

CYPF Scrutiny Committee**Policy Update****SEPT/OCT 2012****1. School funding reform: arrangements for 2013-14**

- a) The DfE has published the final school funding arrangements for 2013-14 following a series of consultations on funding reform in preparation for the introduction of a national funding formula in the next spending review period.
- b) The most recent of these set out proposals for the 2013-14 financial year. The main features of the arrangements are:
 - The introduction of 3 notional blocks through which local authorities will be allocated funding in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – a **schools block; early years block; and, high needs block**
 - Maximum delegation of funding to schools
 - Reduction in the number of factors that can be used in local formulae to distribute funding from 37 to a maximum of 10
 - Changes to the composition and operation of Schools Forums

Simplification of the local funding arrangements

- c) The development of new local formulae under these arrangements is highly likely to result in changes to each school's budget share
- d) In order to limit the impact of these changes and to provide stability and protection for schools, a minimum funding guarantee of -1.5% per pupil in 2013-14 and 2014-15 will be put in place
- e) Local authorities should work on the basis that services within the notional Schools Block and the funding for them should be delegated to schools in the first instance. In most local authorities, this will mean more delegation to schools than there has been in the past
- f) There are 3 exceptions to this, including some changes to existing exceptions and some further exceptions related to growth in pupil numbers, equal pay back=pay and non SEN places in independent schools:
 - **Where maintained schools collectively agree** (through the Schools Forum) that a service should be centrally funded because it provides better value or pools risk. Academies can choose to buy into these services by local agreement, and there will no longer be any need for a Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) calculation. The specified items are:
 - Allocation of contingencies (but only for exceptional unforeseen costs, schools in financial difficulties, and additional costs related to new, reorganised or closing schools)
 - Administration of free school meals eligibility
 - Insurance
 - Licenses or subscriptions
 - Staff costs or supply cover
 - Support for minority ethnic pupils or underachieving pupils
 - Behaviour support services
 - Library and museum services

- **Historic commitments** where there has been agreement with the Schools Forum to use the Schools Budget to fund costs which would normally be met from general local authority funding (e.g. redundancy costs) or where local authorities have funded capital from revenue (e.g. the capitalised costs of equal pay arrears, or to supplement capital funding), which does not require Schools Forum approval
 - Expenditure on some services related to **statutory functions of the local authority** (e.g. the co-ordinated admissions scheme, the carbon reduction commitment and administration of the Schools Forum) will also be allowed
- g) Two further exceptions will be allowed (with agreement from the Schools Forum): equal pay back-pay (for staff in schools and academies) and non-SEN places in independent schools (where local authorities choose such placements due to pressure on state school places)
- h) In addition, local authorities will be able to create a ring-fenced growth fund from the DSG in advance of allocating school budget shares to support growth in pupil numbers to meet basic need (for the benefit of both maintained schools and academies). They will be required to produce criteria for the allocation of any growth fund (which must be agreed by the Schools Forum) which must also be consulted on the total sum to be top sliced in each phase
- i) The 9 formula factors that can be used for distributing the notional Schools Block are:
- **Basic per-pupil entitlement** (mandatory): at a single rate for primary pupils, but local authorities will be able to apply different age-weighted pupil units for Key Stage 3 and key Stage 4. Initially there will be no minimum threshold for pupil-led factors, but this will be reviewed next year
 - **Deprivation** (mandatory): to be based on free school meal (FSM) data, IDACI data, or both
 - **Looked after children** (optional): if used, primary and secondary schools will attract the same rate
 - **Low cost, high incidence special educational needs** (optional): if applied, this factor will be based on prior attainment. For primary schools there will be 2 thresholds (either all pupils who do not achieve 78 points or all pupils who do not achieve 73 points or more in the EYFS Profile). For secondary schools the threshold will be pupils who fail to achieve Level 4 or above in both English and maths at Key Stage 2
 - **The notional SEN budget** (mandatory): local authorities will be required to give mainstream schools a notional SEN budget from the Schools Block, which might be made up of funding from the basic per-pupil entitlement, deprivation and low cost, high incidence SEN factors. From this notional budget, mainstream schools will be expected to meet the needs of pupils with low cost, high incidence SEN and contribute, up to a level set by the local authority, towards the costs of provision for pupils with high needs
 - Support for pupils with **English as an additional language** (optional): local authorities will be able to provide support for a maximum of 3 years from when the pupil enters compulsory education in England. They will be able to allocate different rates for EAL pupils in primary and secondary schools
 - **Lump sum** (optional): local authorities will be able to allocate a lump sum of the same amount to all schools in their area (to support small

schools). In 2013-14 the limit of this sum will be £200,000 but this may be changed in 2014-15

