

Notice of Schools Forum



Date: Monday, 23 February 2026 at 10.00 am

Venue: Royal Hampshire Committee Room, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth
BH2 6DY / Via MS Teams

Membership:

Chairman:

Geoff Cherrill

Vice Chairman:

Patrick Earnshaw

Kate Carter
Sean Preston
Esther Curry
Sutter
Heather Spring
Chris Moody
Jackson
Mark Avoth

Midworth
M Dyer
Phillips
Woodville
Ben Doyle
Russell Arnold
McCurrie
Chris Barnett

Phillip Gavin
Parker
Vicky Peters
Richard Wharton
Vacancy
VACANCY

All Members of the Schools Forum are summoned to attend this remote meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to attend this remote meeting and should email any request to do so to the meeting contact below, and a meeting invite will be sent.

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=6663>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Sinead O'Callaghan on 01202 096660 or email democratic.services@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office: Tel: 01202 118686 or email press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

AIDAN DUNN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

16 February 2026

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app

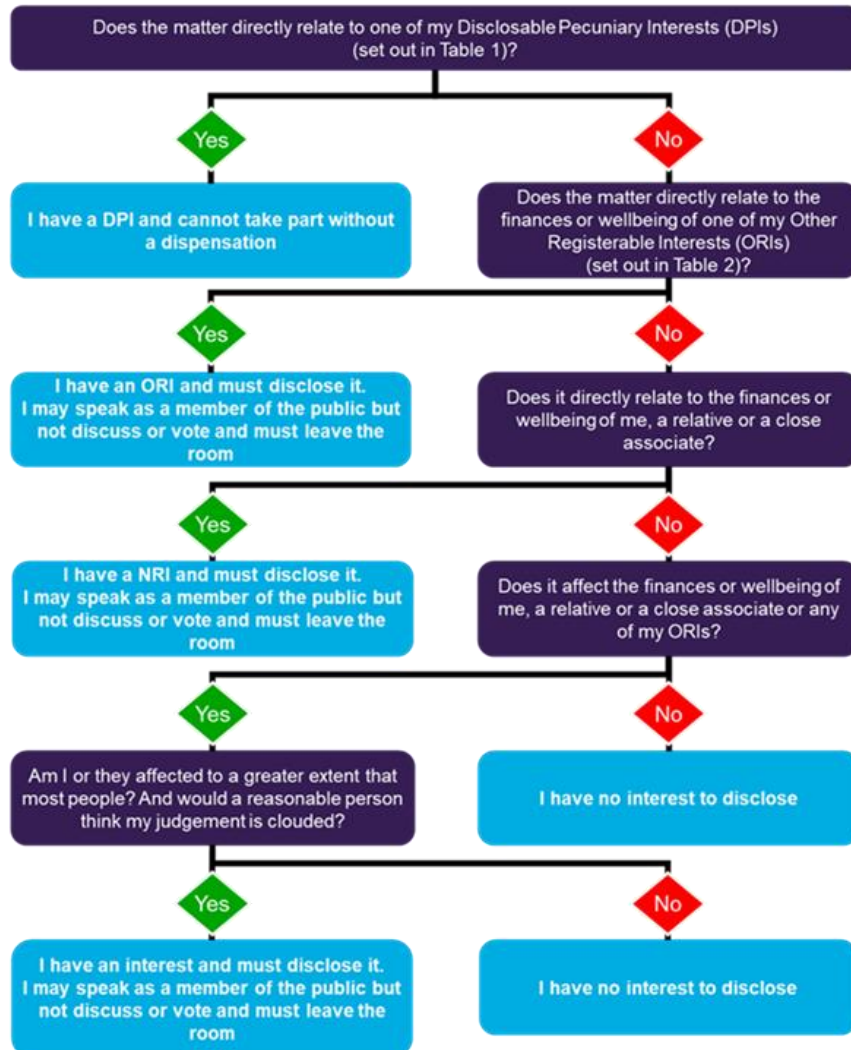


Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

Declaring interests at meetings

Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.

Bias Test

In all the circumstances, would it lead a fair minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility or a real danger that the decision maker was biased?

Predetermination Test

At the time of making the decision, did the decision maker have a closed mind?

If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer

Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance. Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

5 - 10

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 19 January 2026, as a correct record.

4. **Early Years Single Funding Formula 2026/27**

11 - 16

This report sets out the outcome of the 2026/27 Early Years Funding consultations, and proposals for decision as outlined below. This is to ensure the Council meet its statutory requirements as per the Schools Forum regulations and Early Years Financial Regulations.

The Early Years Sub-Group, comprising representatives from a range of local provider types, has engaged constructively with the proposal and provided valuable input throughout its development. A key preference expressed by members was for the local consultation to be timed to follow the DfE's announcement of national funding rates, while avoiding the Christmas period. This would ensure that providers are able to consider the local approach with full sight of confirmed funding levels. The DfE confirmed the national funding formulae and hourly rates for local authorities for the 2026/27 financial year on 15 December 2025, alongside the expectation that local authorities will pass through a minimum of 97% of this funding to providers.

For 2026–27, the Council proposes to maintain stability in the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) by keeping the current structure unchanged. This includes retaining the existing universal base rate and deprivation supplement, with no alterations to eligibility criteria or rates.

Any additional funding received from the Department for Education will be fully passed on to providers through increases in the universal base hourly rates.

The Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) will also remain unchanged, with no amendments to existing rates or processes.

In line with national regulations, the Council will retain the maximum 3% of the EYSFF to fund central services necessary to administer and support the delivery of the early year's entitlements.

On 12 January 2026, the Early Years Single Funding Formula consultation paper and online link for responses was emailed to 270 childcare providers registered for early education funding within Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP). The deadline for responses was on 25 January

2026. 20% of providers engaged with the consultation. Overall, providers were supportive of the proposal for 2026/27 EYSFF. The consultation response is summarised at Appendix A.

5. Central Retention and De-delegation Consultation

17 - 32

This report provides proposals for maintained schools only:

- The central retention of services where the LA retains a statutory duty to undertake activity to support maintained schools only (both mainstream and specialist).
- De-delegation of services applicable only to mainstream schools. These are services where schools retain the statutory duties, but better efficiency could be achieved through central delivery by the LA.

6. Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools 2026/27

33 - 34

The BCP Scheme has been updated to reflect the latest statutory guidance and proposed local financial arrangements. A short consultation has been undertaken with maintained schools.

