

Central Schools' Services Block Budget 2026/27

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum

Date of Meeting: 1st December 2025

Report Author:

Item for: Discussion **By:** All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To set out the budget proposal for services funded from the Central Schools' Services (CSSB) block of the DSG.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Decision will be required at the January Schools Forum when we have confirmed allocations for all blocks within the DSG.

Is the Schools' Forum required to make a decision as part of this report or subsequent versions due to be considered later in the meeting cycle?

Yes: ☒

No: ☐

3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Equalities Impact:	Positive	No Impact	Negative	Commentary
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Data Impact:		X		

4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The CSSB covers funding allocated to Local Authorities (LAs) to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils in state-funded maintained schools and academies in England. All the services funded by this block are statutory and have to be carried out.
- 4.2 To date, there has been no indication of the value of the grant to be received in 2026/27. The DfE are due to communicate an update later in November 2025.
- 4.3 The following table shows the budget requirement for the services that fall within the Central Schools Services Block for 2026/27 compared to 2025/26.

	Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget Requirement	Increase/ Decrease	Change
		£	£	£	%
	Budget Requirement:				
1	School Admissions	239,336	240,964	1,628	1%
2	National Copyright Licences	184,097	203,756	19,659	11%
3	Servicing of Schools Forum	55,158	55,774	616	1%
4	Education Welfare	246,411	260,004	13,593	6%
5	Support for Inclusion	-	65,470	65,470	
6	Statutory & Regulatory Duties:				
a	Provision of Education Data	187,008	194,638	7,630	4%
b	Finance Support for the Education Service	88,005	92,385	4,380	5%
c	Strategic Planning of the Education Service	67,450	71,280	3,830	6%
	Total Budget Requirement	1,067,465	1,184,271	116,806	10.9%

Issue Identification

- 4.4 Historically, the Department for Education (DfE) has provided an indicative allocation for the Central School Services Block (CSSB). At present, no information has been received for 2026/27. While we have reviewed historical allocations to identify patterns, recent years have not shown any pattern. This has made it difficult to estimate the grant level for this block.

Consultation and Engagement

- 4.5 Consultation with the Service Managers who run the services funded by the Central School Services Block.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 4.6 These budgets will be monitored as part of the quarterly budget monitoring cycle through the Heads Funding Group and Schools Forum meetings

5. Introduction and background

- 5.1 The CSSB covers funding allocated to Local Authorities (LAs) to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils in state-funded maintained schools and academies in England. All the services funded by this block are statutory and have to be carried out.
- 5.2 There hasn't yet been any information from the DFE in relation to what level this grant will be set at for the block
- 5.3 The following table shows the budget requirement for the services that fall within the Central Schools Services Block for 2026/27 compared to 2025/26.

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- 5.4 For 2026/27, staff on council pay grades have been budgeted at 3.5% pay award, which is where the majority of the increased costs have come from. Other increases relate to the cost of the Capita system and the addition of support for inclusion
- 5.5 The cost of copyright licence for schools is determined by the relevant national agencies. Details of all the other services included in the Central Schools Services Block (including a breakdown of costs) is given in Appendix A.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The expected costs for the Central Schools Services Block for 2026/27 is £1,184,271, which is a £116,806 increase on 2025/26. There will be an update provided once the grant value is known.

7. View from the Heads' Funding Group

- 7.1 Noted

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Details and Costs of Central Schools' Services

Appendix A

	Number of Posts	% Charged to CSSB	2026/27 £
School Admissions			
<u>Description of Statutory Duties covered</u>			
Administration of admissions process for maintained schools and academies			
<u>Staffing Structure</u>			
Admissions and Transport Manager	1.00	80%	
Admissions Officers	2.50	80%	
Admissions and Transport Officer	1.00	40%	
<u>Breakdown of Costs</u>			
Staff salary costs			171,430
Employee Expenses & recharge of appeals costs			18,700
Supplies and Services			1,320
Capita One recharge			24,329
Support Service Recharges			25,185
TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE FOR ADMISSIONS			240,964
	Number of Posts	% Charged to CSSB	2026/27 £
Servicing the Schools Forum			
<u>Description of Statutory Duties covered</u>			
Setting agendas, minute taking, co-ordination and distribution of papers for Schools Forum and its sub groups			
<u>Staffing Structure</u>			
Service Director Education	1.00	10.00%	
Schools Finance Team	2.00	10.00%	
Schools Forum Clerk			
<u>Breakdown of Costs</u>			
Staff salary costs			49,720
Room hire, consumables and members expenses			1,610
Support Service Recharges			4,444
TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE FOR SERVICING THE SCHOOLS FORUM			55,774

