realised if it isn't matched by a funding mechanism to support it rather than funding being determined by individual schools.

We recognise that some decisions are best taken at an individual school level, to enable them to reflect and respond to the specific needs of the local school population. Schools in areas of high deprivation, or in small rural communities, will experience different challenges and have different priorities from those in affluent suburbs. We recognise that the principle behind the Pupil Equity Fund, to give schools resources to address the poverty-related attainment gap, has been very helpful for some.

However we feel targeting resources simply based on deprivation or SIMD data is not entirely appropriate. Enquire, Scotland's Additional Support for Learning helpline have highlighted that funding models like the Pupil Equity Fund, may actually contribute to the long-term inequity of outcome for children and young people with additional support needs, as it may be hard for schools to resist using funds to plug its existing gaps in funding, such as for staffing. The planning and funding for all additional support needs for children and their families must be addressed by the forthcoming regional collaboratives, integrated joint boards and local authority levels, with support of the Scottish Government.

As the consultation paper rightly suggests, it is how money is spent on education that matters not the overall spend itself<sup>1</sup>. We remain concerned that money from the Pupil Equity Fund will not be spent on effective interventions that actually make a difference to the poverty-related attainment gap, particularly as schools face increasing budgetary pressure in their core funding. We would like more detailed information on the effective use of, and accountability for, this spend.

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

We welcome increased transparency of funding for schools. We think there should be broad equity of spend per pupil across Scotland, with additional spend per head in areas of disadvantage and to reflect additional support needs. We think this information would be welcomed by parents and tax payers. However in the main this could be improved by promoting more open and transparent methods. We

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00521081.pdf>

are unconvinced that devolving funding to regional collaboratives or directly to schools would in and of itself provide greater transparency.

Again we have concerns that the overall level of funding for education, and in particular for additional support for learning, is not currently sufficient, to meet the ambitions of the Scottish Government for children.

**Q2. (a) What are the benefits to headteachers of the current Devolved School Management schemes?**

The present Devolved School Management schemes allow headteachers to respond to the local needs of their schools. However there is a clear issue that the structure can place extra responsibility on the headteacher, and it is not certain that headteachers either wish or seek this level of responsibility. This is a situation that the proposals made in the Scottish Government's Governance Review and Fair Funding proposals could clearly exacerbate. We expect the views and opinions of headteachers to be decisive in deciding how to proceed with this proposal.

**Q2. (b) What are the barriers that headteachers currently face in exercising their responsibilities under Devolved School Management? How could these barriers be removed?**

EIS has argued strongly that teachers and headteachers are under increasing workload pressure in Scotland<sup>23</sup>. We would question whether they have the time or resources available to effectively fulfil their responsibilities under Devolved School Management, particularly as this requires using a range of new skills, such as procurement.

Again, we expect the views of headteachers to be taken fully into account before finalising these proposals.

**Q3. How can funding for schools be best targeted to support excellence and equity for all?**

Children in Scotland agree with the general principles of excellence and equity for all that are at the heart of the governance review. However as has been raised in our previous response to the Next Steps consultation we have issues with the path being taken by the Scottish Government<sup>4</sup>. Indeed as part of the Children's Sector Strategic and

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.eis.org.uk/public.asp?id=3707>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_Education/Inquiries/20170505ES.workforce\\_planning\\_SPICe\\_paper.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20170505ES.workforce_planning_SPICe_paper.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Consultation-Response-GovernanceReview-Jan2017.pdf>

Policy Forum we have identified 10 points that we feel could improve the upcoming changes to Scotland's education governance<sup>5</sup>.

In terms of the direction of funding we would highlight several ways in which it could be better targeted to ensure excellence and equity for all and narrow the attainment gap.

### **Early years**

Evidence shows that targeting funding towards high quality early years is both the equitable and efficient funding solution to promote equity and excellence for all<sup>67</sup>. Scotland currently faces a situation in which the vocabulary of 5-year-old from the poorest quintile is on average 13 months further behind than a 5-year-old from the richest quintile<sup>8</sup>. Waiting until children reach school age to address the poverty related attainment gap is therefore inappropriate.