7. Forward Plan

35 - 36

To consider and note the Forward Plan

8. Dates of Future Meetings

- 22 June 2026

9. Any Other Business

To consider any other business, which, in the opinion of the Chairman, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 January 2026 at 10.00 am

Present: Geoff Cherrill (Maintained Special) – Chairman
Patrick Earnshaw (Academies - Secondary) – Vice-Chairman
Kate Carter, TEACH Academies Trust, Academies – Primary
Chris Jackson, Avonwood Primary, Academies - Primary
Chris Moody, CFO - Delta Education Trust, Academies – Primary
Heather Spring, Twynham Primary, Academies – Primary
Sean Preston, Hamwic Multi-Academy Trust - Chief Financial Officer,
Academies – Primary
Mark Avoth, Bourne Academy, Academies - Secondary
Sian Phillips, Poole High School, Academies - Secondary
Matthew Woodville, Twynham School, Academies - Secondary
Phil Midworth, Aspirations Academies, Academies - Secondary
Ben Doyle, Principal, St Peter's School, All Through Academies
Russell Arnold, The Quay School - Headteacher, Alternative
Provision Academy
Phillip Gavin, Christchurch Learning Centre - Headteacher,
Mainstream PRU
Vicky Peters, Priory View Preschool, Early Years

Also in attendance: Cllr R Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children's and Young People
Cllr Carr-Brown, Chair, Children's Services O&S Committee

Officers in attendance: Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director Children's Services
Lisa Linscott, Director of Education and Skills
Tanya Smith, Head of School Planning and Admissions
Nicola Webb, Assistant Chief Finance Officer
Steve Wade, Management Accountant

34. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Chris Barnett (substitute in attendance), Michelle Dyer and Esther Curry.

It was noted that there was a spelling error on the agenda sheet for one of the Schools Forum Members, and the Clerk agreed to update this. **ACTION**

35. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

36. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2025 were approved as a correct record.

The Chair confirmed that membership updates and Early Years scheduling actions had been completed.

37. Financial Settlement and Draft Budget 2026-27

The Assistant Chief Finance Officer presented the settlement update for 2026–27, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Schools Forum was advised that the DSG Settlement for 2026–27 had been received on 17 December 2025 and included the following:

- Indicative allocations for the Early Years Block, with an 18% increase (from £9.7m to £62.2m) reflecting higher hourly funding rates across the free entitlements and full-year funding for the expansion of the childcare entitlement for working parents from September 2025.
- Final allocations for the Schools Block based on the October 2025 schools census, with a 1% funding increase (£2.3m to £290m) through the National Funding Formula, reflecting an average 2% rise in factor values and a 1.4% reduction in pupil numbers. The Growth Fund had more than halved to below £1m.
- Final allocations for the ongoing functions within the Central School Services Block of £1.9m (a 1% increase), alongside indicative funding for unavoidable historic commitments.
- Indicative allocations for the High Needs Block, with the NFF suspended for 2026–27 and no increase in funding.

Members were advised that a draft DSG budget for 2026–27 had been provided in the Appendix to support decision-making, with the funding gap for High Needs pupils projected to be £95.7m.

The report also included quarter three budget monitoring for 2025–26, which showed the accumulated DSG deficit was projected at £183.6m by March 2026, rising to £279.3m by March 2027.

During discussion, Members asked about recent Government indications regarding the future treatment of DSG deficits. The Forum noted that the statutory override would continue to March 2028, and that while Government had signalled an intention to assume responsibility for SEND expenditure from 2028–29, Local Authorities would remain responsible for deficits incurred to that point. No further operational detail had been made available.

The Chair confirmed that there was no surplus within the DSG system available for redistribution, and that any previous Early Years surplus had already been allocated in prior years.

RESOLVED that:

- **The Financial Settlement for 2026–27 be noted; and**
- **The budgets were agreed for the central schools services block (CSSB) as detailed in paragraph 27 of the report.**

It was noted that officers had provided the additional information requested previously on average costs of provision.

38. Mainstream School Funding 2026-27

The Assistant Chief Finance Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Schools Forum was advised that the report set out the outcome of applying the 2026–27 National Funding Formula (NFF) to the October 2025 schools census data, together with the options available for the local mainstream school formula arising from the £0.15m shortfall in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block funding.

Members were informed of the following:

- Three options had been modelled to address the affordability gap, along with the ability for the Forum to recommend a combination of the available levers.
- A consultation had been undertaken with all schools, including trust-level responses, and the exercise had achieved a high overall response rate.
- The affordability gap had arisen due to reductions in the Growth Fund, increases in pupil characteristic data since the pandemic, and the constraints within the DSG Schools Block.
- The National Per-Pupil Funding Level (NPPFL) could not be reduced, as previous applications to the DfE had not been approved.
- The relative impact of adjustments to the Basic Entitlement, Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and capping mechanisms was discussed, with Members acknowledging that whilst absolute fairness was not achievable, all schools able to contribute should do so.

The Forum considered the options set out in the report and voted as follows:

- Option 1: 0 votes
- Option 2: 3 votes
- Option 3: 0 votes
- Option D (Combination): 10 votes

There were two abstentions.

Following the vote, Members agreed that officers should model an MFG of –0.25%, with any remaining adjustments applied to the Basic Entitlement to

meet affordability requirements. This approach was considered a reasonable and proportionate way to distribute the shortfall across a wider group of schools. **ACTION**

It was further agreed that one primary and one secondary representative would be selected to work alongside the Chair and the officers to review the modelling outputs prior to wider circulation. **ACTION**

RESOLVED that:

- **The Forum recommended a combined approach commencing with an MFG of –0.25%, with consequential adjustments to the Basic Entitlement as required.**
- **Feedback to Forum Members on the outcome of the modelling would be managed through the Chair in line with the required DfE submission timescales.**

It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the Q&A document summarising Member questions and officer responses and Members also noted that the consultation summary paper could be shared with headteachers. **ACTION**

Post meeting note

Following the Schools Forum on Monday 19th January 2026, Option D, an alternative option, had been requested. This was subsequently modelled, reducing the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) from the NFF 0% to minus 0.25% in per-pupil funding. The impact was on only five schools, so the balance of the shortfall was made up by reducing the basic entitlements equally by 0.06%. The group of Forum members who had volunteered to look at this option agreed that this option showed a more balanced contribution between schools.

This option was now the one that Schools Forum had approved for BCP to submit.

39. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan was noted. Members were reminded that the next meeting would take place on 16 February 2026, when the Committee would consider the Early Years Single Funding Formula, Maintained School Services and Central Retention, and any required update on the mainstream funding model, alongside the routine Finance Update.

The Clerk would ensure that the meeting invitation for **16 February 2026** was confirmed for all Members. **ACTION**

40. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Forum noted the future meeting dates as follows:

- 16 February 2026
- 22 June 2026
- 21 September 2026
- 16 November 2026

There were no further comments on the schedule

41. Any Other Business

There was no further business on this occasion. The Chair thanked Members and officers for their contributions.