- **Split-sites, rates and PFI** (optional): local authorities may apply additional factors to reflect the costs of operating on split sites (a cash sum), rates (based on actual costs) and PFI arrangements (a cash sum)
 - **Exceptional premises factor** (by agreement with the Education Funding Agency): local authorities can request that this is included for exceptional premises (i.e. less than 5% of the schools in the local authority) with additional costs (e.g. listed buildings, farm buildings, rented buildings)
- j) Other factors that local authorities will be able to take into account are post-16, where local authorities have used DSG for 6th forms they will be allowed to honour this commitment in 2013-14 but no new commitments or increases in expenditure will be allowed. Also, pupil mobility where local authorities will be able to apply a factor based on the number of pupils entering schools at non-standard entry points
- k) Now that the final formula factors are defined, local authorities can finish developing their local formula and start to consult the Schools Forum and others. The DfE has updated its formula to reflect changes, and a final version will be issued, as will confirmation of the information the DfE will collect on the pro-forma and the more detailed table underpinning it
- l) The timetable for the DSG is unchanged. Local authorities must submit the provisional Schools Budget pro-forma to the Education Funding Agency by the end of October
- m) The minimum funding guarantee (MFG) has been set a -1.5% per pupil for 2013-14 and 2014-15. Post-16 funding, allocations from the notional High Needs Block, including those for named pupils with SEN, and the lump sum will be automatically excluded – in addition, allocations made through the early years single funding formula and for rates will be excluded
- n) Free Schools, University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools opening in 2013-14 will continue to use the 'ready reckoner' to plan 2013-14 budgets. They will be funded in accordance with local formulae and the impact of any difference between planned and realised budgets will be limited by providing a protection of -1.5% on a like-for-like basis
- o) Final details of funding for FE and Sixth Form Colleges which make full-time provision for 14-16 year olds are still being finalised, and further details will be given in the Autumn

Improving the way that local areas are funded

- p) Final arrangements are generally as described in the March consultation paper, but in response to queries from local authorities about children who defer entry to reception classes, the DSG will be uplifted to reflect differences in reception pupil numbers between October and the January counts of the previous academic year, and Regulations will allow local authorities to apply this uplift to all schools with reception classes, reflecting what happened in each school the previous year
- q) The DfE plans to consult later in the summer, alongside the DCLG's consultation on the business rates retention scheme, on options for the transfer of funding for the central education functions currently included in LA Block LACSEG from LA Formula Grant to the DfE. The Education Funding Agency would then distribute this funding as a separate un-ringfenced grant to local authorities and Academies in proportion to pupil numbers

Improving arrangements for funding pupils and students with high needs

- r) The new high needs funding arrangements ('Place Plus') will be introduced for all providers in the schools sector from April 2013, including local authority maintained schools, special and Alternative Provision Academies. They will be phased in for mainstream Academies by September 2013 (new arrangements for providers in the FE sector will be introduced from the start of the 2013-14 academic year)
- s) The final arrangements are generally in line with those proposed in the March consultation paper. Arrangements which have been clarified following consultation are:
- The DfE will recommend that, when discussing top-up funding for Alternative Provision settings, providers and commissioners will calculate half-termly rates for short-term placements and daily rates for part-time placements
 - When placing pupils in AP for fixed-term exclusion, early intervention or off-site direction, mainstream schools and Academies will not be required to repay AWPU (as they will in cases of permanent exclusion), but will pay top-up funding to AP settings
 - A new approach to hospital education from April 2013 will involve top-slicing the current spend on each hospital education setting from the national DSG and passporting the funding to providers through the maintaining local authority, ending the need for inter-LA recoupment, and enabling the Education Funding Agency to fund any providers that convert to Academy status. It is intended to use the same arrangements for hospital education for young people aged 16-18 provided in the 7 secure forensic psychiatric units

Simplification of the arrangements for the funding of early years provision

- t) The DfE will shortly publish short, clear, non-statutory material to help local authorities improve their funding arrangements, best practice examples from local authorities, and even local authority-level data on the funding, take-up, quality and outcomes of early education provision
- u) From 2013-14, all providers of free early education, including Academies currently funded for early education by the Education Funding Agency, will be funded by local authorities on common principles through the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF)
- v) Currently, the MFG applies to the whole school budget (including early education funding) in primary and infant schools with nursery classes.
- w) In future, the early years budget (based on the January census, not the October one) will be excluded from MFG. Instead, the DfE proposes to introduce a specific MFG for all providers of free early education for 3 and 4 year olds but is supportive of local authorities using the EYSFF to level the playing field between different types of behaviour. So, where necessary, it will be possible for local authorities to apply to suspend the early education MFG (with a presumption that applications that improve the fairness of funding between providers will be approved). The early education MFG will also be set at -1.5% but only the per-hour base rate will be included
- x) The DfE will shortly make a final announcement on the transitional arrangement for 2013-14 that will be put in place ahead of ending the 90% floor funding for free early years education for 3 year olds from 2014-15. A separate consultation will

shortly seek views on how funding for early education for 2 year olds could be allocated to local authorities

