



**Subject Heading:**

**Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)  
2024-25**

**Report Author:**

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Manager**

**Eligibility to vote:**

**All school and academy members**

### SUMMARY

This report summarises the announcement of indicative DSG Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) funding for financial year 2024-25 and seeks approval for the retention of funding to maintain central statutory services.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Funding Forum:

- (i) notes the allocation of CSSB for 2024-25
- (ii) considers the request to retain funding for central statutory services

### REPORT DETAIL

#### 1. Background

As part of the introduction of a Schools and High Needs National Funding Formula in 2018-19 the DfE also introduced a fourth funding block, the CSSB, which

brought together funding for services previously funded through the Schools Block and through an Education Services Grant. The allocation for 2024-25 is shown below.

The ESFA Operational Guidance requires Schools Forum approval for the central retention of this funding, as shown at section 3 below.

## 2. CSSB allocation 2024-25

Indicative funding for 2024-25 through the DSG Central Service Block has been announced by the DfE as shown in the table below, with comparable data from 2023-24.

	Ongoing responsibilities			Historical commitments	Total CSSB
	Pupil nos.	Per pupil £	£	£	£
2024-25 indicative	38,898	41.67	1,621,025	94,206	1,715,231
2023-24 final	38,898	40.57	1,578,072	117,757	1,695,829
Difference	0	1.10	42,953	-23,551	19,402

## 3. Services to be funded

The services that LAs can fund from the CSSB are set out in the extract from the Operational Guidance at Appendix A. For Havering, these services are as follows:

Ongoing responsibilities	2023-24 £	Proposed 2024-25 £	Proposed change £	Proposed change %
Copyright licences	214,651	230,000	15,349	7.2
Admissions	511,590	524,380	12,790	2.5
Schools Forum	44,548	45,662	1,114	2.5
LA responsibilities to all schools	742,457	761,019	18,562	2.5
Pension funding	59,964	59,964	0	0
Unallocated	4,861	0	-4,861	-100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,578,072</b>	<b>1,621,025</b>	<b>42,954</b>	<b>2.7</b>

Historical commitments	2023-24 £	Proposed 2024-25 £	Proposed change £	Proposed change %
Schools Partnerships/Schools Causing Concern	117,757	94,206	-23,551	-20.0

<b>Total</b>	<b>1,695,829</b>	<b>1,715,231</b>	<b>19,402</b>	<b>1.1</b>
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### **Ongoing responsibility element**

The copyright licence costs tend to increase each year but LAs are not notified of the increase until later in the year. An estimated sum of £230,000 has been included. Areas relating to salary costs have been increased by 2.5%. The actual increase in cost is likely to be closer to 5.0%.

### **Historic Commitments element**

Following the views expressed by the Schools Funding Forum on the use of this element of the grant in 2022-23, at the meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the LA is proposing that for 2024-25 it is used for items that are accessible to a large number of schools. This includes the coaching bursary, Havering Academy of Leadership and support commissioned on behalf of all schools.

Schools Funding Forum approval is requested for this use of the CSSB.

## **34. Central school services block (CSSB)**

The CSSB continues to provide funding for local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies, comprising 2 distinct elements:

- ongoing responsibilities
- historic commitments

Further details on the methodology used for the CSSB are set out in the [2024 to 2025 NFF technical note](#).

The total funding for ongoing responsibilities is £304 million in 2024 to 2025. This funds all local authorities for the functions they have a statutory duty to deliver for all pupils in maintained schools and academies. It also includes £5.5 million to cover the increased cost in copyright licences that local authorities faced in 2023 to 2024.

Local authorities will continue to be protected so that the maximum per-pupil year-on-year reduction in funding for ongoing responsibilities is -2.5%, while the year-on-year gains cap will be set at the highest affordable rate of 5.51%.

As previously stated, the department has reduced the element of funding within CSSB that some local authorities receive for historic commitments made prior to 2013 to 2014.

In 2024 to 2025, for those local authorities that receive it, historic commitments funding has been reduced by 20%.

The department has protected any local authority from having a reduction that takes their total historic commitments funding below the total value of their ongoing prudential borrowing and termination of employment costs, in recognition of the time required for such costs to unwind. For example, if a local authority had historic commitments funding of £800,000 in 2023 to 2024, this would reduce to £640,000 in 2024 to 2025 (a £160,000, or 20% reduction). However, if that local authority had a termination of employment and prudential borrowing costs to a value of £675,000 that value would be protected, and the reduction to the historic commitments would only be £125,000. Note that we only grant protection against the 20% decrease in historic commitments funding - the protection for 2024 to 2025 cannot increase funding beyond what was received in 2023 to 2024.