The meeting ended at 11.09 am

CHAIRMAN

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Report subject	Early Years Single Funding Formula 2026/27
Meeting date	23 February 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report sets out the outcome of the 2026/27 Early Years Funding consultations, and proposals for decision as outlined below. This is to ensure the Council meet its statutory requirements as per the Schools Forum regulations and Early Years Financial Regulations.</p> <p>The Early Years Sub-Group, comprising representatives from a range of local provider types, has engaged constructively with the proposal and provided valuable input throughout its development. A key preference expressed by members was for the local consultation to be timed to follow the DfE's announcement of national funding rates, while avoiding the Christmas period. This would ensure that providers are able to consider the local approach with full sight of confirmed funding levels. The DfE confirmed the national funding formulae and hourly rates for local authorities for the 2026/27 financial year on 15 December 2025, alongside the expectation that local authorities will pass through a minimum of 97% of this funding to providers.</p> <p>For 2026–27, the Council proposes to maintain stability in the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) by keeping the current structure unchanged. This includes retaining the existing universal base rate and deprivation supplement, with no alterations to eligibility criteria or rates. Any additional funding received from the Department for Education will be fully passed on to providers through increases in the universal base hourly rates. The Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) will also remain unchanged, with no amendments to existing rates or processes. In line with national regulations, the Council will retain the maximum 3% of the EYSFF to fund central services necessary to administer and support the delivery of the early year's entitlements.</p> <p>On 12 January 2026, the Early Years Single Funding Formula consultation paper and online link for responses was emailed to 270 childcare providers registered for early education funding within Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP). The deadline for responses was on 25 January 2026. 20% of providers engaged with the consultation. Overall, providers were supportive of the proposal for 2026/27 EYSFF. The consultation response is summarised at Appendix A.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schools Forum recommend the proposal for the 2025-26 EYSFF to the BCP Corporate Director Children's Services. 2. Schools Forum agree the central retention of 3% for council costs of supporting the free entitlement.
Reason for recommendations	The recommendation demonstrates a balanced position of the funding available for distribution to the early years sector, support for disadvantaged children and those with additional needs and funding required for central council functions.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Children and Young People

Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director Children's Services
Report Authors	Tanya Smith, Head of School Place Planning, Admissions and Capital Iwona Onik, Early Education Funding Team Manager
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. The DfE has confirmed its national funding formula and hourly rates for local authorities for the 2026-27 financial year. Within this, local authorities are expected to pass a minimum of 97% of the funding received to providers of early years childcare to fund early years entitlements.
2. The early years entitlements for 2026/27 are as follows:
 - the 30 hours entitlement for qualifying children of working parents aged from 9 months until the child turns 2 years old
 - the 30 hours entitlement for qualifying children of working parents aged 2
 - the 15 hours entitlement for families with 2-year-olds receiving additional forms of support (formerly known as the 2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement)
 - the universal 15 hours entitlement for all 3- and 4-year-olds and the additional 15 hours entitlement for qualifying children of working parents aged 3 and 4
3. National funding for early years entitlements is set through the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) and flows to local authorities as the early years block via the national funding formula (NFF), in accordance with the 2025 Regulations. The regulations then govern how this funding can be allocated to providers and what may be charged centrally.
4. Included within the DSG, but outside the early years funding formula are:
 - early years pupil premium (EYPP) for eligible children
 - disability access fund for one off payments to settings for eligible children

Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF)

5. The Council is required to operate an EYSFF for all providers, including:
 - early years providers other than childminders registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
 - childminders registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
 - childminders or childcare providers registered with a childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted
 - schools taking children aged 2 and over which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider
 - schools taking children under 2 which are separately registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register (including independent schools)
 - independent schools where the early years provision is inspected separately by an independent inspectorate
6. The formula is applicable for all early year's entitlements. For 2026/27, DfE is increasing the minimum pass-through rate to 97% (from 96% in 2025/26). This new 97% requirement will apply separately to each of the entitlements for:
 - 9-month-old children up to 2-year-olds of eligible working parents
 - 2-year-old children of eligible working parents
 - 2-year-old children from families receiving additional support
 - 3- and 4-year-olds (universal and additional hours)

7. The formula for 3- and 4-year-olds is to include a universal base rate for all providers and a mandatory deprivation supplement to differentiate funding. The formula for 2-year-olds and under 2s includes a base rate for all providers and a discretionary deprivation supplement.
8. The formula must include a SEND Inclusion Fund (SENIF). The SENIF provides additional funding to support children with additional needs and must be applied across all age groups. SENIF is not provided under the statutory framework for EHCPs. Any EHCPs for children in the early years age groups are funded by the high needs block following statutory processes in addition to the inclusion fund within the EYSFF.

Consultation for 2026/27

9. Initial consultation took place with provider representatives in the Early Years Sub-Group of the Schools Forum. The group, which includes representatives of local provider types, has engaged with the EYSFF for 2026/27 proposal and offered valuable insights during its preparation.
10. In partnership with this group, the Council recommended the following to the sector:
 - **No changes to the existing formula structure:** The current EYSFF structure, including the universal base rate and the deprivation supplement, will remain unchanged for 2026-27. There are no proposed changes to the deprivation supplement rates, and this supplement will still be paid to:
 - Children from 9 months – 2 years: where the child is eligible for EYPP.
 - 2- year-olds: where a child is eligible as a disadvantaged 2-year-old or is eligible for EYPP.
 - 3- and 4-year-olds: where a child was formerly funded as a disadvantaged 2-year-olds or is currently eligible for EYPP.
 - **Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF):** The approach to the SENIF will also remain consistent with the previous year and there are no proposed changes to the rates.
 - **Allocation of additional DfE funding:** Any additional funding or uplift in the base rates received from the DfE for the new financial year will be fully added to the universal base hourly rates paid to all providers (plus additional 25p for Under 2s). This ensures that all providers benefit directly from the increased government investment and helps to address cost pressures such as the National Living Wage increases.
11. Final hourly rates were confirmed by government on 15 December 2025. A summary of the early years settlement for 2026-27 is provided in tables 1a and 1b below:

Table 1a. Early Years Settlement for Under 2s and 2 Year Olds

	2025-26 LA Rate	2026-27 LA Rate	Increase to LA Rate*	% Increase to LA Rate
Under 2s	£11.34	£12.06	£0.72	6.3%
2-year-olds	£8.36	£8.91	£0.55	6.6%

Table 1b. Early Years Supplement for 3- and 4-Year Olds

	2025/26 LA Rate	2026/27 LA Rate (without termly adjustment)	Increase to LA Rate	% Increase to LA Rate	2026/27 LA Rate (with termly adjustment)*	Increase to LA Rate	% Increase to LA Rate
3-&4-year-olds	£5.84	£6.36	£0.52	8.9%	£6.54	£0.18	2.8%

Note: The DfE analysis shows that changing from an annual to a termly census will result in a lower number of funded hours being reported across the year. Without corrective action, it is expected that a move to a termly funding system will reduce funding allocations to LAs even where there is no change to the hours LAs are paying out locally.

To keep the funding system and DSG allocations broadly stable, the DfE have offset the reduction they expect to see in funded hours, by increasing the *national* average funding rate for 3-and-4 years-olds by 2.94%. **This increase is a technical adjustment, not additional funding for local authorities. The *without adjustment* rate is used to calculate providers rates.**

12. The table 2 shows proposed providers base rates for 2026/27.

Table 2: Base rates for 2026/27

	Provider Base rate 2025-26	Proposed increase to provider base rate	Proposed provider base rate 2026-27	% increase
Under 2s	£10.28	£0.72	£11.25*	9.4%
2-year-olds	£7.72	£0.55	£8.27	7.1%
3- & 4-year-olds	£5.34	£0.52	£5.86	9.7%

*Additional 25p in addition to 72p increase from DfE

13. The funding received by the local authority for each age group requires several components that inform the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). The next four tables show how these elements are proposed to be allocated for 2026/27.