2. Measures to improve adoption and fostering

- a) Adopting and fostering will become a faster and more efficient process thanks to new arrangements for approving carers, Children's and Families Minister Edward Timpson has announced
- b) The Government is seeking views on measures that aim to allow foster carers to make everyday decisions about the children they look after and cut unnecessary bureaucracy in the approval process to encourage more people to come forward to foster. They also set out to reduce the time it takes to adopt and make the whole process more user-friendly
- c) These measures should help fostering services recruit more people and support foster carers in providing a normal family environment for their foster children
- d) By speeding up the assessment process for adopters the Government expects that more babies will be settled into adoptive families earlier in their lives
- e) The Government will sweep away bureaucracy which will mean that those who want to adopt and foster do not have to:
 - Call social workers every time a child in foster care goes for a haircut, has a sleepover at a friend's house or goes on a school trip
 - Undergo a criminal records check if they are previous adopters or foster carers who have already been approved and who want to adopt through the fast track process, unless agencies want them to undertake one
 - Wait longer than necessary to foster or adopt because agencies cannot share records
- f) In proposing to get rid of these rules the Government intends to introduce measures to encourage councils to do more to enable children in care to be placed more quickly with stable and loving adoptive or foster families who can meet their needs. These include:
 - Bringing in a new 2 stage approval process for adopters, as well as a new fast track procedure for approved foster carers and previous adopters who wish to adopt
 - Taking forward 'fostering for adoption' by enabling adopters to be approved rapidly as temporary foster carers. This will mean that more children can be placed with their potential permanent carers on a fostering basis while the council seeks a placement order from the courts
 - Requiring councils to refer looked after children for whom adoption is the plan to the Adoption Register within 3 months so that they are matched with adopters as soon as possible
 - Requiring all adoption agencies to refer prospective adopters to the Adoption Register no later than 3 months after approval
 - Making it a legal requirement that councils ensure that the child details on the Adoption Register are kept up to date
 - Removing the requirement to interview personal referees when a person has been an approved foster carer in the last year and a referee is available from their last fostering service
- g) The 2 stage adopter approval assessment process means eligibility checks and initial preparation and training will be completed within the first 2 months. This will be followed by 4 months more intensive training and an assessment of their

capacity to care for children needing adoption. In addition, the Government is also seeking views on reducing the size of adoption and fostering panels

- h) After the consultation the changes are set to take effect next year
- i) The Government is also announcing £8 million funding this year to help adoption services. This will be used to develop the necessary skills, tools and working arrangements to deliver the programme of adoption reform, of which these measures form a significant part

3. 55 new Free Schools to open in September 2012, twice as many as this time last year

- a) The Government has announced that 55 new Free Schools will open in September 2012. The first 24 Free Schools opened in September 2011 while a further 114 have been approved to open in 2013 and beyond
- b) Free Schools aim to achieve higher standards and offer a genuine alternative. They are funded by the Government but have greater freedoms than local authority-run schools. They are run by teachers – not local councils or Westminster politicians – and have freedom over the length of the school day and term, the curriculum and how they spend their money
- c) Of the new Free Schools opening this September:
 - o 19 are primary schools, 19 are secondary schools and 7 are all-age schools. There is one 14-19 school and one 16-19 school. Five are alternative provision schools – the first Free Schools of their type – and 3 are special schools
 - o The schools are spread across England. They are primarily concentrated in areas of deprivation or areas where there is a shortage of school places. 25 of the 55 schools are located in the most deprived 25% of communities in the country. 33 of the schools are in areas where there is need for more school places
 - o 12 have been set up by teachers, 19 by parent or community groups, 9 by charities and 13 are set up by existing education providers. Two existing independent schools will join the state sector as Free Schools.
- d) Free Schools have proved hugely popular with parents. All 24 which opened last year have filled, or almost filled, all their places for this year. Many have expanded to meet demand and many have large waiting lists
- e) New York Charter Schools, one of the inspirations behind Free Schools, have been shown to substantially narrow the attainment gap between rich and poor – by 86% in maths and 66% in English. In Chicago they halve the achievement gap between inner-city students and their wealthier suburban counterparts
- f) In England academies, which have the same freedoms as Free Schools, improve at a faster rate to state secondary schools – between 2010 and 2011 the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A* to C including English and maths rose by 5.7% in academies, compared to 3.1% in state secondary schools

4. Urgent reforms to protect children in residential care from sexual exploitation

- a) Urgent reforms to protect children in residential care homes from sexual exploitation and to overhaul the wider system have been announced
- b) The measures include more robust checks before children are placed in homes outside their home boroughs; overhauling the quality and transparency of data so there is a clear picture of children who go missing from care; and reviewing all aspects of the quality and effectiveness of children's homes – including their management, ownership and staffing

- c) Ministers have also ordered the lifting of regulations which stop Ofsted telling police and other appropriate agencies the location of children's homes – a key concern in keeping children in care fully protected
- d) The Government has also published a progress report on the national Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan published in November 2011 and 'step-by-step' guidance for frontline staff – which sets out ongoing work with the courts, police and social services to prosecute and jail abusers, protect young people at risk, and help victims of these appalling crimes get their lives back on track
- e) This action comes after a report published by the Deputy Children's Commissioner Sue Berelowitz – ordered after the sentencing in May of 9 men who groomed and abused young girls in Rochdale
- f) Ministers asked her to report urgently on emerging findings from her ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups inquiry, including recommendations on specific risks facing looked-after-children living in care homes
- g) Her report finds growing evidence that children in care are particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation – with a disproportionate number being groomed or sexually exploited, although the majority of known victims are outside the care system
- h) It finds there is a clear emerging picture that some residential homes are specifically targeted by abusers and that given the high turnover of young people in care there is a constant flow of vulnerable children for perpetrators to exploit
- i) It finds evidence that some children who are being sexually exploited may introduce other children within homes to their abusers – where they are forced or threatened to bring other children when they meet their exploiters
- j) And it makes a series of recommendations to address serious weaknesses in how care homes report and react to children going missing, in the checks made before children are placed into care homes, and weaknesses in staff skills and management quality
- k) Her interim report with fuller findings will be published in September and her final report in autumn 2013. It also follows a damning report by the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Children Missing From Care published last month, which said there was a scandal in the care system and called for urgent action to address key failings
- l) Ministers accept recommendations in both reports about how to secure improvements and provide better support and safety in children's homes
- m) This will build on Ofsted's tougher new framework, introduced in April 2012, for the inspection of children's homes that focuses far more strongly at whether a home has taken action to implement recommendations in previous reports, and whether improvements are flowing through in consequence
- n) The immediate actions announced include:
 - o Create a clear picture of children missing from care
 - o Ensure children's homes are properly protected and located. Ministers have ordered immediate changes to regulations so that Ofsted can share information about the location of children's homes with the police, and other relevant bodies as appropriate – a key criticism of the current system: Ministers are alarmed that there is no coherent set of figures for the number of children that go missing from care, which prevents children at risk being properly identified, and are clear that local agencies must be held accountable.
 - o Help children be located in homes nearer to their local area. Ministers are today announcing a task and finish group to report urgently by

