

## School Funding

On 17 December 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) made a school funding announcement about 2021/22 National Funding Formula (NFF) funding and short-term coronavirus costs funding.

### 2021/22 NFF funding

The DfE published its final allocations of 2021/22 NFF funding to local authorities. These allocations may differ from the provisional allocations which were published in July this year. The DfE funding tables are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2021-to-2022>.

The DfE has also updated its operational guide into 2021/11 NFF funding, making it clear that local authorities can continue to implement their local funding formula (the soft NFF), but the Government intends to move to the hard NFF, when all schools receive an allocation determined by the NFF, in the future:

*'In 2021 to 2022, as in previous years, each local authority will continue to set a local schools' funding formula, in consultation with local schools. The Government will put forward plans to move to a 'hard' NFF in the future, which will determine school funding allocations directly, rather than local funding formulae.'*

For this reason, if a local authority continues to use a local funding formula as an alternative to the NFF, the school level allocations in the DfE funding tables are for notional purposes only and Negotiating Secretaries should contact their local authority direct for details of the funding which each school will receive.

### De-delegation

De-delegated services, including de-delegated trade union facility time, will be able to continue through to 31 March 2022 and may continue until a later date, depending on the Government's proposals for a 'hard' NFF. The NASUWT will issue an update on these when they are published.

### Teachers' pay and pension grants

The teachers' pay and pension grants, which have previously been paid by the DfE to individual schools, are wrapped up in NFF core funding for 2021/22. The NASUWT opposed this change in the allocation of the grants, as it would inevitably lead to some schools claiming that funding for increased 2019-23 pension costs, in particular, is disappearing. This is not the case, as schools will still receive funding for the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) employer contribution increase from 2019-23 through their core school funding. They will also continue to receive funding which was previously in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 teachers' pay grants in their core funding.

### Movement between blocks

The continuation of the soft NFF permits local authorities to move funding between blocks. The DfE has published guide on block movement at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-16-schools-funding-local-authority-guidance-for-2021-to-2022>, together with pro-formas so that local authorities can request block movement.

The most common form of block movement is from the schools block to the high needs block. This is a crucial flexibility because without movement of funding from the schools block to the high needs block since the NFF was introduced, high needs provision in some local authorities would have collapsed. Despite the Government's increase in high needs funding over the last two years, high needs is still woefully underfunded in some local authorities and increases in high needs funding in some authorities have been used to plug historic Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficits.

If a local authority wishes to move funds from one block to another in 2021/22, the schools forum would need to be asked to make a decision about this and all maintained schools and academies would need to be consulted. The NASUWT would also regard it as vital that NASUWT Negotiating Secretaries are consulted, given that the continuation of high needs provision and the jobs of teachers may be at stake.

### **Short-term coronavirus costs**

The NASUWT is campaigning for full funding by the Government of schools' additional coronavirus costs, incurred from March 2020 onwards. Although there was some funding of additional coronavirus costs from March through to July 2020, the Government refused to fund any additional costs from September onwards. The Government has now agreed to fund some coronavirus costs for November and December 2020 – funding which the NASUWT has condemned as too little, too late and too short term. Additional details of this funding are available at: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/health-safety/coronavirus-guidance/full-reopening-of-schools/full-reopening-of-schools-england.html>.

The DfE has now published information about how schools can claim for some coronavirus costs for November and December 2020 at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-workforce-fund-for-schools>. Information about how Sixth Form Colleges and the Further Education (FE) sector can claim are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-workforce-fund-for-colleges>.

The only costs which schools can claim for is permanent staff absences. Schools and academy trusts are expected to use their reserves to pay for these costs until the reserves reduce to 4%.

### **Mainstream schools**

Mainstream schools need to have experienced:

- a total teacher and leader absence rate at or above 20% on a given day;

**OR**

- a lower total teacher and leader absence rate of 10% or above, but have been experiencing this for 15 or more consecutive school days.

Mainstream schools can only claim for support staff absences if the member of support staff has a direct role in keeping the school open for one or more pupils; for example, if a teaching assistant provides support in accordance with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

### **Special and alternative provision (AP) settings**

In the case of special and AP settings, the staff absence thresholds are different, but schools can claim for support staff and teacher absences in the same way:

Special and AP settings need to have experienced:

- a total teacher and leader absence rate at or above 15% on a given day;

OR

- a lower total teacher and leader absence rate of 10% or above, but have been experiencing this for 15 or more consecutive school days.

or in the case of support staff:

- a total support staff absence rate (teaching assistants and other support staff) at or above 15% on a given day;

OR

- a lower total support staff absence rate of 10% or above, but have been experiencing this for 15 or more consecutive school days.

Schools will be expected to provide some evidence of the expenditure for which they are claiming.

These claimable costs represent a tiny fraction of the additional costs which schools have incurred in order to manage the impact of the coronavirus, and the NASUWT has made it clear to the Government that its funding for schools' coronavirus costs is completely inadequate.

The NASUWT continues to encourage NASUWT activists to engage with MPs and local authority elected members to make clear the inadequacy of school funding during the coronavirus pandemic. NASUWT school funding briefing and campaigning materials are available at: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/health-safety/coronavirus-guidance/full-reopening-of-schools/full-reopening-of-schools-england/school-funding-briefing-for-activists.html>.



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