The department will continue to consider evidence from local authorities which are in this position. We invite local authorities affected to contact the department

at [FundingPolicy.QUERIES@education.gov.uk](mailto:FundingPolicy.QUERIES@education.gov.uk). To reflect this in the December DSG allocation, we request evidence by Friday 27 October 2023; and to reflect this in the March DSG publication, we request evidence by Friday 2 February 2024. We will not accept evidence after this date for 2024 to 2025 DSG adjustments. Agreements for protection are granted on an annual basis. As such, local authorities which have had their historic commitment funding protected in previous years need to resubmit an application for the year 2024 to 2025 for their protection to continue.

Local authorities are required to have schools forum or Secretary of State approval for expenditures on historic commitments and they may not spend more on these commitments than they did in the previous year unless this is authorised by the Secretary of State. A local authority can maintain spending on these areas using other funding sources if they wish to.

The duties included in the CSSB are set out in [annex 3: central services that may be funded with agreement of schools forum](#), which also includes maintained school only functions.

Where local authorities hold these duties in relation to all schools, all schools must be treated on an equivalent basis. Local authorities should not treat voluntary aided schools, foundation schools or academies differently from other maintained schools in the services they provide to them. This is set out in the DSG conditions of grant.

For example, although admissions appeals are not a duty that the local authority holds in relation to all schools, the department would still expect all schools to be treated fairly and equitably by the local authority.

This does not include funding that has been retained centrally from maintained school budgets only, where some statutory duties relate to community and voluntary controlled schools only.

However, in these situations, local authorities should not charge voluntary aided and foundation schools if requested to provide services to these schools and where there is no charge to community and voluntary controlled schools for the same service.

## **50. Annex 3: central services that may be funded with agreement of schools forum**

The split of services between responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools, and those that relate to maintained schools only are shown below.

Responsibilities held by local authorities for all schools are funded from the central school services block, with the agreement of schools forums or the Secretary of State.

Responsibilities held by local authorities for maintained schools only are funded from maintained schools budgets only, with agreement of the maintained schools members of schools forums.

The department has included references to the relevant schedules in the annually updated school finance regulations. These provisions will be replicated in the regulations we make for the 2024 to 2025 funding year.

## **50.1 Responsibilities held for all schools**

### **Statutory and regulatory duties**

- Director of children's services and personal staff for director (Schedule 2, paragraph 15a)
- planning for the education service as a whole (Schedule 2, paragraph 15b)
- authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (Schedule 2, paragraph 15c)
- formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (Schedule 2, paragraph 15d)
- internal audit and other tasks related to the local authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 15e)
- consultation costs relating to non-staffing issues (Schedule 2, paragraph 19)
- plans involving collaboration with other local authority services or public or voluntary bodies (Schedule 2, paragraph 15f)
- standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) (Schedule 2, paragraph 17)
- provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 21)
- revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (Schedule 2, paragraph 22)

### **Education welfare**

- functions in relation to school attendance (Schedule 2, paragraph 16)
- responsibilities regarding restrictions on the employment of children (Schedule 2, paragraph 18)
- functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils (Schedule 2, 20)

### **Asset management**

- management of the local authority's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions (Schedule 2, paragraph 14a)
- landlord responsibilities, including those in relation to land leased to academies for schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 14b)

### **Other ongoing duties**

- licences negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State for all publicly funded schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 8); this does not require schools forum approval
- operation of the system of admissions and appeals (Schedule 2, paragraph 9)

- fees or expenses payable in connection with the attendance of non-SEN pupils at schools not maintained by any local authority (Schedule 2, paragraph 10)
- remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies (Schedule 2, paragraph 11)
- servicing of schools forums (Schedule 2, paragraph 12)
- back-pay for equal pay claims (Schedule 2, paragraph 13)
- writing to parents of year 9 pupils about schools with an atypical age of admission, such as UTCs and studio schools, within a reasonable travelling distance (Schedule 2, paragraph 23)

### **Historic commitments**

- capital expenditure funded from revenue (Schedule 2, paragraph 1)
- prudential borrowing costs (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(a))
- termination of employment costs (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(b))
- contribution to combined budgets (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(c))
- special educational needs transport costs (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(d))