We recognise the significant investment made by the Scottish Government to increase the provision of free childcare, up to 1140 hours for all 3 and 4-year-olds and eligible 2-year-olds, by 2020. This has the potential to have a positive impact on the attainment gap, and should be integrated into other approaches to improve attainment. However, evidence from CHANGE, our path-finder child care project in the East End of Glasgow, and elsewhere, suggests that there are still issues of uptake of free places under current entitlement to 600 free hours. Increasing provision further comes with significant challenges, not least to ensure that the quality of childcare support positive development goals for young children.

A high quality early years workforce that understands the importance of issues such as attachment, trauma and play is vital to supporting early child development and we know this will be vital for preventing the attainment gap from occurring<sup>9</sup>.

A strong focus on workforce development to promote high quality early years provision will be one of the most effective means of achieving the Scottish Government's goals. Creative approaches such as community led models and open kindergarten models will also help.

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<sup>5</sup> Scotland's School Governance Reforms, A Briefing on Behalf of the Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum (*Currently not published online*)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/education/school/48980282.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/education-attainment-scotland-full.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/education-attainment-scotland-full.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/2.-Improving-quality-in-the-early-years.pdf>

All restructuring decisions should be assessed on the extent to which they will divert attention and staff time and resource from this goal.

### **Additional support for learning**

We believe more could be done to target funding towards Additional Support for Learning to promote excellence and equity for all.

Evidence from Enquire, the Scottish Advice Service for Additional Support for Learning has identified both inadequacies of provision of Additional Support for Learning, and lack of clarity of process for addressing parental concerns<sup>10</sup>. For example, Enquire has identified cases where schools tell parents to take up issues with funding of provision with the local authority and then are told by the authority that budget issues should be dealt with by the school. This has led to parents feeling trapped between the school and the authority.

We are concerned that the proposed new funding structure could potentially increase this problem if clarity of responsibility is not provided. It does not seem feasible to us that if parents are not satisfied with the level of support offered by the school, the next point of contact would be a regional collaborative. The pathways for escalation of concerns and who has responsibility need to be made very clear and accessible to families.

We also know that incomplete provision of additional support for learning causes issues for both the child or young person and their family. Without the appropriate provision we cannot expect children or young people with additional support needs to achieve within the education system, particularly as issues with this are likely to contribute to increased stress.

### **Supporting the whole child**

Tackling the poverty-related attainment gap requires a holistic approach that encompasses the whole child. Head teachers cannot be given responsibility for closing a gap that has drivers that extend far beyond the school gates. Narrowing the attainment gap will require action to address child poverty across all the domains outlined in the Child Poverty Bill<sup>11</sup>, including social security powers, childcare, employment, housing, health and social care.

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<sup>10</sup> (Enquire had 1533 enquires in the last year (October 2016- October 2017). 153 of our callers raised relationship difficulties or breakdown with the school or education authority. 56 mentioned resources and 45 callers mentioned funding.)

<sup>11</sup>[http://www.parliament.scot/Child%20Poverty%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill06AS052017.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/Child%20Poverty%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill06AS052017.pdf)

An integrated approach, as required by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and that recognises the cross-governmental role in addressing the poverty-related attainment gap is absolutely vital. This should be mirrored at a local level, where planning and reporting on action to address child poverty sits with local authorities and health boards.

### **Pupil and parent participation**

Finally, we strongly advocate for involving both pupils and parents / carers in decision-making around funding priorities for schools. As key stakeholders, pupils and parents / carers will each have valuable views and opinions on school priorities and could play a greater role in: identifying the needs and priorities of schools; informing funding decisions; supporting change; and reviewing progress. As well as supporting fair funding goals, such approaches would also support the wider aims of the previous consultation with regards to meaningful participation of children and young people and widened routes for parental engagement.

### **Q5. (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;**

We can see an advantage in devolving funding directly to schools as it may allow them to respond to aspects of local need. However we would echo our response to the January consultation and points previously made in this response. Given the breadth of decisions already taken at school level we are unclear what could be further devolved and what decisions schools are being precluded from making under current arrangements.

We also must note that devolving more funding directly to schools has clear implications in terms of workload and bureaucracy. Schools should retain their focus on learning and teaching and we feel extra responsibility in terms of budgeting could take away from this.

Devolving a greater proportion of funding directly to schools could also remove some of the vital support provided by authority-wide functions. The Enquire helpline hears from parents that are struggling to access the input of specialists to support their children. We are concerned that the systemic issues around specialist teachers and professionals recruitment and retention in education are having an impact on the support available for children with additional support needs and subsequently their outcomes. We are concerned that this problem around the availability of teachers and professionals like educational psychologists, visual impairment teachers and specialised support for

learning teachers are not ones that cannot be tackled by this proposal.

