



**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**11th December 2025**

**Report sponsor:** Sharon Buckby, Service Director – Learning Skills and Inclusion,  
**Report author:** Janice Hadfield, Head of Finance

**ITEM**

**Dedicated Schools Grant 2026-27 – Proposal for Items for Re-Pooling**

**SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Funding within the Schools Block of the Dedicated School Grant is ring-fenced for schools however where **maintained** schools agree that a service should be provided centrally, they can pool those resources, if maintained schools in a phase collectively agree, they can be provided centrally by returning funding to the local authority. The final delegated budget available to each school would then exclude these amounts.
- 1.2 This report makes recommendations to Schools Forum from the perspective of the Local Authority and the Strategic Director of People Services in the context of delivering Children's Services in Derby. It should also be noted that the funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant (detailed within this report) forms part of a total service funding stream alongside funding from the local authority resources.
- 1.3 Schools Forum is asked to consider the recommendations and the maintained representatives on the Forum will vote on the delegation levels to inform schools budgets for 2026-27. If re-pooling was not successful, the Local Authority would have to consider operating alternative models, such as a sold service model or cease the support. Sold service models will only be provided where there are no costs to the Local Authority. This makes the future sustainability of the service subject to take-up.

De-delegation only applies to mainstream primary and secondary schools. Academies, early years, special and pupil referral units will take an individual decision outside of Forum although it should be noted that the services contained in this report are reliant on a whole sector support in order that they are viable and sustainable.

Where funding is delegated to schools, this will be done on a per pupil basis. Schools need to recognise that the amounts eventually delegated through a per pupil model will not reflect the costs of that service to an individual school through a sold services model. Some schools may receive relatively smaller amounts through a delegation model yet may require higher levels of service provision; a reason why central services exist.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To consider the pooling of resources to continue to provide services based on the current model as detailed in the report for a 1-year period. Values are provisional and based on indicative numbers.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Where maintained schools agree that a service should be provided centrally, they can pool resources to fund those services. There is a limited range of services where central provision for maintained schools may be argued for on the grounds of economies of scale or pooled risk.

The following items are for re-pooling considerations.

- 3.2 **Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty: £138,016 approx. £12.88 per pupil, this is an increase of £6.44 per pupil, double the 2025/26 rate**

The significant increase is a reflection of those schools heading into financial difficulties. Over the last 3 years an unprecedented number of schools have reported funding issues. Whilst officers do work with schools to understand the pressures and support schools to use all options available to balance a school budget, there are instances where such additional support will be required, any unspent funds would return to the DSG.

This is a resource used to support schools' budgets directly, particularly where schools are either in deficit or on the verge of deficit with standards issues and require additional contributions for one-off expenditure. The additional amounts are generally allocated to deal with restructure costs where the school may already be in deficit, or the budget plans of the school indicate that a deficit would not be recoverable within the terms of a licensed deficit.

This resource will also be used to cover any deficits remaining for schools converting to an academy through the 'sponsored' route. Forum should be assured that the local authority manages this very closely to protect the risk to the Council and the DSG through the issuing of financial warning notices and where appropriate removal of financial delegation.

It must be stressed that school's own delegated budgets are always considered in the first instance.

It should be noted that this re-pooling is for maintained schools only and excludes early years, special schools, and academy schools.

- 3.3 **Insurance: £217,204. approx. £20.27 per pupil (an increase of £2.15 per pupil , 11.86% from 2025/26) reflecting the latest increases to insurance premiums.**

The centrally funded insurance arranged by the Council provides cover for both the schools liabilities and property assets. The Councils liability insurance provision provides cover for Employers, Public and Hirers Liability, Officials and Professional Indemnity and Libel and Slander. Personal Accident cover is also provided for employees and teachers employed by the Council. The Councils insurance provision for property provides cover for catastrophic loss of buildings and contents and or business interruption due to Fire, Lightning, Explosion, Aircraft, Earthquake, Riot, Civil Commotion and Terrorism. In addition, the provision also includes cover for the loss of money and fidelity guarantee for acts of employee fraud. Schools with lifting and pressure plant will also benefit from the Councils engineering insurance and competent person inspections under the current LOLER (1998), PUWER (1998) and PSSR (2000) regulations.

In addition to the centrally funded insurances the Council also offers extended buildings and contents insurance cover offering additional perils (Malicious Persons, Storm, Flood, Escape of Water, Full Impact, Theft and Accidental Damage) and lower excess. The Council also offers additional Personal Accident, School Journey, and School Minibus motor insurance upon request. These additional covers are not included in the centrally funded provision but can be arranged directly with the Councils insurance team.

- 3.4 **Central Staff Cover: £237,141 approx. (£27.13 per pupil)** the increase of £1.25 per pupil continues be necessary to enable the fund to reimburse schools without adding further pressure to Derby's DSG. Whilst the cost has remained static in previous years, pay award increases does require the overall budget to be revised. Monitoring of that budget will be reported in year along with all other DSG commitments.  
**Breakdown £22.13 per pupil for Maternity cover; approx. £5.00 for Trade Union recharges.**

This funding is pooled to reimburse schools the costs of maternity pay and trade union activity. Should this budget not be re-pooled then schools will have to fund the costs of this through their delegated budgets.