September on tougher regulations and checks before any local authority can place a child outside their home borough

- o) Ministers accept there may be good reasons for placing a child or young person at some distance from their home area but argue it is difficult to accept that nearly half of all children in children's homes benefit from such distant placements. Both reports are clear about the problems that can arise
- p) The Government will consult on changes in the autumn
- q) The group will focus on:
 - o) The dependence of some local authorities on out of area children's homes, often at a considerable distance, in meeting the needs of a significant number of the most challenging children in their care. The group will be asked to consider how to ensure that there is much better scrutiny, planning and assessment of risks, before decisions are taken to place a child at a distance. This will include establishing how the placing authority should satisfy itself that the environment of the home will be appropriate for the child in question, and that they can reasonably be expected to be safe in the community within which they will be placed
 - o) Whether further changes to the care planning framework are required to ensure that local authorities will always respond appropriately when difficulties emerge in children's placements e.g. whether there is a role for the Independent Reviewing Officers in ensuring that the plan for the child is reviewed if there is an emerging pattern of going missing from their home and putting themselves at risk of sexual exploitation
 - o) The need for all children's homes to work collaboratively with their local police forces and other local safeguarding services. Homes should have strong policies for preventing children from running away or from being sexually exploited but also for responding effectively when these crises do occur in children's lives
 - o) The local authority's responsibilities for monitoring the quality of the care in homes located in their areas and the steps they should take if they consider that a home is failing to offer children the supervision and support that they need
 - o) Taking forward work to develop 'risk mapping' for those areas where there are high concentrations of children's homes to assess the general safety of these communities as places for bringing up our most vulnerable looked after children e.g. whether homes are located alongside hostels and other accommodation for adult offenders or are in areas where there is known to be a high level of prostitution
 - o) Drive up quality and effectiveness of children's homes
- r) Ministers are setting up a further expert working group that will have a broad remit to review and develop a clear action plan to drive up the quality of provision being delivered within children's homes, including the qualifications and skills of the workforce. It will review questions relating to:
 - o) The location of homes and models of ownership and commissioning practice
 - o) How homes can offer a more therapeutic environment to help children overcome their difficulties
 - o) What staff development is needed to manage children's behaviour, including when it is appropriate to use restraint
 - o) The effectiveness of current arrangements to drive improvement across the sector

- s) The group will report to Ministers by December with a clear reform timetable
- t) The Deputy Children's Commissioner report comes after the Education Secretary Michael Gove asked the Office of the Children's Commissioner to produce an accelerated report on the emerging findings of its inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups. In particular, he asked the Office of the Children's Commissioner to consider recommendations required to give better protection to children in care homes

Wider child sexual exploitation

- u) The Office of the Children's Commissioner's is half way through its 2 year inquiry and is in the process of analysing the emerging evidence
- v) Significant general themes emerging at this stage include:
 - Gang and group associated child sexual exploitation is taking place across England
 - Gang and group associated sexual exploitation is being perpetrated by people of varying ages, ethnicities and social backgrounds
 - In some areas agencies have a stronger focus on identifying group-associated child sexual exploitation and others have a stronger focus on gang-associated child sexual exploitation
 - Some services are better able to identify gang-associated child sexual exploitation than others, and so even within a local area different services provide different intelligence on both victims and perpetrators
 - Children are being sexually exploited by gangs and groups made up of people who may be of the same or different age, ethnicity, religion and social backgrounds to them
 - Children in care and children not in care are being sexually exploited. While the majority of children being sexually exploited are not in care, a disproportionate number are in care

Children in care

- w) Key findings from the emerging evidence shows:
 - Children in care, particularly in residential care, are more vulnerable to grooming and abuse and account for a disproportionate number of children known to be sexually exploited – although the majority of overall victims are outside the care system
 - Some residential children's homes are being deliberately targeted by those who want to exploit young people
 - Victims of sexual exploitation may introduce other children in the care system to their abusers – with clear evidence of coercion and threats if they do not recruit their peers. Local authorities have reported concerns about children in some homes going missing together and being particularly at risk of sexual exploitation
 - Children are expected to arrange their own travel back to some residential units late at night
 - Inconsistency in reporting and recording of incidents of children missing from care – with official figures only recording those missing for more than 24 hours, while emerging evidence shows that sexual exploitation victims may actually go missing for much shorter periods
 - Some care homes are not raising the alarm when boys go missing from residential units or are picked up by groups of older males
 - Over-16s housed in foyer, bed and breakfast and hostel accommodation are at significant risk – these are often unstable

placements where they live with older adults and are at risk of sexual exploitation from both residents themselves and abusers targeting residents