Evidence from the Enquire helpline also suggests that devolving resourcing responsibilities to headteachers may not meet the needs of those children and young people out of school<sup>12</sup>. The helpline hears from families of children who have been excluded formally as well as those who are informally out of school either through part-time education, school refusal, needs not being met at school or parental concern about the suitability of support or placement. As the recent included, engaged and involved guidance on school exclusions sets out, work should be focused on maintaining young people's education and exclusion should only be used for their best interests<sup>13</sup>. Often this involves vital relationships between the school, home-link workers and council outreach services. However, these services are not always widely available. This is a wider service issue that needs overview beyond the headteacher.

## **2. Clusters; or**

We can see an advantage of funding clusters in the sense that it may allow an effective or efficient means of pooling resources for schools and also developing close professional collaboration to achieve improved professional goals, such as improving literacy and numeracy and also tackling support issues, such as speech and language development.

However as we identified in our response to the Excellence and Equity in Education – A Governance Review, there needs to be confidence and mechanisms in place to demonstrate that the purpose is to improve outcomes for learners and increase the opportunities available to all rather than being financially-driven.

We also believe that the potential for clusters to be responsible for the provision of statutory services such as educational psychologists needs to be ruled out. Clarity about the scope and function of clusters is required and extending their responsibility to wider support services would be inappropriate at this stage.

In summary, we are not convinced that the benefits of pooling resources (rather than allocation of funding for specific initiatives, such as introducing a cluster-led literacy programme) outweigh the

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<sup>12</sup> *(Between April 2016-2017 Enquire heard from families of children with additional support needs who are out of school: 216 who were informally out of school due to part-time education, school refusal, ill health or suitability of placement and 98 who were formally excluded.)*

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00521260.pdf>



bureaucracy and resource required for accounting for public funds in this way to be strong enough to advocate for more funding to go directly to clusters of schools. We are content with the current situation that allows schools to enter these clusters where it benefits them and to consider the funding implications on a case by case basis.

### **3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives?**

**Q5. (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;**

See our response to Q5(a) on Schools.

#### **2. Clusters; or**

See our response to Q5(a) on Clusters.

### **3. Regional Improvement Collaboratives?**

We can see the benefit the collaboratives could provide, particularly in areas where there is poor provision of services such as additional support for learning. However, we still have concerns over the effectiveness of funding these groups directly, adding a potentially unnecessary layer of bureaucracy.

One area where this could add to confusion is the provision of additional support for learning. As previously identified in this response, Enquire have received calls from parents who have issues of accountability between schools and local authorities, budgetary control for collaboratives could further complicate this issue.

**Q6. 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 fulfill these responsibilities effectively?**

Local authorities with their other public sector partners have statutory duties to secure the wellbeing of all children in their area and to work with their partners to secure this. Headteachers are employees of local authorities and as such, are responsible for fulfilling these duties on behalf of their local authority and the children in their school community.

Decisions about resources need to take into account these duties and in particular, how they will fulfil these under the Integrated Children's Services planning framework set out in the 2014 Act.

Greater responsibility for resources implies, in turn, increased accountability for securing the authority's statutory duties. Headteachers therefore need to receive support, where required, on the responsibilities and accountabilities under the 2014 Act and how they can be delivered within the integrated children's services planning framework agreed in their area.

Local and regional partnerships will need to be recalibrated to reflect greater responsibilities for resources, and support for headteachers and their partners will be required to develop arrangements that work in the best interests of children.

Operationally, there needs to be clear, practical guidance alongside a structured CPD programme, where needed, to improve the capacity of headteachers and to support them to make decisions about budgeting, procurement and financial management.

We have also received suggestions that improved information and guidelines on effective interventions to raise attainment and close the gap would be helpful.

Further, to allow headteachers to make the best decisions for their school the appropriate resources would need to be put in place. We question whether simply giving more financial responsibility to headteachers will encourage excellence and equity for all. However, we do recognise the vital importance of adequate resourcing, and our concerns relate primarily to where the financial decision-making best lies.

**Q8.** Do you have any other comments about fair funding for schools?

No.