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	Number of Posts	% Charged to CSSB	2026/27 £
Education Welfare			
<u>Description of Statutory Duties covered</u>			
Promote regular attendance by registered pupils at schools in West Berkshire and reduce the number and duration of absences			
Develop a strategic approach to improving attendance across the district			
Work with schools to support pupils who are persistently absent			
Progress cases to court where appropriate. Maintain up to date knowledge of legal processes and proceedings so that culpable parents are prosecuted or issued with a fixed penalty notice i.e. Take legal action			
The Education Attendance Team (Education Welfare Service) also have responsibility for Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education and Child Employment which includes:			
*maintaining records and conduct annual reviews of EHE children			
*provide clear written guidance to parents about their responsibilities of EHE children			
*ensure risk assessments carried out for Child Employment, including site visits & issuing child work permits and performance licences			
<u>Staffing Structure</u>			
Principal Education Welfare and Safeguarding Officer	1.00	40%	
Senior Education Welfare Officer	0.80	90%	
Education Welfare Officers	2.36	100%	
<u>Breakdown of Costs</u>			
Staff salary costs			217,149
Employee expenses/car allowances			4,900
Other non staffing costs			15,380
Income from fines			-19,350
Capita One Recharges			10,814
Support Service Recharges			31,111
TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE FOR EDUCATION WELFARE			260,004
	Number of Posts	% Charged to CSSB	2026/27 £
Support for Inclusion			
<u>Description of Statutory Duties covered</u>			
The local authority must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil to begin from the sixth school day after the exclusion			
Where a pupil has an EHCP, the local authority may need to review the plan or reassess the child's needs, in consultation with the pupil's parents			
Maintain a register of pupils who have been excluded			
Organise the IRP within the legal time frame, ensuring the exclusion is lawful, reasonable and fair.			
<u>Staffing Structure</u>			
Staffing	1.00	100%	
<u>Breakdown of Costs</u>			
Staff salary costs			65,470
TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE FOR PROVISION OF EDUCATION DATA			65,470

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	Number of Posts	% Charged to CSSB	2026/27 £
Provision of Education Data			
<u>Description of Statutory Duties covered</u>			
Statutory returns to DfE			
Data analysis and reporting e.g. Exam results, performance			
School census administration and reports			
<u>Staffing Structure</u>			
Staffing	2.00	75%	
<u>Breakdown of Costs</u>			
Staff salary costs			95,950
Capita One recharge			85,355
Support Service Recharges			13,333
TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE FOR PROVISION OF EDUCATION DATA			194,638
	Number of Posts	% Charged to CSSB	2026/27 £
Finance Support for the Education Service			
<u>Description of Statutory Duties covered</u>			
DSG services budget preparation, monitoring, and year end			
Education services budget preparation, monitoring, and year end			
School funding formula and early years funding formula			
Administration of funding allocations to all schools for early years and high needs			
Statutory returns e.g. APT, S251, CFO deployment of DSG			
<u>Staffing Structure</u>			
Service Lead - Financial Management, Revenues & Benefits	1.00	5%	
Education Finance Manager	0.92	15%	
Education Senior Accountant	0.61	50%	
Education Accountant	0.50	65%	
Accountant	1.00	50%	
<u>Breakdown of Costs</u>			
Staff salary costs			77,570
Support Service Recharges			14,815
TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE FOR FINANCE SUPPORT			92,385
	Number of Posts	% Charged to CSSB	2026/27 £
Strategic Planning of the Education Service			
<u>Description of Statutory Duties covered</u>			
Strategic planning and management of the Education service as a whole			
<u>Staffing Structure</u>			
Service Director Education	1.00	40%	
Other staffing	1.00	27%	
<u>Breakdown of Costs</u>			
Staff salary costs			71,280
TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE FOR PLANNING OF EDUCATION SERVICE			71,280