- Inconsistencies in quality of risk assessment, instability, and lack of choice in placements, lack of support for foster parents, a reduction in recognition of child sexual abuse in child protection plans, and an inability to appropriately identify placement by type, specialism and geography
- Lack of skilled workers – with residential care staff only required to be qualified up to A Level standard and managers up to degree-level but with no requirement for qualifications to be in health, education or social care. It finds that the majority of the staff who work with those in those units are not specialists working with highly troubled children and young people, nor in child sexual exploitation. Staff support and training is inadequate and much provision does not link up with the wider support services

5. £100m to expand early education and childcare

- a) Early education and childcare providers are to receive £100m to help them meet a growing demand for places
- b) The money will be used to support new nurseries and childminders in getting established, as well as helping existing providers to create and provide additional places. The Government will extend free childcare to 130,000 of the most disadvantaged 2 year olds from September 2013, rising to around 260,000 (40% of all 2 year olds) in September 2014
- c) Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are known to be more at risk of poor development, with evidence showing that differences by social background emerge early on in life. High quality early education can make a difference to a child's progress and the additional government money will help to make sure that children from poorer families do not lose out
- d) The £100m will be allocated to local authorities across England
- e) The free childcare entitlement for 2 year olds has already rolled out early in 10 pilot areas this September. Currently, more than 850,000 3 and 4 year olds nationally access up to 15 hours of free early education every week
- f) The 10 pilot areas trialling the free 2 year old entitlement are: Blackpool, Cornwall, Greenwich, Kent, Lambeth, Lancashire, Newcastle, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rotherham

6. Cash boost for disadvantaged school children

- a) England's most disadvantaged pupils are to benefit from extra cash next year when the Pupil Premium rises to £900 per pupil – around 50% higher than last year
- b) Schools receive extra cash through the premium for every child registered as eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point in the past 6 years and children in care who have been looked after for 6 months
- c) Statistics show that in 2011:
 - 35% of pupils on free school meals achieved 5 good GCSE grades compared with 62% of other pupils
 - 58% of pupils on free school meals achieved the expected level in both English and maths by the end of primary school compared with 78% of other pupils

- The Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2011 and over 1.8 million disadvantaged children are benefiting from the extra cash that goes to schools. The total available through the premium has risen from £625 million in 2011-12 to £1.875 billion next year, and will rise further to £2.5 billion by 2014-15
- d) Evidence shows that children from low income families generally do not achieve as well as other pupils. Schools therefore receive additional Pupil Premium funding on top of the school budget to enable them to support these pupils in reaching their potential and to help schools reduce educational inequality
- e) Just 13.2% of children looked after by local authorities achieve 5 good GCSE grades, including English and maths, and the Government wants them to benefit from the extra funding through the premium
- f) Whilst schools have the freedom to use the Pupil Premium funding in innovative ways, it is vital they use it to boost results for the most disadvantaged pupils. They will be held to account by Ofsted through its inspections which include a closer focus on premium use and the performance of pupils who attract it, as well as a focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in the school performance tables
- g) Schools are also required to publish online details of their premium spend for parents
- h) Following the popularity of the summer schools for Pupil Premium pupils, the Government will be making £50 million available for the scheme to run again next year
- i) Nearly 2,000 schools received government funding to run a summer school this year, providing up to 2 weeks of support for around 65,000 disadvantaged children. Schools offered a range of activities aimed at helping children settle in to the new school, ranging from catch-up lessons for those children needing extra help, to extra-curricular activities such as theatre trips, and Olympics-related sporting events
- j) Pupils can struggle to make the jump to secondary education. Moving to a larger school and having to tackle a more challenging curriculum can be daunting for some pupils. This results in a dip in their performance, which can persist throughout their time at school
- k) The Department for Education has also confirmed that the per pupil level of the Pupil Premium for 2012-13 will rise from £600 to £619. This follows a smaller than expected rise in the number of pupils registering for free school meals in January 2012. The allocations to schools will be revised to reflect this change in the per pupil amount

7. Places for National Citizen Service autumn roll-out

- a) Places are being announced all over England and Northern Ireland for young people to take part in National Citizen Service (NCS), starting in the October half-term holiday, Minister for Civil Society Nick Hurd has announced
- b) Previously, NCS has only run in the summer holidays, but following the success of this year's programme the Government is looking for ways to offer it all year round for every 16 and 17 year old. For the first time, NCS will also take place in Northern Ireland for 15 and 16 year olds
- c) NCS offers 16 and 17 year olds from different backgrounds valuable life experience by putting them into teams away from home and setting them the task of finding solutions to local problems or issues that matter to them. It also enables them to develop important skills that they can take with them into the world of work

