

A consultation on school funding reform: Proposals for a fairer system

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is:

11 October 2011

Your comments must reach us by that date.

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education e-consultation website (<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Name

Organisation (if applicable) NALDIC

Address: Building L46
University of Reading
London Road,
Reading
RG1 5AQ

If you have an enquiry related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact either

Ian McVicar on: Telephone: 020 7340 7980 e-mail: ian.mcvicar@education.gsi.gov.uk
or

Juliet Yates on: Telephone: 020 7340 8313 e-mail: juliet.yates@education.gsi.gov.uk,

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Consultation Unit by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk, by Fax: 01928 794 311, or by telephone: 0870 000 2288.

Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained School	<input type="checkbox"/> Academy	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools Forum	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority Group
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Association	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Trade Union / Professional Body	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Years Setting
<input type="checkbox"/> Governor Association	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

If 'Other' Please Specify:

NALDIC is the national subject association for EAL

Chapter 1 - The National Funding System

In paragraphs 1.8 to 1.14 we discuss two ways we are considering using to calculate the schools block:

- a) A formula based on the schools within the area and the pupils within those schools (“School-level”);
- b) A formula based solely on the pupils within the area (“local authority-level”).

Question 1: Would you prefer the formula to be based on

a) a notional budget for every school; or

b) the pupils in each local authority area?

<input type="checkbox"/> School level	<input type="checkbox"/> x LA level	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

We believe that an LA level formula based on the pupils in the area is the fairest option. This will enable the local authority and Schools Forum to ensure resources are driven towards addressing school specific and local issues through the local formula. We believe that issuing notional budgets to schools would be a barrier to ensuring that the needs of all young people in an area are well supported.

Chapter 2 - The Schools Block - system

Local flexibility

In paragraphs 2.6 to 2.9 we discuss local funding formulae and propose reducing the number of formula factors which local authorities can apply. We suggest that the local formula factors could cover:

- a. Basic entitlement per pupil (currently Age-Weighted Pupil Units)
- b. Funding for additional educational needs (e.g. deprivation, SEN)
- c. Rates
- d. Exceptional site factors (e.g. split site, PFI and rent)
- e. Lump sums for schools

Question 2: Do you agree that these are the right formula factors to retain at a local level?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Some	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

We believe that all these formula factors should be allowed at local level. In particular we request that it is made clear that funding for additional needs includes not only deprivation, SEN and EAL but also underachieving ethnic minority groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. We would like this to be made specific in the wording. It is essential that the desire for a simple funding system does not further reduce funding for pupils with additional educational needs not captured by a free school meal measure. A fairer funding system should ensure that pupil needs are equitably and transparently funded as well as ensuring that regional differences in the costs of provision are properly recognised.

Question 3: What other factors, if any, should be able to be used at local level or could any of these factors be removed?

Comments:

Mobility (beyond armed forces)

Ethnicity (if not clarified within the above 'additional educational needs' factor)

Paragraphs. 2.12 to 2.14 discuss primary/secondary ratios:

Question 4: Do you think that setting a range of allowable primary / secondary ratios around the national average is the right approach to ensure that there is consistency across the country?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Arrangements for Academies

Paragraphs 2.17 to 2.22 discuss options for the future of calculating Academies' budgets. Option (i) suggests that local authorities could calculate budgets for all schools in the area and then tell the EFA how much Academies should be paid; and Option (ii) that the EFA could calculate Academies' budgets using a pro-forma provided by local authorities setting out their formula factors.

Question 5: Do you think we should implement option (i) or (ii) when calculating budgets for Academies?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (i)	<input type="checkbox"/> (ii)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

The advantages of the local authority calculating budgets for all schools in the area are:

- Open and transparent so supports accountability
- Supports partnerships and collaboration in the interests of all children and young people

Should the EFA calculate Academy budgets, these should be published to ensure proper transparency and accountability

Ensuring accountability and fairness

Paragraphs 2.23 to 2.26 discuss options to improve the working of Schools Forums - whether the main groups on the Forum should all separately have to approve a proposed formula and whether the Forum should have more decision making powers.