Table 3a: Under 2s - The Components that make up the Early Years Single Funding Formula

Under 2s	Allocation from funded rate*	%*	EYSFF Provider Rate for Approval	Notes
Provider Base Rate	£11.25	93.3%	£11.25	Every child
Deprivation Supplement	£0.01	0.1%	£0.33	Per eligible child
SENIF - targeted	£0.15	1.2%	£2.43/£4.86/£7.49	Per eligible child
Central Functions	£0.36	3.0%		
Contingency	£0.28	2.3%		

DSG Funding per hour	£12.06
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Table 3b: 2 Year Olds - The Components that make up the Early Years Single Funding Formula

2YO Families receiving additional support (disadvantaged families)	Allocation from funded rate*	%*	EYSFF Provider Rate for Approval	Notes
Provider Base Rate	£8.27	92.8%	£8.27	Every child
Deprivation Supplement	£0.65	7.3%	£0.65	Per eligible child
SENIF - targeted	£0.32	3.6%	£2.43/£4.86/£7.49	Per eligible child
Central Functions	£0.27	3.0%		
Contingency	£0.00	0.0%		

DSG Funding per hour	£8.91
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Table 3c: 2YO Working Families - The Components that make up the Early Years Single Funding Formula

2YO Working families	Allocation from funded rate*	%*	EYSFF Provider Rate for Approval	Notes
Provider Base Rate	£8.27	92.8%	£8.27	Every child
Deprivation Supplement	£0.03	0.3%	£0.65	Per eligible child
SENIF - targeted	£0.14	1.6%	£2.43/£4.86/£7.49	Per eligible child
Central Functions	£0.27	3.0%		
Contingency	£0.20	2.2%		

DSG Funding per hour	£8.91
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Table 3d: 3&4 YOs- The Components that make up the Early Years Single Funding Formula

3&4YOs	Allocation from funded rate*	%*	EYSFF Provider Rate for Approval	Notes
Provider Base Rate	£5.86	92.1%	£5.86	Every child
Deprivation Supplement	£0.06	0.9%	£0.33	Per eligible child
SENIF - targeted	£0.25	3.9%	£2.43/£4.86/£7.49	Per eligible child
Central Functions	£0.19	3.0%		
Contingency	£0.00	0.0%		

DSG Funding per hour	£6.36
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**the allocations are shown for context, some rounding may occur*

14. The Early Years Single Funding Formula consultation paper was distributed via email to 270 childcare providers within BCP on 12 January 2026 with responses requested by 25 January. 3 virtual consultation briefing events were held on 13 and 15 January.
15. 20% of the sector provided feedback (53 responses) and the outcome paper (see Appendix A) shows an overall approval for the proposal.
16. Councils are permitted to retain up to 3% of the EYSFF for central services such as administering the entitlement and providing support to providers and systems to operate the funding claims, for services in-kind including special educational needs, to transfer funding to any other early year's entitlement. For 2026/27 the Council will retain funding at the maximum 3%.

Proposed EYSFF 2026/27 for Decision

17. It is proposed that:

- For 2026/27 there will be no changes to the existing formula structure
- Additional funding received from the DfE for the new financial year will be fully added to the universal base hourly rates paid to all providers.

- In line with national regulations, the Council will retain the maximum 3% of the EYSFF to fund central services necessary to administer and support the delivery of the early year's entitlements. This includes establishing the eligibility of entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-old funding, promoting the free entitlements and targeted SEND support.

18. This ensures that:

- Sufficient funding will be allocated to the SENIF to ensure demand from the forecast is met.
- All providers benefit directly from the increased government investment and helps to address cost pressures such as the National Living Wage increases.
- A balance between increasing the base rate and meeting the needs of vulnerable children through the deprivation supplement and through support for children with SEND is achieved.
- A contingency fund is retained to allow for any unforeseen overspend.
- Centrally retain funding will enable to deliver essential support services, quality improvement and statutory functions that help ensure high-quality, sustainable early years provision for all children.

Options Appraisal

19. Proposals were considered in the consultation processes with the early years sector and the sector supported the Council's proposal

Summary of financial implications

20. The early years formulae are set within the funding envelope of the DSG and therefore have no impact on the general fund.

Summary of legal implications

21. The consultations undertaken and the formulae recommendations are compliant with the School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2025.

22. Funding rates in 2026/27 must be provided to the sector by no later than 28 February 2026.

Summary of human resources implications

23. There are no human resources implications for the Council. Any implications from funding levels are for early years providers.

Summary of public health implications

24. Should appropriate funding not be allocated to meet the needs of pupils with SEND within BCP, there may be health and well-being implications for this group of the population leading to reduced health equalities locally.

Summary of equality implications

25. An equalities impact assessment has not been undertaken. The DfE undertake equality impact assessments in determining the structure of the funding formulae and how funding is to be allocated. The local formulae are aligned with the national schemes.

Summary of risk assessment

26. There are no risks to the Council from the implementation of the funding formula within the Regulations and published guidance.

Background papers: None

Appendices: **Appendix A:** Proposed Changes to the Early Years Single Funding Formula for the Free Early Entitlements for April 2026 – March 2027: Outcomes of the Consultation.

Report subject	Central Retention and De-delegation Consultation
Meeting date	23 February 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides proposals for maintained schools only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The central retention of services where the LA retains a statutory duty to undertake activity to support maintained schools only (both mainstream and specialist). • De-delegation of services applicable only to mainstream schools. These are services where schools retain the statutory duties, but better efficiency could be achieved through central delivery by the LA.
Recommendations	<p>Maintained School members only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree collectively the retention rates per pupil and budgets for LA duties supporting maintained schools as contained in this report. • Agree separately for primary and secondary schools, the de-delegation of funding for school improvement duties as described.
Reason for recommendations	Maintained School Forum members must be consulted on proposals for the central retention and de-delegated budget shares and agree the level of central budgets.
Report Author	Tanya Smith, Head of School Places, Funding and Admissions

Background

1. The deployment of the DSG is regulated by the DfE through the School Finance Regulations, which are updated annually. The local School's Forum must be consulted on how the grant is used and has a range of decision-making powers.
2. The council is responsible for setting the formula for mainstream schools for reception to year 11 after taking account of the recommendations of the School's Forum which in turn should be based on the views of schools.
3. Maintained schools' representatives on the Schools Forum are asked to agree that some services should be funded from the budget shares of maintained primary and secondary schools and specialist providers. The services and the proposed total amount to be funded are in respect of the following:
 - **Central Retention:** Proposals for the central retention of services where the LA retains a statutory duty to undertake activity to support maintained schools only. These include a range of services such as financial and audit services, asset management and monitoring national curriculum assessments.
 - **De-delegation:** Proposals for de-delegation of services applicable only to mainstream schools. These are services where schools retain the statutory duties, but better efficiency could be achieved through central delivery by the LA.