- d) This summer, young people have already committed nearly three-quarters of a million hours of volunteering, making a hugely positive impact in communities across the UK
- e) NCS autumn will also see a new final weekend of further adventure away from home. The young people will go through a challenging scenario-based weekend, taking part in their teams and meeting fellow NCS participants from around the country to share experiences and tackle new activities
- f) Early findings from last year's scheme show that it was a success, with 9 out of 10 young people saying that they would recommend it to a friend, and more young people planning to stay on in education after taking part
- g) Ministers are keen that all young people, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to take part. Their aim is for the programme to give 16 and 17 year olds a shared common experience and to create a generation of 'work-ready', well-rounded young people with raised aspirations and greater opportunities in the job market
- h) NCS is a life-changing experience for 16 and 17 year olds. They get the chance to do outdoor activities, meet new people and put something back into their community. By taking part they learn new skills and have a great experience they can put on their CVs or college applications. This year sees the first trial of an autumn programme. This kicks off in the October half-term holiday, followed by days of activity over the next 6 weekends
- i) This year up to 30,000 places have been made available and the long-term aim is for NCS to be available to every 16 year old
- j) NCS brings young people together from different backgrounds (e.g. religious, ethnic and socio-economic) to work together, and teaches them what it means to be responsible and serve their communities. It promotes:
 - k) A more cohesive society by mixing participants from different backgrounds
 - l) A more responsible society by supporting young people's transition into adulthood
 - m) A more engaged society by enabling young people to work together to create social action projects in their local communities

8. Examinations for 15-19 year olds in England – Commons Education Committee Report

- a) The Education Select Committee published its report, *The administration of examinations for 15-19 year olds in England* on 3 July 2012. This is the final report of the Committee's inquiry launched on 12 September 2011 into the administration of a public examination system that in 2011 issued 4.6 million GCSE grades, over 1.3 million AS and 8,000 A Level grades
- b) The report paints a picture of widespread negativity coming from those most involved in the exam system including academics, the independent schools sector, employers and universities. The most recent survey carried out by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) found that out of a sample of 7,149 employers, 72% said that they did not feel confident in recruiting school leavers with A Levels or equivalent. The most recent CBI survey findings are that two thirds of employers (65%) see a pressing need to raise standards of literacy and numeracy among 14-19 year olds.
- c) While the report acknowledges that employer concerns are not new, it does highlight the fact that this is a consistent message about the rising pass rates at GCSE and A Level maybe not reflecting real improvement in student performance and its application in a work context

- d) Universities are also seen as critical of A Level, both as a selection tool and as a preparation for undergraduate level study. Ofqual research from 2010 looked at confidence in the GCSE and A Level system. Out of teachers, students and employers, teachers were most optimistic about the system with employers the least satisfied group (61% teachers, 57% students and 48% employers thought that the system was doing a good job but some improvement needed; 12% teachers, 14% students and 23% employers called for more fundamental reform).
- e) However, the Select Committee also notes low confidence levels reported amongst the wider public in annual perception surveys also conducted by Ofqual and its predecessor body. In 2011, only 28% of the general public was more confident in the GCSE system and 25% in the A Level system than they were in previous years
- f) The Select Committee report concludes that evidence gathering through the inquiry into 15-19 examinations suggested relatively low public confidence in the exam system among various groups which in the long-term risks compromising the credibility of the system and devaluing the qualifications achieved by young people. The factors involved, heard by the committee from a range of stakeholders, included the impact of exam board competition on syllabus content, the issues around grade inflation, the impact of the accountability system and the reliability of exam board marking

Fundamental reform of the exam system

- g) Michael Gove's view of a discredited exam system with a single board as a compelling answer is characterised as nothing new. It is emphasised that the concern about the number of exam groups has persisted over time against a backdrop of grade inflation and increasing pressure on teachers from the accountability system
- h) The report considers 3 models which are most commonly discussed as the basis of administering the public exam system. These are multiple competing exam boards (the current system in England); a single board (a national body responsible for setting administering and grading examinations); and franchising by subject so that individual exam boards are contracted to run examinations in particular subjects. The inquiry evidence is described as split with written evidence displaying most support for retaining multiple boards (over 40%) with just under 20% supporting a single board. Only 5% supported a franchised system which could be due to a lack of understanding about the way it works
- i) The exam boards, perhaps unsurprisingly as the report notes, are concerned about fundamental change, though they acknowledged that the system does need improving. However, exam board chief executives agreed that strong regulation with a focus on standards was a priority. In contrast, school leaders were mostly in favour of a single board though with caveats about its size and powers and the impact on school choice
- j) International comparisons explored as part of the inquiry are reported as revealing a number of countries with single exam boards including Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Kenya and Uganda with Australia, Canada and China having regional groups. England is seen as unusual because of its regulated qualifications market which make international comparisons difficult. Evidence from other countries with different models cited suggests that the problems such as grade inflation would not necessarily be eradicated by a change to a differing examination model.
- k) The report concludes that the costs, heightened risk and disruption likely to be involved in the move to a single board outweigh the potential benefits and that if

the status quo is retained, significant improvements are needed to increase confidence in the system