Question 6: Do you think these options would help to achieve greater representation and stronger accountability at a local level?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

The role of Schools Forum is intended to be strategic and to ensure the best use of

resources for the benefit of all pupils regardless of phase or school type. It would be unhelpful to divide the Schools Forum by school type and then give different groups the power to veto decisions approved by the majority.

Paragraphs 2.27 to 2.31 discuss functions the EFA could provide to ensure scrutiny and challenge at a national level. They are (i) checking compliance and/or (ii) acting as a review body.

Question 7: Do you think we should implement option (i), (ii), both or neither?

(i) (ii) Both x Neither Not Sure

Comments:

We are unclear how these options tie in with the current government championing of localism in both decision making and accountability.

Arrangements for Free Schools

Paragraphs 2.33 to 2.35 discuss arrangements for the funding of Free Schools:

Question 8: If we introduce the new system in this spending review, do you think that Free Schools should (i) remain on the Free School methodology for 2013-14 and 2014-15 or (ii) move straight away to the overall funding system?

(i) x (ii) Not Sure

Comments:

We believe all providers of state funded education should be treated equally and so Free Schools should move immediately to the overall funding system

Chapter 3 - The Schools Block – formula content

In paragraphs 3.3 to 3.6 we discuss formula content and propose that the new formula could consist of:

- A basic per-pupil entitlement
- Additional funding for deprived pupils
- Protection for small schools
- An Area Cost Adjustment (ACA)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Question 9: Are these the right factors to include in a fair funding formula at a national level?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Some	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

It is essential that EAL is included as a formula factor and that this applies to all bilingual pupils from their entry to the English school system, not only those who are recently arrived from overseas.

Deprivation

Paragraphs 3.14 to 3.17 discuss possible indicators we could use in a national formula for reflecting deprivation.

Question 10: Do you agree that we should use Ever FSM to allocate deprivation funding in the national formula? Should this be Ever 3 or Ever 6?

<input type="checkbox"/> Ever 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ever 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

We remain concerned that FSM does not fully capture deprivation and that an over-reliance on a single measure ignores significant aspects of disadvantage.

We think that a broader measure of disadvantage than FSM needs to be used in order to take into account the full range of factors that impact on educational attainment. We believe the government should recognise that disadvantage in the education system arises from more than one cause. We acknowledge that there are commonalities in the educational experiences and needs of deprived pupils, regardless of ethnicity, language or culture, there are also commonalities in the experiences and needs of

black and ethnic minority pupils, regardless of deprivation or language, and of bilingual learners for whom English is an additional language, regardless of deprivation or ethnicity. We are concerned that an exclusive focus on deprivation will lead to the neglect of other issues impacting on the school experience of bilingual and minoritized students.

We therefore would like to see the notion of deprived pupils be replaced by the notion of disadvantaged pupils. We believe these factors include pupils learning EAL, pupils from underachieving ethnic minority backgrounds included Gypsy, Roma Travellers; pupils eligible for free school meals; and pupils who are looked after.

Small school protection

Paragraphs 3.19 to 3.28 discusses funding protection for small schools, suggesting that a £95,000 lump sum would be sufficient to provide protection, that it should be applicable to primary schools only and should adopt Middle Super Output Areas to derive the sparsity factor. If a local authority formula is used a choice between a lump sum payment and a sparsity measure is offered and there is also discussion on whether the threshold for eligibility should be narrowed so that sparsity funding is focused on the most sparsely populated areas.

Question 11: If we have a school-level formula, do you agree that £95,000 is an appropriate amount for a primary school lump sum?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 12: Do you agree that the lump sum should be limited to schools with Year 6 as the highest year-group?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 13: If we have a local authority-level formula, should we use a primary school lump sum or the sparsity measure?

Primary
School
lump sum

Sparsity
Measure

Neither

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 14: If we have a sparsity measure, do you think we should narrow the sparsity threshold as described above?

Yes

No

x Not Sure

Comments:

Area Cost Adjustments

Paragraphs 3.29 to 3.33 (and annex D) discuss approaches to calculating the area cost adjustment.

Question 15: Which option should we use to calculate the Area Cost Adjustment: the current GLM approach or the combined approach?