4. There are currently 11 mainstream maintained schools, and these will need to be accounted with this status for a full year on the APT containing the budget shares sent to the DfE in January. In addition, there are 3 specialist-maintained providers.
5. **Consultation with Maintained Schools Only:** The detail of these budgets was set out in the consultation paper see **Appendix 1** to this report.
6. **Central retention from maintained school budget shares for LA statutory duties:** The amount of retention supports the delivery of statutory functions and duties of the Council and is the only funding source for these duties. Details of maintained school duties with a comparison of those for all schools funded from the central school services block is provided in the consultation paper provided at Appendix 1A of this report. Details of the services provided for each of the service headings paid for from schools' budget shares are contained in **Appendix 2** of this report. The actual costs and hours of service provided under each service heading is difficult to determine. This reflects that in the case of some service areas i.e. financial services; there are no longer dedicated staff teams working only with maintained schools and there are no records of time spent on this activity only.
7. It is proposed that the level of the central retention for 2026-27 is as follows: Mainstream School rate per pupil £31.97 and Specialist Provider rate per place £120.62. This means that the central retention rates derive a budget of £223,000 with the allocation for each service for the 12-month period from April 2026 to March 2027 as set out in the table 2 below.

Table 1: Proposed Maintained School Central Retention Rates April 2026 - March 2027

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Mainstream School rate per pupil	24.86	31.89	31.97
Specialist Provider rate per place	105.64	-	120.62

8. Table 2 sets out the planned total spending for the 12 months period from April 2026. Spending is shown under maintained school service headings which align to statutory and regulatory duties of the Local Authority. Details of the impact on individual school budgets/for each maintained school are summarised in Table 3.

Table 2: LA Budget for Maintained School Statutory Duties April 2026 to March 2027

Statutory and Regulatory Duties	Central Budget Retained £000's
Education Services	61
Finance and Audit	73
Human Resources	15
Asset Management	53
Monitoring National Curriculum Assessments	21
Total Statutory & Regulatory	223

Table 3: Proposed Maintained School Central Retentions April 2026 to March to 2027

Maintained Mainstream	NOR	Central Retention
Burton Church of England Primary School	266	£8,504
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School	427	£13,651
Highcliffe St Mark Primary School	609	£19,470
Mudeford Community Infants' School	175	£5,595
Mudeford Junior School	255	£8,152
Somerford Primary School	168	£5,371
St Edward's RC/C England School, Poole	898	£28,709
St Joseph's Catholic Primary	201	£6,426
St Katharine's Church of England Primary	436	£13,939
St Walburga's Catholic Primary School	419	£13,395
The Priory Church of England Primary	197	£6,298
Total		£129,510
Maintained Specialist*		
Christchurch Learning Centre	48	£5,790
Linwood Special	473	£57,053
Winchelsea Special	254	£30,637
Total		£93,480

Proposed Contribution BCP		£222,990
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9. **De-delegation of School Duties:** De-delegation of services is currently applicable only to mainstream schools. These are services where schools retain the statutory duties, but better efficiency could be achieved through central delivery by the LA. The arrangements for maintained special and AP providers are currently the same as those for academies through traded services, except for school improvement services where de-delegation was implemented for the first time in 2022/23 when the grant from the DfE started to be withdrawn. Schools Forum makes the decision on behalf of all maintained schools by primary and secondary phases separately.
10. In the case of special schools and PRUs, the funding to buy such services will be included in any top-up payments. For this reason, special schools and PRUs will need to agree the charge on an individual basis.
11. New decisions will be required for any service to be de-delegated in 2026/2027. There are no specific proposals for new traded services.
12. **Core School Improvement Duties:** The DfE previously funded the core school improvement duties through specific grant with the amount received by each council proportionate to the number of maintained schools in their area. BCP previously received the minimum allocation of £50,000 with this reducing for 2022/23 and then the grant ending. Following the government decision to end the grant in March 2023, an equivalent amount is the amount required to be funded via de-delegation from maintained schools' budget share. This enables the LA to fund core improvement activities. These include monitoring the performance of maintained schools, brokering school improvement provision and exercising the Council's statutory intervention powers. The core improvement activities are set out in Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) and in the Schools Causing Concern guidance. Part 4 of the 2006 Act provides councils with statutory powers to warn and intervene in schools causing concern, through issuing a warning notice setting out actions the governing body are to take. Further details are contained in Appendix 4 of the consultation document.

13. The school improvement team also discharge the shared statutory responsibility for SACRE and the agreed RE Syllabus under the 1948 Act. All support for the improvement of RE across all BCP maintained schools is free to access and will be delivered to all maintained schools, which includes free access to a school RE conference.
14. As for 2026/27, it is proposed that de-delegation is done on a per pupil basis in the same way as the central retention to replace the amount of the previous grant attributable to mainstream schools. Specialist providers would need to buy into a traded service individually to replace the balance of the lost grant. Meeting the costs of providing the de-delegated services would equate to the rates per pupil for mainstream schools set out in Table 4. Details of the impact on individual school budgets/for each maintained school are summarised in Table 5.

Table 4: Proposed Maintained School De-delegation Rates April 2026 - March 2027

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Mainstream School rate per pupil	4.89	-	6.31

15. **Indicative De-delegation Amounts 2026 – 2027:** The financial impact of the de-delegated proposal for maintained schools is shown in the table below.

Table 5: Indicative Maintained School Amounts April 2026 – March 2027

Maintained Mainstream	NOR	Impact
Burton Church of England Primary School	266	£1,678
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School	427	£2,694
Highcliffe St Mark Primary School	609	£3,843
Mudeford Community Infants' School	175	£1,104
Mudeford Junior School	255	£1,609
Somerford Primary School	168	£1,060
St Edward's RC/C England School, Poole	898	£5,666
St Joseph's Catholic Primary	201	£1,268
St Katharine's Church of England Primary	436	£2,751
St Walburga's Catholic Primary School	419	£2,644
The Priory Church of England Primary	197	£1,243
Total		£25,562
Maintained Specialist*	Places	
Christchurch Learning Centre	48	£1,143
Linwood Special	473	£11,262
Winchelsea Special	254	£6,048
Total		£18,453

Proposed Contribution BCP		£44,015
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*In respect of special maintained schools and PRUs, De-delegation does not apply and therefore special schools and PRUs will need to agree the charge on an individual basis. Based on a per pupil place rate (same multiplier as the central retention) these amounts are shown in the table below as referred to as SLA amounts. Special Schools, PRUs will be contacted individually to agree this.

16. **Traded Services:** As in the current year, a number of services may be offered to maintained schools only, as provision centrally complements our statutory duties. This includes, for example, being within the council's group banking arrangements. It is also expected that all maintained schools will continue in the central insurance arrangements, although this funding is delegated to schools, until the end of the current contract period at which point

schools individually will need to consider whether to join instead the government scheme. Exceptionally, a school may not be able to join central schemes, it may depend on historic claims history, but in this event the council will support a separate procurement as the LA has a duty to ensure school arrangements are satisfactory. Insurance costs are charged to schools, largely according to pupil numbers.