The way forward

- l) A recurring criticism of an exam board market as identified by the Select Committee is the downward pressure on the system generated by competition between the boards and the accountability system. In terms of syllabus development, the report emphasises that exam boards compete on a variety of features designed to attract particular teacher choice, and because of such fierce competition, do not share practice and collaborative approaches. The DfE warns of significant risk of awarding bodies producing more accessible specifications with content that is less intrinsically challenging in order to capture market share, raising the question of whether the boards' commercial concerns were overriding their educational purpose
- m) The report recommends that the development of national syllabuses coupled with stronger Ofqual regulation, would offer a way of addressing downward competition on content, without the disruption of moving to a single board.
- n) Little is known about the process by which public exam grades are arrived at. According to the report, the process is complex and technical and there is limited public understanding of it. The debates about 'grade inflation' are long standing and have a negative influence on public confidence in the exam system.
- o) The Committee concludes that the increase in higher grades achieved in both exams is undisputed, but that the case for accompanying improvements in knowledge, skills and understanding is far less clear and recommends that Ofqual continues to investigate grade inflation as well as engage in the public debate on exam standards

Role of Ofqual

- p) The report flags up the strong steer that the Committee received through written and oral evidence, for a stronger Ofqual, whatever organisational model was adopted. The Government has already legislated to increase Ofqual's regulatory powers and amendments in the Education Act 2011 require Ofqual to benchmark attainment in English qualifications with comparable international qualifications, as well as qualification standards over time in England.
- q) The key perception of Ofqual emerging from the inquiry was that of the organisation adopting a more proactive approach to standards with its action to contain grade inflation at A Level, its accreditation of all new syllabuses and its development of an advisory group on standards issues
- r) However, the Select Committee recommended that Ofqual as part of its annual report to Parliament should detail the evidence used in the regulation of standards and the action taken to maintain standards
- s) A further recommendation was the need for Ofqual to build more in-house assessment expertise and for this to be further reflected on its board. Criticism was expressed about the lack of transparency concerning Ofqual's consultation processes with external subject experts and this is the basis of a further recommendation.
- t) The Select Committee recommended that national subject committees should be convened in large entry GCSE and A Level subjects, with membership drawn from learned organisations, subject associations, HE and employers
- u) Another recommendation was for the Government to give Ofqual greater clarity over its additional requirements for benchmarking standards over time and in terms of international qualifications.

A Level Reform

- v) The Government's agenda for A Level reform is already in process with changes taking effect for courses starting in 2014. The report endorses the Government's key long-term change for A Level and recommends the greater involvement of HE in the content of A Levels since such a high proportion of those studying A Levels go on to university. The evidence feeds into the report's recommendation for an inclusive approach involving the diverse HE sector in A Level development, and the importance of using Learned Bodies in addition with their links to universities. In terms of the Committee's support for Ofqual national subject committees, it also recommended the inclusion of new A Level criteria and accreditation issues in their remit

Exam board competition: market share, professional support and marking

- w) Ofqual figures supplied to the inquiry showed that the overall GCSE/A Level market had remained stable over time, though Ofqual and exam board witnesses confirmed that shifts in market occur at moments of syllabus revision. The report stresses the difficulties of getting past anecdotal explanations for such changes and their possible implications for standards, and supports further regulatory scrutiny
- x) The Committee therefore recommends that Ofqual prioritise its existing work in monitoring changes in market share between exam boards and any implications that they might have for standards. As a result of concerns over the large amount of public money spent on exams and the perceived lack of transparency in awarding body operations transmitted as evidence to the Committee, the report also recommends that Ofqual should demonstrate that the charges made to the public purse by the exam system are fair and appropriate
- y) Prior to the Select Committee enquiry, Ofqual's own investigation into the training offered by exam boards to teachers was that there is a real risk that inappropriate information about the future of secure exams is disclosed and a risk of narrowing the curriculum through sessions on how to teach the specification
- z) Inquiry evidence reflected concerns about boards offering tailored support to individuals or groups of schools where there could be risks of inappropriate information being given
- aa) The report therefore welcomes Ofqual's decision to end exam board training on specific qualifications and recommends further monitoring of exam board marketing overall, including more general training that might be offered
- bb) Some of the potential conflict of interest concerns about training also emerged in relation to exam board endorsed textbooks, often written by senior examiners. The Committee welcomed the tighter restrictions already being considered by the boards on the role of examiners in textbook authorship and recommended that Ofqual oversee a consistent industry-wide approach
- cc) On question papers and marking, the report briefly reviews the impact on public confidence, of the 12 errors on GCSE/A Level Summer 2011 papers and acknowledges Ofqual's findings related to the need to refresh question paper setting procedures
- dd) The inquiry also took evidence on enquiry rates to the boards about results and grading which in 2011 were up by 38% on the previous year with the number of grade changes increasing by 11%
- ee) The Committee concluded that public confidence is obviously undermined by crises such as the 2011 errors and by allegations of improper conduct by the Boards related to marking and grading. It welcomed Ofqual's work to develop a

common approach to deal with marking concerns and recommended a rigorous approach by the regulator in response to allegations of improper exam board conduct

Exams and school accountability

- ff) The report acknowledges that many of the problems about the exam system are linked to accountability system pressures
- gg) The report briefly considers the impact of what it terms 'side effects' such as the burden of assessment and the impact of increasing early and multiple exam entry
- hh) However, the report identifies the core question as being whether the reform of the exam system and the strengthening of the role of Ofqual would in themselves solve the exam system problems without making any changes to the accountability framework that drives much behaviour in schools
- ii) The key issue on which the report focuses is the much debated issue of multiple purposes to which exams are used, attempting to assess individual, school and system performance, and briefly refers to the endorsement of its predecessor committee for sample testing as an alternative way to assess national standards
- jj) However, the current Committee dismisses this as not being part of its inquiry and instead recommends that the Government should look afresh at current accountability measures with a view to reducing the dominating influence of the measures of 5 GCSEs A*-C or equivalent