GLM Approach

Combined Approach

Other

Not Sure

Comments:

English as an Additional Language and Underperforming Ethnic Groups

Paragraphs 3.34 to 3.38 considers what further factors of underachievement there might be for school age pupils and proposes the inclusion of an EAL factor in a national formula.

Question 16: Do you agree that we should use an EAL factor in the national formula?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

We believe it is essential that any national formula includes an EAL factor. As the consultation notes, it is essential that the language learning needs of EAL children and young people are met as early and as fully as possible.

Whilst we recognise the validity of the analysis that the DfE has carried out in relation to FSM, ethnicity and EAL nationally, we also feel that this should be further explored. In our modelling in local areas we have found that whilst there is a strong correlation between achievement and eligibility for FSM for 'underachieving' ethnicities, this often only holds true for underachieving ethnic minority groups who are **not bilingual**. In contrast, eligibility for free school meals does not always act as an indicator for bilingual young people who are from underachieving ethnic minority groups.

Question 17: Do you agree that this should cover the first few years only? How many years would be appropriate?

Yes

x No

Not Sure

Comments:

Our preference is not for a funding system which is tied to the length of time a pupil has been in the English school system but for a national system related to EAL fluency levels. We recognise that this is unlikely to be achieved in the short term and therefore propose that funding is in place for 5-7 years. We would like to draw the department's attention to the British research carried out on cohorts of bilingual children in Lambeth over four years which not only confirms that achieving academic language fluency in schools takes between 5 and 7 years, but also that the stage of pupils' language fluency strongly correlates to their achievement at the end of KS4.

Research indicates that it takes between 5 and 7 years for bilingual pupils to reach the academic language fluency levels of their peers. It needs to be made clear that this 5-7 years estimate is based on the learning of English by pupils who have been provided with appropriate language **and** curriculum support. Estimations of fully providing such language learning and curriculum support indicate that costs can be as high as £8,640 per annum per pupil although clearly the median cost is likely to be lower than this.

We would therefore argue that not only is it essential that an EAL factor is included in the national formula, it is also essential that this is available for 5-7 years from the entry of the pupil to school in order to fully match the evidence based research findings relating to additional language learning. It needs to be made clear that this 5-7 years qualification needs to begin when the child or young person enters the school system. For the majority of EAL learners in who are British born, this will be from **their entry into Reception to the end of Year 6**. The inclusion of this factor will additionally support the recommendations of the Tickell report and the subsequent Early Years Foundation Stage consultation that '*in reception class, children with English as an additional language should receive the necessary support*'.

The EAL factor will certainly need to be included for secondary aged EAL learners who have not benefited from education within the English schools system from the Reception year onwards. Indeed we would urge the government to consider whether such a factor needs to be set at a higher rate, given the acknowledged challenges that face later-entry bilingual students in accessing the curriculum and learning English within the context of a secondary setting.

Transitional Arrangements

Paragraphs 3.39 to 3.41 discuss transitional arrangements to minimise turbulence.

Question 18: Do you think we should:

(a) Continue with a maximum decrease of -1.5% per pupil each year and accept that this will mean very slow progress towards full system reform; or

(b) Continue with a -1.5% per pupil floor in 2013-14 but lower it thereafter so that we can make faster progress?

(a)

(b)

Neither

Not Sure

Comments:

Chapter 4 - Central services and defining responsibilities

Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.7 discuss the development of a funding model, having first defined the respective responsibilities of maintained schools, Academies and local authorities. The model would clarify what elements of funding would be delegated to schools or centrally retained for maintained schools, if there is local discretion.

Question 19: Do you agree that some of these services could be retained centrally if there is local agreement by maintained schools?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Flexibility to manage services centrally is a key feature of the ability to respond to local needs. It is essential that support for Ethnic Minority and Underachieving pupils is retained within Block 1B.

Our recent surveys of the position of Ethnic Minority Achievement Services indicates that there was a lack of knowledge of the amendments to school funding regulations allowing these services to be retained centrally and that this was a crucial factor in some local authorities abolishing services which our survey notes has led to poorer provision for Black and bilingual learners. We believe it is essential to ensure that these services can continue to be retained centrally.