17. Maintained schools also get access to EVOLVE, which is an online system for managing educational visits, off-site activities, and adventurous learning. EVOLVE streamlines the entire process – from planning and risk assessment to approval, active management and post-visit evaluation. It ensures that every trip meets legal and educational standards while reducing administration.

Consultation

18. **Summary of Consultation Outcome:** A consultation was undertaken with maintained schools between 5 and 16 January 2026 on proposals for the central retention of funding for statutory local authority duties and the de-delegation of funding for services delivered by the Council. A total of 8 responses were received from 14 schools (57%), all from mainstream schools.
19. **Central Retention:** Schools showed broad support for the majority of centrally retained services, including Education Services, Finance & Audit, Asset Management and Monitoring of Net Capacity Assessments. However, there was notable concern regarding HR services, with several schools unsure what is currently provided and some stating they use external HR providers. Schools also requested greater transparency, including a published service catalogue, clear service descriptions, named contacts, and annual reporting on activity and performance. Some questioned the cost of Net Capacity monitoring and raised issues about the relevance of certain services for Voluntary Aided schools.
20. **De-delegation:** Mainstream maintained schools expressed strong support for continuing de-delegation for Core School Improvement functions, with 7 supporting and 1 unsure, and no objections or alternative funding mechanisms suggested. The majority also agreed that using pupil/place numbers remains an appropriate allocation method.
21. The feedback indicates overall support for both central retention and de-delegation arrangements, alongside a clear need for improved clarity and visibility of the services funded through these mechanisms.

Financial Implications

22. The budgets for the schools and central school services blocks are set within the available DSG funding.

Legal Implications

23. The consultation undertaken and the recommendations are compliant with the School Funding Statutory Framework. School budgets must be finalised and notified to maintained schools by 27 February 2026 with the DfE timetable the same for academy budgets.

Human resources implications

24. Implications for staffing levels from mainstream funding changes rests within individual schools.

Equality Implications

25. The DfE undertook an equality impact assessment in determining how DSG funding is to be allocated and the structure of the mainstream funding formulae. The local budgets are aligned with the national scheme.

Summary of risk assessment

26. School finance regulations also allow local authorities to centrally retain funding from school budget shares. The proposal to charge for services from maintained school budgets is to enable the council to continue to undertake these functions/maintain a central education function in relation to maintained schools. Importantly, the council is obliged to carry out a number of statutory duties and if the proposed retention is not agreed, the Council would:
- Fail to discharge its duties and this would impact the effective operation of education support services in BCP
 - Find it difficult to set a balanced budget without making cuts to other vital services.

Recommendations for maintained schools only

27. **Central Retention:** The maintained schools members of the Schools Forum (primary, secondary, special, and pupil referral units (PRUs)) should agree the amount the local authority will retain as set out in paragraph 9. If the local authority and Schools Forum are unable to reach a consensus on the amount to be retained by the local authority, the matter can be referred to the Secretary of State.
28. **De-delegation:** Schools Forum Members for primary maintained schools and secondary maintained schools must decide separately for each phase whether the service should be provided centrally as set out in paragraphs 14-16. The decision will apply to all maintained mainstream schools in that phase. Members must decide on fixed contributions for these services so that funding can then be removed from the formula before school budgets are issued.

Background papers

List of Appendices

- **Appendix 1A** Consultation Paper: [Central Retention and De-delegation Consultation 2026_27 Maintained Schools Only](#)
- **Appendix 1B:** Consultation Responses Summary: [Maintained Schools Central Retention De-delegation Consultation Outcome 2026-27](#)
- **Appendix 2:** Services Provided by BCP Council – Central Budget Retentions
- **Appendix 3:** Conversion to Academy Status- Extract from DfE Guidance
- **Appendix 4:** The Schools Causing Concern guidance
- **Appendix 5:** Funding for Maintained School Education Services (Central Retention & De-delegation extracts from guidance)

Appendix 1A Consultation Paper: [Central Retention and De-delegation Consultation 2026_27 Maintained Schools Only](#)

Appendix 1B : Consultation Responses Summary: [Maintained Schools Central Retention De-delegation Consultation Outcome 2026-27](#)

Services Provided by BCP Council

Central Budget Retention

Education Services - including appointment of governors, education effectiveness, monitoring and moderation of primary assessments, government data returns, functions under the equality act, legal services advice, handling complaints, academy conversion support.

- **Governors:** Advice and support by e-mail, telephone or in person to all those involved in governance in schools to enable governors to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities
- Access to governor/committee member training – free commissioned training for all maintained governors and governing bodies including briefings on major changes in education policy and legislation.
- Free bespoke training for all maintained governors, individual governors, clerks and chairs
- The LA provides support for governing bodies to recruit headteachers and deputies and provides induction and mentoring for new and aspiring leaders in maintained schools.
- Support for school governance, training and recruitment of school governors and offer of performance management of school leadership and SLT is incorporated into this work.
- Support focused on outcomes to assist governing bodies play a proactive role in raising standards as part of an experienced team working collaboratively with professional colleagues in education effectiveness
- Provision of recruitment of LA governor and support for Careers Governors in secondary phase and SEND/AP
- **LA Lead Contact:** Kerry.Smith@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Education Effectiveness:

- At least termly visits from an Education Advisor to support education effectiveness, preparation for OFSTED inspection and effective use of pupil premium
- Intensive support for schools when appropriate, which can include brokering of bespoke support
- Head Teacher induction as required
- Head Teacher performance management
- Early Years training and events
- Advice and support with RE curriculum

Monitoring National Curriculum Assessments

- Monitoring and moderation of primary assessments
- QA of external writing moderation
- **LA Lead Contact:** Kerry.Smith@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Legal Services and Complaints Handling Advice

- Employment law, Safeguarding matters arising under inter-agency arrangements including compliance with statutory responsibilities towards children protection, Neighbour disputes, property law, contractual issues and disputes, parental rights and responsibilities, pupil records, exclusions and other disciplinary sanctions, special educational needs and disabilities administration of medicines, Equalities and human rights issues, procurement issues, debt recovery and information compliance.
- Academy Conversion Support
- **LA Lead Contact:** Please contact Kerry.Smith@bcpcouncil.gov.uk and/or tanya.smith@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Finance and Audit

- Production of budget schedules and payment of funding allocations and DfE grants, consolidation of annual accounts and quarterly returns.
- Advice, best value and procurement advice
- Scheme of financing maintained schools
- Internal audit including advice, guidance and assistance for control, risk and governance processes, specialists knowledge to assist in or lead fraud and irregularity investigations. Support governors and staff in the effective discharge of their responsibilities and advice in good practice approach
- Government Data Returns
- Banking and treasury activities, financial regulations adaptation for schools (for example delegation of some CFO approvals to school governors).
- **LA Lead Contact:** Steve.Wade3@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Human Resources

- Employee investigations,
- pension administration,
- pay scales and conditions of service,
- TU negotiations for local government employees
- **LA Lead Contact:** hrservice.delivery@bcpcouncil.gov.uk and recruitment@bcpcouncil.gov.uk and payroll.team@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Asset management

Services and functions provided by BCP in order to discharge the General landlord duties for all maintained schools (Schedule 2, 79a & b (section 542(2)) Education Act 1996; School Premises Regulations 2012) is commissioned by the Education and Skills Service working with BCP Property Services and the Corporate Health and Safety team. The central budget provides a contribution towards the costs of staffing, property professional fees, survey and membership costs. The actual staffing costs alone exceed the nominal central budget retained.