9. Measuring happiness

- a) A new method that will help to measure the happiness of children has been developed by the Children's Rights Director for England
- b) Through discussions with children in care and/or living away from home, Dr Roger Morgan has created a questionnaire based on the things that young people might say about themselves
- c) Twenty statements such as 'I know what is happening next in my life', 'I get bullied', 'I am getting all the help I need' and 'I get lonely' are listed and each is given a score. Children complete the questionnaire by ticking all of the statements that are right about them
- d) During focus discussion groups, children and young people were asked what they thought the definition of happiness was. They thought happiness had a lot to do with being satisfied with how things are for you. One group said happiness wasn't one thing, but could depend on lots of different things for different people. Another group suggested that it could be to do with doing different things with other people, from sex to laughing a lot
- e) The children agreed that people are not born happy or unhappy, but are made happy or unhappy by what happens to them
- f) When asked if money can make you happy, some children said that being treated equally and fairly, and having family, is more important than how much money you have
- g) Children in the discussion groups said that being safe and well looked after, having all the basic things you needed, being treated fairly and with respect, being able to make your own decisions and do things you wanted to do, stability, and having support from family and friends, all helped to make children and young people happy
- h) The things that the children felt could make a child unhappy included lack of trust, being bullied, people being prejudiced against you, being treated unfairly, losing somebody who matters to you, not being cared for properly, being abused, not

being listened to, being excluded from things, not being told things you needed to know, and being let down by people should be supporting you

- i) The Children's Rights Director for England has independent statutory duties to ascertain and report the views of children living away from home or in care, to advise on children's rights and welfare, and to raise matters he considers significant to the rights or welfare of the children in his remit
- j) Ofsted regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked-after-children, safeguarding and child protection

10. Twice as many students not taking key academic subjects than to the EBacc

- a) Long-term decline reversed
- b) Poorer pupils benefiting most
- c) Recent figures reveal how the introduction of the English Baccalaureate has led to a huge increase in the proportion of young people studying the core academic subjects so highly valued by universities and employers
- d) The EBacc was introduced by the DfE in the performance tables in January 2011. Pupils who achieve a GCSE grade C or better in English, maths, a language, history or geography, and two sciences achieve the EBacc
- e) In 2010 under a quarter (22%) of GCSE pupils were entered for the EBacc
- f) But a survey of more than 600 teachers in state-maintained mainstream secondary schools by Ipsos Mori for the DfE reveals that almost half (49%) of Year 9 pupils have chosen to study the set of key subjects from this September
- g) The take-up indicates that the EBacc is reversing the long-term and damaging drift away from the subjects most likely to lead to higher education and good jobs, and that they are bouncing back to the levels of a decade ago
- h) The survey indicates that individual subjects are returning to levels of popularity not seen for years:
 - o History
 - Highest for at least 20 years
 - 41% of GCSE pupils are set to take the subject in summer 2014
 - That is the highest proportion since at least summer 1994 when 39% of pupils took history GCSE
 - o Science
 - Highest for at least 20 years
 - 93% of GCSE pupils are set to take double or triple science GCSE in summer 2014
 - That is the highest proportion since at least summer 1994 when 79% of pupils took it
 - o Geography
 - Highest for 13 years
 - 36% of GCSE pupils are set to take the subject in summer 2014
 - That is the highest proportion since summer 2001 when 37% of pupils took geography GCSE
 - o Languages
 - Highest for 9 years

- 54% of GCSE pupils are set to take a language GCSE in summer 2014
 - That is the highest proportion since summer 2005 when 60% of pupils took a language GCSE
- i) And the figures show that the EBacc has had an especially positive impact on poorer pupils
- In 2010 just 10% of pupils in schools with a high proportion of children on free school meals were taking a combination of subjects that could have led to the EBacc
 - But 41% of pupils in these schools started studying the set of key subjects from this September – a 310% increase
 - The rise over the same period in schools with a low proportion of students on free school meals is 54%
- j) Ipsos Mori undertook the survey to assess to effects of the EBacc on secondary schools in England. It was carried out in June and July 2012. The survey was administered to a representative sample of 1,620 state-maintained mainstream secondary schools (by region, establishment type and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals). There was a response rate of 38%, with 618 schools taking part (which maintained a representative sample)
- k) The figures compare GCSE entry data (historically) with survey estimates of GCSE subject choice. Pupils who choose particular subjects are not always entered for them
- l) Free school meal bandings were devised by ranking schools by the proportion of their pupils who were FSM eligible, and dividing them into thirds (bottom third = low FSM band, middle third = medium, upper third = high)

Subject	Proportion of pupils who took GCSEs in summer 2010 (%)	Proportion of pupils taking GCSEs in summer 2014 (%)	2010-14 change (% pts)	% increase in proportion of pupils studying the subject 2010-14
EBacc combination	22	49	+27	123
History	31	41	+10	32
Geography	26	36	+10	38
Any language	43	54	+11	26
Double science	46	59	+13	28
Triple science	16	34	+18	113