- 3.5 **Support for Inclusion**

It is permitted under the current Schools Funding Regulations to remove amounts from schools' delegated budgets to support inclusion including improving the performance of underperforming pupils from minority ethnic groups or to meet the specific needs of bilingual pupils. This allocation supports a wide range of activity, and each item is considered separately.

- 3.5.1 **Primary Pupil Support Grant: £30,541 approx. £4.36 primary only (no change to the per pupil amount)**

This funding is used to provide financial support to the Primary in Year Fair Access process, as outlined in the Fair Access Agreement. This would ensure that central support is provided for all fresh starts, through the Behaviour Strategy, both school to school and PRU to school, and that financial support is offered to schools on a case-by-case basis as outlined in the agreement. This service also supports behaviour in all schools across the City. This means that placements for children with challenging behaviour as a result of trauma/ attachment or adverse childhood experiences remain in mainstream education with support..

The local authority would recommend its continuation.

**3.5.2 Behaviour Support Services: £47,774 approx. £6.82per pupil primary (no change to the per pupil amount)**

This service supports behaviour in LA Maintained schools across the City. In the primary phase this service supports children at risk of exclusion in LA mainstream schools. In addition, this funding contributes to the support offered for Y6/7 transition for the most vulnerable.

**3.6 Support to Underperforming Ethnic Minority Groups and Bilingual Learners.**

This funding covers a wide range of service areas and is part of a total budget of circa £1.5 million funding, partly from the DSG and partly from Council resources. The service is an integrated service and managed as an Inclusion and Intervention service.

**3.6.1 New Communities Support Team £177,771 approx. £16.59 per pupil (an increase of £0.48 pence per pupil 3% from previous years.).**

The New Communities Achievement Team (NCAT) supports families from new and emerging communities to fully integrate into the community in which they now live and to allow them access to services, provided at local level, including access to education in our city. Whilst in previous years there has not been an increase to Schools the announcement for both pay awards and increased NI duties it does mean a slight increase to schools.

The Schools' Forum funding is used to support the integration of new arrivals, who do not speak or understand English and to support schools in their preparation for the arrival and the induction of EAL pupils/students. This includes provision of in-class language/ curriculum support, home/school liaison, interpreting /translation service for school staff and families, attendance monitoring, supporting EAL New Arrival children at risk of exclusion in mainstream schools, mentoring, development of bi-lingual resources, parental engagement support and sign posting families to appropriate mainstream service providers and specialist service providers.

NCAT currently delivers one half a day support session each week for maintained primary and secondary school in Derby which have regular half-termly admissions of EAL New Arrival children. All other schools can secure support from the team as requested and for the minimum period of one school term or until the supported child /children is/are well integrated into the school. The support is delivered in the form of language/curriculum in class support, admission/induction support, home/school liaison, attendance monitoring, mentoring, parental engagement support and interpreting /translation service provision.

In addition to the above support, there are several support services which are designed to help children and their families with better access to universal services and better integration into the local community.

The support services include:

1. One Stop Shop / Drop-in Advice and Support service at Rosehill Family Hub (advice, guidance and signposting service for EAL New Arrival families in Derby / Mon-Fri, 52 weeks a year service delivered in several community languages)
2. Access to education service for New Arrival families in Derby. The service is available to all newly arrived EAL families to apply for nursery, primary and secondary school places as well as for Post -16 education provision, school appeals, free school meals and free school transport (This service can be accessed by self-referrals and / or referrals received from local schools and services / organisations working with newly arrived families in Derby)
3. Education, citizenship and parenting programme for EAL New Arrival parents (termly, with provision of interpreting service)
4. Interpreting / translation service for New Arrival parents who have children with SEND. This service supports parents to raise awareness of the Educational Health Care (EHC) Plan process and receive relevant information in their first language. The translation of the EHC plans is available in various New Community languages.

Schools are entitled to refer parents /families to access these services and the cost of these support services/programmes is partly covered by the School's Forum funding.

The School's Forum funding contributes towards staffing who are involved in provision of services of NCAT.

In order to meet high demand within the support for new and emerging communities, NCAT delivers support through 11 support packages and these include: initial support for the induction of new arrival EAL pupils, language / curriculum support, support in working with parents of EAL New Arrivals, training provision for school staff, SATS / GCSE preparation for EAL pupils, mentoring, 1 to 1 mother tongue / first language teaching, , improved engagement with families from EAL New Arrival communities, support with overcoming barriers to educational engagement and attainment of Roma

pupils in primary and secondary schools and provision of interpreting / translation service.

This element of the service is provided through Traded Service.

**For more information  
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Background papers:  
List of appendices:**

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