Arrangements for the management of the school estate include the following:

Health and Safety: Statutory H&S services for BCP maintained schools are provided by BCP Corporate Health and Safety team. A summary of the service provided is contained in Appendix 2b attached.

LA Lead Contact (Health and Safety): rebecca.lawry@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Hard Facilities Management comprising re-active and planned maintenance functions as follows:

- **Reactive maintenance management:** Access to emergency helpdesk/call out 24 hours/365 days per year, access to urgent works team.
- Access to urgent works/reactive maintenance fund in the capital programme above affordable levels as indicated by school's devolved formula capital allocations.
- Advice and guidance from BCP property professionals including surveyors and structural engineers
- Support/assistance from a Client Project Officer from Education and Skills Service
- **Planned and backlog maintenance – Implement a plan of cyclical maintenance management:** Access to Predictive/Planned Maintenance fund in the capital programme identifying cyclical maintenance works necessary for statutory compliance and planned lifecycle replacement to ensure properties remain safe, compliant and fully operational

- Advice and assurance to achieve statutory compliance for example lighting, heating, ventilation, asbestos, H&S requirements.
- Regular/updated surveys of School Buildings identifying works in priority order.
- **School Estate:** Preparation of returns to the DfE and submission of nominations for funding under School Rebuilding Programmes.
- Submission of Section 77 applications in respect of School Playing Fields as necessary.
- **LA Lead Contact:** tanya.smith@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory H&S services for BCP maintained schools provided by BCP Corporate Health and Safety team

- Comprehensive advice and support from Health & Safety team in response to H&S enquiries/concerns raised by school (by phone, email or visit to school where necessary)
- periodically undertake full or part audits of school facilities and/or safety management systems at a frequency based on risk
- Provide access to the BCP Council Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare policy
- Provide a model school-based health and safety policy, including, a statement of policy, roles and responsibilities and arrangement sections
- Provide assistance with the reporting of serious accidents / incidents involving employees and non-employees to the Health and Safety Executive under the RIDDOR regulations
- investigation of serious accidents and other incidents, in association with the school's management team (as appropriate)
- Where specific H&S training need has been identified and agreed between school and H&S team, facilitate/provide basic health and safety training for school staff (at a cost to be agreed if applicable). School will be notified of the cost prior to any training being delivered.
- Where necessary, signpost to or refer to relevant BCP teams on matters related to school buildings and premises safety or BCP Fire Safety team on fire safety matters
- Signpost to or contact other specialist advisors within BCP Council where required so that suitable assistance can be given
- Provide and inform schools of their membership of CLEAPSS, which provides H&S information and services regarding the safe delivery of science, design technology and art in schools as stated below:
 - To support governing bodies/schools in their responsibilities to provide effective safe working and learning conditions in the areas of Science, Design & Technology and Art for all staff, pupils and visitors to school.
 - Provide access information to the CLEAPSS website giving access to guidance, risk assessments, updates etc (log on details provided on purchase)
 - CLEAPSS telephone and email helpline (all year round not just term time) for expert subject advice
 - HAZcards and recipe cards containing advice on use of chemicals in lessons
 - Provide CLEAPSS Radiation Protection advice service (Secondary schools only)

All governing bodies/secondary schools have a statutory duty to ensure they have a Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA) affiliated to their school for the purposes of overseeing the safe storage and use of radiation sources. This falls within the Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999.

This service provides an alternative less costly way of complying with these regulations by acting as an identified link with the RPA.

The role of Radiation Protection Officer (RPO) is an approved method for schools to use as an 'official intermediary'. The RPO is in regular contact with the RPA and acts on his/her behalf and under their direction. The Corporate H&S team act as the RPO.

The service includes:

- annual membership to the CLEAPSS LA run RPA scheme
- a site visit every 2-3 years (dependant on historical risk assessment) to carry out monitoring of the school's implementation of the L93 CLEAPSS guidance booklet
- access via the RPO to a named RPA for both proactive and reactive expert advice

School responsibilities

To ensure that effective services can be provided, there is a responsibility for schools to:

- provide BCP Corporate Health and Safety team with a named contact
- seek early advice on complex health and safety issues
- comply with all relevant Health and Safety legislation
- provide access to the Governing Body as necessary
- access the CLEAPSS website where appropriate and use the resources within it.

Delivery of Service

The corporate Health & Safety team comprises Health and Safety professionals and Health and Safety / Regulatory Team Managers. Expertise of staff is maintained and developed through a programme of continuing professional development, other training and liaison with fellow professionals. The team have online access to up-to-date legislation and codes of practice.

Consequences if the proposed central retention was not approved

The proposal to charge for services from maintained school budgets is to enable the council to continue to undertake these functions/maintain a central education function in relation to maintained schools. This operates in much the same way as multi-academy trusts might top-slice budgets of individual academies to pay for central functions. Specifically, the school's budget share in most cases provides a contribution towards staffing costs. Importantly, the council is obliged to carry out a number of statutory duties, for example in relation to financial regulation and asset management and, in the event that the proposed retention is not agreed, the Council would:

- fail to discharge its duties and this would impact the effective operation of education support services in BCP;
- find it difficult to set a balanced budget without making cuts to other vital services

Conversion to Academy Status Extract from DfE Guidance

2026 to 2027 de-delegation arrangements for schools converting to academy status are as follows:

- conversion date on or before 1 April 2026 – no de-delegation
- conversion date between 2 April 2026 and 1 September 2026 – local authority retains any de-delegated funding until 1 September 2026
- conversion date between 2 September 2026 to 31 March 2027 – local authority retains any de-delegated funding until 31 March 2027

After the dates specified, the academy will receive the full formula allocation and the department will recoup this from the local authority.

The local authority should continue to provide the services to new academies where funding is de-delegated, if they are asked to do so. If the local authority is unable to provide the requested service, the department expects the local authority and the academy to come to an arrangement to pay the funding directly to the academy.

Exceptions to this would be in cases where contractual arrangement to pay services in advance have already been made, and the local authority does not have the ability to continue to provide this service.

Where there has been agreement that a school is entitled to receive an allocation from a de-delegated contingency fund, that agreement should be honoured if the school converts to an academy at any point in the year.

Where a school converts to an academy in the period 2 April 2026 to 1 September 2026, local authorities will have an opportunity to present an evidence-based case to request a recoupment adjustment for the period 2 September 2026 to 31 March 2027.

Local authorities should report any unspent de-delegated funding remaining at year-end to their Schools Forum.

Local authorities can carry funding forward to the following funding period as with any other centrally retained budget and can choose to use it specifically for de-delegated services.