Paragraphs 4.8 to 4.13 set out details of the funding blocks which make up the funding model and their functions. Funding blocks for schools, High Needs Pupils, early years, central services and formula grant are proposed.

Question 20: Do you agree that the split of functions between the blocks is correct? If not, what changes should be made?

<input type="checkbox"/> Completely Correct	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Broadly, but some changes required	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Chapter 5 - Future arrangements for the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG)

Paragraphs 5.1 to 5.9 discuss the future arrangements for the calculation of LACSEG.

Question 21: Do you think the funding for local authority LACSEG should be moved to a national formula basis rather than using individual LA section 251 returns?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 22: Do you think the distribution mechanism should be changed to one that more accurately reflects the actual pattern of where Academies are located?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Chapter 6 - Children and Young People requiring high levels of support

Principles

Paragraph. 6.7 sets out the high level principles behind the proposals for funding children and young people with high levels of need.

Question 23: Is this the right set of principles for funding children and young people with high needs?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

This is not our area of expertise so we will not comment on this section. However we would like it noted that a proportion of pupils with SEN/LDD will also be learning an additional language for which tailored provision will be required. We would like this to be recognised.

A Base Level of Funding for High Needs SEN

Paragraphs 6.11 to 6.18 discuss proposals to set a base level of funding to reflect high needs SEN.

Question 24: Would it be appropriate to provide a base level of funding per pupil or place to all specialist SEN and LD/D settings, with individualised top up above that?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 25: Is £10,000 an appropriate level for this funding?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No – too high	<input type="checkbox"/> No – too low	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Applying this approach to post-16

Paragraphs 6.19 to 6.21 discuss proposals for funding high needs pupils to post -16 pupils.

Question 26: Is the idea of a base rate of funding helpful in the post-16 context?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Question 27: Should local authorities be directly responsible for funding high level costs over £10,000 for young people in post-16 provision in line with their commissioning responsibilities?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 28: Do the proposed funding arrangements create risks to any parts of the post-16 sector?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Funding by Places or Pupil Numbers

Paras 6.22 to 6.26 discuss whether institutions providing for high needs children and young people should be funded on the basis of planned places or pupil numbers. It also sets out four options for doing so.

Question 29: Should institutions providing for high needs children and young people be funded on the basis of places or pupil numbers?

Places

Pupil Numbers

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 30: Are any of options (a)-(d) desirable?

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

None

Not
Sure

Comments:

Funding Special and AP Academies and Free Schools

Paragraphs 6.27 to 6.39 discuss how funding for special and AP Academies and Free Schools should be managed in the short term and, in the longer term, whether funding should be routed through the Education Funding Agency (EFA) or the commissioner.

Question 31: For the longer term, should we fund Special and AP Academies and Free Schools:

- a) with all funding coming direct from the commissioner?
- b) with all funding coming through the EFA and recouped from the commissioner?
- c) through a combination of basic funding from the EFA and top-up funding for individual pupils direct from the commissioner?

(a)

(b)

(c)

Neither

Not
Sure

Comments:

Question 32: If we go for the combination funding approach, should we pass all funding through the EFA for a limited period while the school is establishing itself before moving to this approach?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Constructing the High Needs Block for local authorities

Paragraphs 6.40 to 6.47 propose a new formula for determining the High Needs Block building on the research carried out for the Department by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2009.

Question 33: Given there is no absolute method of determining which pupils have high needs, and given local variation in policy and recording, is this approach to determining proxy variables acceptable?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 34: Do you agree that deprivation is linked more to AP rather than the wider SEN needs?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Paragraphs 6.48 to 6.49 suggest the need for substantial transitional arrangements in moving to a new formula as the formula will fail to reflect the spend of local authorities on high need pupils.

Question 35: Do you agree that in the short term we should base allocations to local authorities for the high needs block largely on historic spend?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Post-16

Paragraph 6.50 proposes aligning pre- and post-16 funding for high needs pupils over time.

Question 36: Do you agree that post-16 funding should also become part of the local authority's high needs block over time, but that there might be a particular need for transitional arrangements?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 37: What data should ideally underpin the funding allocations both initially and for a potential high needs block arrangement?

