

Minutes - Sheffield Education Funding Forum

Extraordinary Meeting, 2.30-3.00pm, 16 January 2025, Online
Chair: Keith Crawshaw

Schools Forum Members:

Primary Heads Representatives

- Nigel Brooke-Smith (Greystones)
- Helen Kenyon (Pipworth)
- Chris Holder (Lowfield)

Primary Governors

- Alison Warner (Grenoside)

Secondary Head

- Linda Gooden (King Edward VII)

Non-school Members

- Stephen Betts, Learn Sheffield
- Andy Krabbendam, Faith Sector (Clifford All Saints)
- Fiona Hawksley/Lisa Smith, Trade Unions
- Karen Simpkin, Early Years providers (Sunflower Children's Centre)
- Sarah Le-Good/James Smythe, 16-19 Sector (Sheffield College)

Academies

- Keith Crawshaw (Sheffield South East Trust)
- Jim Dugmore (Peak Edge Academy Trust)
- Neil Miley (Mercia Learning Trust)
- Morag Somerville (Steel City Schools Partnership)
- Nevine Towers (Diocese of Sheffield Academy Trust)

Special Academies

- Joel Hardwick (Nexus Multi-academy Trust)

Special Schools

- Aileen Hosty/Laura Rzepinski (Bents Green)
- 1 x vacant seat

PRU

- Alan Richards (Sheffield Inclusion Centre)

Apologies: Stephen Betts, Jim Dugmore, Joel Hardwick, Andy Krabbendam, Neil Miley, Alan Richards, Karen Simpkin, James Smythe

Also in attendance: Amanda Murray, EY, Education and Skills (notes); Mark Sheikh, Head of Service, Resourcing and Business Planning

Presenters: Jacky Beatson, Resourcing Manager

Observers: Charlotte Chance, Mercia Learning Trust; Rafia Hussain, NEU

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to this extraordinary meeting of the Forum and explained that it had been convened as a result of late guidance being received regarding 2025/26 school budgets from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

2. Mainstream School Budget Shares 2025/26

Mark Sheikh summarised key points from the presentation shared prior to the meeting:

- The delays in the guidance being released are due to the change in administration.
- The principles used to produce the budgets and models for the December Education Funding Forum were based on assumptions.
- Full guidance has now been released and includes minimum and maximum National Funding Formula (NFF) values that local authorities must adopt.
- An uplift in minimum values means additional investment is required across secondary and primary sectors through social deprivation factors compared to our previous model.
- The model agreed at the December Forum is therefore no longer affordable.
- Column 3 in the table on slide 4 shows the absolute NFF values which we have continued to align with as closely as possible.
- Forum members are reminded that the NFF is about distributing the same amount of funding (£488m) in different ways.
- Slide 5 shows a £740k variance overall and this will need to be funded from part of the £2.4m previously agreed, at the December Forum, to be transferred to the High Needs Block.

Jacky Beatson added:

- Slide 5 shows the distribution of funding comparing our proposed December model to the revised model – the Social Deprivation Free School Meals factor now requires a further £2m investment.
- For the revised model to be affordable, and to avoid deviating from our existing alignment with the NFF:
 - We can no longer afford the proposed additional increase of £20 per pupil for primary Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). This can only be achieved by deviating from absolute NFF values and would cost approximately £13 per pupil for all schools.
 - We cannot afford to pay the additional £5k Lump Sum to primary schools as originally planned. However, there may be a reduced amount that is affordable, and which is yet to be determined.
 - To balance the overall allocation available, we have set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) at -0.5% and we have introduced a cap on gains.
- Slide 7 shows the impact on the different types of schools, depending on their levels of social deprivation, compared to the original model. Secondaries will see a greater increase in funding as all secondaries benefit from the higher minimum level of funding used for the Free School Meal Ever6 social deprivation factor.

Forum members agreed to the recommendations as set out on slide 7 for the purposes of preparing the 2025/26 individual school budgets:

- Continue with our principles of alignment with NFF absolute values.
- Increase investment through social deprivation.
- Continue to support smaller primary schools with reduced additional Lump Sum funding as affordable.

Date of next meeting: 26 February 2025, 3.00-5.00pm, Learn Sheffield