LA Lead Contact: tanya.smith@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

The Schools Causing Concern guidance sets out expectations that councils should:

- Understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress.
- Work closely with the relevant Regional School Commissioner (RSC), diocese and other local partners to ensure schools receive the support they need to improve
- Where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RSC, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards.
- Encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement.
- Support other schools; and enable them to access the support they need to improve.
- **LA Lead Contact:** Kerry.Smith@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Funding for Maintained School Education Services (Central Retention)
Extract from DfE Guidance

1. Local authorities can fund some services relating to maintained schools only from maintained school budget shares, with the agreement of maintained school members of the schools forum.
2. The relevant maintained schools members of the schools forum (primary, secondary, special, and PRUs) should agree the amount the local authority will retain.
3. If the local authority and schools forum are unable to reach a consensus on the amount to be retained by the local authority, the matter can be referred to the Secretary of State.
4. Local authorities should set a single rate per 5 to 16-year-old pupil for all mainstream maintained schools, both primary and secondary. In the interests of simplicity, this should be deducted from basic entitlement funding.
5. The department will not allow adjustments to other factors, and the rate will not include early years or post-16 pupils, who are funded through different formulae.
6. Local authorities can choose to establish differential rates for special schools and PRUs if the cost of fulfilling the duty is substantially different for these schools. The rate will be expressed per place rather than per pupil for special schools and PRUs.
7. As with de-delegation, the amount to be held by the local authority will be determined after MFG has been applied. If a school converts to academy status, the department will recoup the amount retained for that school from the local authority's DSG for the remaining months of the financial year that the school is an academy. The academy will be reimbursed in its monthly general annual grant payment from the point of conversion.
8. Unlike for de-delegated services, there will be no phased transfer of funding following conversion so there will be immediate recoupment of this part of the budget. For example, if a school converts on 1 January 2027 (3 months prior to the end of the financial year), we will recoup three-twelfths of the retained amount relating to that school.
9. Local authorities can fund some administrative functions relating to maintained schools from the DSG, with the agreement of either the schools forum or the Secretary of State. For expenditure to be funded from the DSG, it must be defined as part of the schools budget. This definition is set out in the annually made school finance regulations.
10. As an alternative, local authorities may not wish to fund these administrative functions from the DSG, but to fund them from general funds.

De-delegated Services

Extract from DfE Guidance

1. De-delegated services are for maintained schools only. Funding for de-delegated services must be allocated through the local funding formula but can be passed back, or de-delegated, for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools with schools forum approval.
2. De-delegation does not apply to special schools, nursery schools, or PRUs. Where de-delegation has been agreed for maintained primary and secondary schools, our presumption is that the local authority will offer the service on a buyback basis to those schools and academies in their area which are not covered by the de-delegation.
3. In the case of special schools and PRUs, the funding to buy such services will be included in any top-up payments. Any decisions made to de-delegate in 2025 to 2026 related to that year only, new decisions will be required for any service to be de-delegated in 2026 to 2027.
4. Schools forum members for primary maintained schools and secondary maintained schools must as set out in The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 decide separately for each phase whether the service should be provided centrally; the decision will apply to all maintained mainstream schools in that phase.
5. They must decide on fixed contributions for these services so that funding can then be removed from the formula before school budgets are issued. There may be different decisions for each phase. The services which may be de-delegated are:
 - contingencies (including schools in financial difficulties and deficits of closing schools)
 - behaviour support services
 - support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners
 - free school meals eligibility
 - insurance
 - RPA
 - museum and library services
 - staff costs supply cover (for example, long-term sickness, maternity, trade union and public duties)
 - licences and subscriptions; except for the following, which are paid for by DfE:
 - Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI)
 - Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA). Education Recording Agency (ERA)
 - Filmbank Distributors Ltd. (for the PVSL), Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS)
 - Motion Picture Licensing Company (MPLC)
 - Newspaper Licensing Authority (NLA), Performing Rights Society (PRS)
 - Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL), Printed Music Licensing Ltd (PMLL)
6. Local authorities should make a clear statement of how the funding is being taken out of the formula for each de-delegated service. For example:
 - primary insurance £20 per pupil
 - secondary behaviour support services £30 per FSM pupil
7. There should be a clear statement of how contingencies and other resources will be allocated. Academies will continue to receive a share of funding for these services in their delegated budget.
8. Where de-delegation is agreed, middle schools will potentially be subject to 2 different decisions and the unit value for de-delegation can be different for primary and secondary age pupils. For example, if the primary sector agreed to de-delegate a service but the secondary sector did not, middle schools in the local authority would have their formula allocation reduced only for their primary pupils at the agreed primary school rate.

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SCHOOLS FORUM



Subject	Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools 2026-27
Meeting Date	23 January 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive Summary	The BCP Scheme has been updated to reflect the latest statutory guidance and proposed local financial arrangements. A short consultation has been undertaken with maintained schools.
Recommendations	The Scheme of Financing Maintained Schools is to be agreed by maintained school representatives.
Reasons for Recommendations	Local authorities are required to publish schemes for financing schools, setting out the financial relationship between them and the schools they maintain.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Children, Young People, Education and Skills
Corporate Directors	Cathi Hadley, Director of Children's Services
Report Author	Steve Wade, Management Accountant for Children's Services steve.wade3@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For information and decision

Background

1. The local authority is required to maintain and publish a scheme for financing maintained schools, setting out the financial relationship with the maintained schools in the authority's area. Amendments to the Scheme may be proposed by the authority after consultation with all maintained schools and is to be agreed by maintained school members of the Schools Forum. The Secretary of State may also direct changes to all authorities' schemes for financing schools.

Summary of Changes

2. Various minor amendments and updates have been made to reflect current practice without materially changing the purpose or effect of the scheme. Some references to obsolete documents and legislation have been removed.
3. The freedom of schools to choose their own insurance provider has been clarified with reference to the Secretary of States Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA) as mentioned in the DfE Scheme.

4. Clarity has been added to the procurement section of the scheme regarding the provision which has the effect of disapplying from schools any provision of LA procurement standing orders which would require them to seek local authority officer countersignature for any contracts for goods or services for a value below £60,000 in any one year.

Consultation with Maintained Schools

5. A consultation with maintained schools was undertaken between 22 January and 3 February on the proposed updates to the Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools.
6. Two responses were received, neither raised any objections nor proposed any amendments. One response asked for clarification on some of the scheme provisions and a request was made for an earlier transfer of the budget share payment when the 28th falls on the weekend.
7. Following the feedback the following amendment is proposed for payment to be made on the 28th of the month or the penultimate working day prior to this. The previous version stated last working day prior to this.

Financial Implications

8. The financial implications for maintained schools are set out in detail in the Scheme.

Legal Implications

9. The proposed scheme is compliant with the latest statutory guidance issued by the DfE
10. Consultation has taken place with all maintained schools as required by the School Funding Statutory Framework

Background Papers

11. [Draft Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools](#)

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Schools Forum

Forward Plan

16 February 2026

- Early Years Single Funding Formula
- Maintained School Services and Central retention
- Update of the Scheme for Financing Schools
- Forward Plan

22 June 2026

- DSG Outturn 2025-26
- High Needs Block Update
- Forward Plan

16 September 2026

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