Comments:

Issues Specific to Alternative Provision

Paragraphs 6.51 to 6.56 highlight issues specific to AP provision but suggest that AP should continue to be treated alongside SEN for funding purposes.

NB: Questions 38 is displayed together with question 39 in the document.

Question 38: Should AP continue to be treated alongside high needs SEN for funding purposes?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Question 39: What differences between them need to be taken into account?

Comments:

Early Years

Paragraphs 7.5 to 7.8 set out current arrangements for early years funding and discuss whether the Early Years Single Funding Formula could be made simpler:

Question 40: Do you agree we should aim for a simpler EYSFF? If so, how?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Paragraphs 7.9 to 7.11 sets out options for improving the focus on tackling disadvantage and improving consistency in the support offered to disadvantaged children.

Question 41: How could we refine the EYSFF so that it better supports disadvantaged children?

Comments:

As noted earlier in relation to schools we think that disadvantage is not only about FSM/IDACI and that we need to take into account the full range of factors that impact on learning.

We believe the government should recognise that disadvantage in the education system arises from more than one cause and begins early. We acknowledge that there are commonalities in the educational experiences and needs of disadvantaged children regardless of ethnicity, language or culture. There are also commonalities in the experiences and needs of black and ethnic minority children regardless of deprivation or language, and of bilingual learners for whom English is an additional language, regardless of deprivation or ethnicity. We are concerned that an exclusive focus on socio-economics will lead to the neglect of other issues impacting on the experience of bilingual and minoritized children.

We therefore would like to see a widening of the definition of disadvantaged children and an investigation of which area factors might reflect this.

We are particularly keen that the outcomes of this funding review tie in with the recommendations of the Tickell Review into the EYFS. She argued that it is essential that language support and development is in place in the EYFS. In order for this to happen, language will need to be recognised within the funding formula.

Local investigations have shown that IDACI and similar do not necessarily reflect linguistic patterns in neighbourhoods and so will need further investigation.

Bringing more consistency to free early education funding

Paragraphs 7.12 to 7.15 consider two options for continuing to fund local authorities for free early education: on the basis of their current spend or on the basis of a formula.

Question 42: Do you agree we should allocate funding to local authorities on the basis of a formula?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

As above

Paragraphs 7.16 to 7.18 discuss how a formula to local authorities for funding early years would operate.

Question 43: Do you agree a formula should be introduced based largely on the same factors as the schools formula?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

As we have noted, it is essential that any formula encompasses not only income deprivation but other factors, most notably EAL.

Bringing greater transparency to free early education funding

Paragraphs 7.19 to 7.20 discuss what has been done so far to improve transparency and our plans for the future.

Question 44: We would be grateful for views on whether anything else can be done to improve transparency.

Comments:

Pupil Premium

Paragraphs 8.1 to 8.8 set out two options for extending the coverage of the pupil premium to include pupils previously eligible for Free School Meals: an 'ever 3' measure or an 'ever 6' measure which extend cover to those eligible for FSM at some point in the last three or six years.

Question 45: What is your preferred option for determining eligibility for the Pupil Premium from 2012-13? Should it be based on the Ever 3 or Ever 6 measure?

Ever 3

Ever 6

Neither

x Not Sure

Comments:

As noted in previous responses, we believe that the Pupil Premium should be extended and include: pupils learning EAL, pupils from underachieving ethnic minority backgrounds included Gypsy, Roma Travellers; pupils eligible for free school meals; and pupils who are looked after.

Paragraphs 8.9 to 8.10 seek views on other issues for calculating the pupil premium, such as whether to reflect differences in funding already in the system.

Question 46: What is your preferred approach for calculating the Pupil Premium?

Comments:

Timing for implementation

Paragraphs 9.1 to 9.4 consider the issue of when to begin the process of moving to a new funding formula.

Question 47: Do you think we should implement the proposed reforms in 2013-14 or during the next spending period?

<input type="checkbox"/> x 2013-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Next Spending Period	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Question 48: Have you any further comments?

Comments:



Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 738060 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 11 October 2011

Send by e-mail to: schoolfunding.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk

Send by post to:

Consultation Unit
Area 1C
Castle View House
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GJ