

# Consultation – schools block transfer 2024-25

42 Responses 140:39 Average time to complete Closed Status 17:00 07-11-23

Q2. Please tell us your role

Headteacher/principal	29
Other senior leader	1
Chair of governing body	10
Governor	1
Bursar/finance manager/director of finance	0
Other	1

Q3. Please tell the name of your school – See Appendix 1

Q4. Would your school support a schools block transfer of up to 1.0% of the schools block to the high needs block for 2024-25?

Yes 0  
No 42

Q5. Would your school support a schools block transfer of up to 0.5% of the schools block to the high needs block for 2024-25?

Yes 0  
No 42

Q6. What reasons for your answers would you wish to provide to the local authority, to be considered by Solihull School Forum? See Appendix 2

42 Responses

## **Appendix 1 – Responses by school**

Alderbrook School	1
Arden	2
Balsall Common Primary School	1
Bentley Heath Church of England Primary School	1
Berkswell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	0
Bishop Wilson Church of England Primary School	0
Blossomfield Infant and Nursery School	1
Burman Infant School	0
Castle Bromwich Infant and Nursery School	0
Castle Bromwich Junior School	0
Cheswick Green Primary School	1
Coleshill Heath School	0
Coppice Academy	1
Cranmore Infant School	1
Damson Wood Nursery and Infant School	1
Dickens Heath Community Primary School	1
Dorridge Primary School	1
Fordbridge Community Primary School	0
George Fentham Endowed School	1
Grace Academy Solihull	2
Greswold Primary School	0
Haslucks Green School	1
Heart of England School	0
John Henry Newman Catholic College	0
Kineton Green Primary School	1
Kingshurst Primary School	1
Knowle Church of England Primary Academy	1
Lady Katherine Leveson Church of England Primary School	0
Langley School	2
Light Hall School	1
Lode Heath School	1
Lyndon School	1
Marston Green Infant Academy	0
Marston Green Junior School	1
Meriden Church of England Primary School	1
Mill Lodge Primary School	0
Monkspath Junior and Infant School	1
Oak Cottage Primary School	0
Olton Primary School	3
Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School	0
Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School	0
Park Hall Academy	2
Peterbrook Primary School	1
Sharmans Cross Junior School	0
Shirley Heath Junior School	0
Smith's Wood Academy	0
Smith's Wood Primary Academy	1

St Alphege Church of England Infant and Nursery School	0
St Alphege Church of England Junior School	0
St Andrew's Catholic Primary School	0
St Anne's Catholic Primary School	0
St Anthony's Catholic Primary School	0
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School	0
St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School	0
St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School	0
St Margaret's Church of England Primary School	1
St Mary and St Margaret's Church of England Aided Primary School	1
St Patricks Church of England Primary Academy	1
St Peter's Catholic School	0
Streetsbrook Infant and Early Years Academy	0
Tidbury Green School	1
Tudor Grange Academy Kingshurst	0
Tudor Grange Academy, Solihull	0
Tudor Grange Primary Academy Hockley Heath	0
Tudor Grange Primary Academy Langley	0
Tudor Grange Primary Academy Yew Tree	0
Tudor Grange Primary Academy, St James	0
Ulverley School	1
Valley Primary	0
Widney Junior School	1
Windy Arbor Primary School	0
WMG Academy for Young Engineers (Solihull)	1
Woodlands Infant School	0
Yorkswood Primary School	0
Other	1

**Appendix 2 – What reasons for your answers would you wish to provide to the local authority, to be considered by Solihull School Forum?**

1	anonymous	As a school with a high level of children with additional needs, I understand that we would be disproportionately affected by the transfer as it would be taking money away from the schools who perhaps need it most. In our case, it would limit our capacity to meet the needs of the young people in our care, including children with high levels of personal care needs as well as extremely vulnerable children, many with complex medical needs. On a philosophical level, the children we serve today need more not less, after Covid and with the complex challenges they face. Happy to discuss any of this further and thank you for the opportunity to participate in the consultation.
2	anonymous	Our own budgets are under intense pressure. We have significant SEND needs in our school who are not at the high needs level but require significant additional funding so there is not capability.
3	anonymous	We are already looking at a deficit budget. Our school has the second highest number of SEND pupils in the borough and this is causing our financial difficulties as we have to have more staff than we can afford to keep children in the mainstream system. Also, some schools with low numbers of SEND don't seem to be affected by this transfer which seems very unfair- a double blow to us.
4	anonymous	I do not support a schools block transfer of either 0.5% or 1.0% to the High Needs block. Both of the schools in the trust have had to reduce spending this year, 2023-2024, in order to provide a balanced budget. This has put greater pressure on staff, significantly increased workload and reduced the quality and amount of curriculum resources available for children in the classroom. In particular, Damson Wood is seeing reducing pupil numbers, which, due to lagged funding, will make next year's budget even more challenging. We have only just managed to provide a balanced budget for this school for 23-24. The DfE has misinformed academy schools regarding their funding allocation for 24-25. Rather than a 2.7% increase in GAG for 24-25, there is only a 1.9% increase. A further reduction by transferring money would leave both schools with insufficient funds to prepare a balanced budget. Our reserves total for the end of 31st August 2022 was NEGATIVE £24,500. We worked diligently last year and have only just come out of negative reserves, finishing 31st August 2023 on POSITIVE £63,000. If this transfer were to go ahead, leaving my schools unable to prepare a balanced budget, the only option I would have would be to contact the ESFA and request a loan. The LA should not be putting the trust in this position. What would be more helpful would be if the value of EHCPs was not attributed to the number of hours that parents can expect their child to have, which is published on the LA website. This would enable us better to plan mitigations and support the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme.
5	anonymous	Despite significantly reducing spending in our school this year, we are struggling to keep a balanced budget with the funding we have. We also have a falling roll which has added negative financial implications. There is extra pressure on our staff to deliver against the provision outlined in the SEVEN EHCPs we have. What would be more helpful would be if the value of EHCPs was not attributed to the number of hours that parents can expect their child to have, which is published on the LA website. It would also be helpful if the SEN Top Up Funding better reflected the funding actually required to deliver against outlined provision, instead of expecting schools to pick up the additional cost. Thank you for offering the opportunity for schools to respond to this consultation. I understand what a difficult position Solihull La are in and that all avenues must be explored.
6	anonymous	* Impact on individual school's budget, which is already stretched due to various budget constraints, including additional funds needing to come out of the budget

		<p>to staff individuals to be employed in order to support high needs pupils, who are unable to access the provision right for them. By taking money off an already stretched budget, the implications are a reduction in staffing/ possible redundancies and high needs pupils, in our mainstream school, not being able to receive the additional support required. This coupled with the 'target reduction' of the number of pupils accessing EHCP's/ being awarded them means schools are needing to cater for high level SEND pupils internally. * The provision for high level SEND pupils in the LA has shown slow progress over the years and whilst there have been some moves to create additional spaces in AP, or specialist provision, this has not been rapid enough and so schools are paying for the backlog of failures in providing high level pupils with what they need. The creation of an additional special school appeared to be a step in the right direction, however the intake of pupils is way too staggered and slow, resulting in main stream schools holding on to pupils whose needs are far too extreme for mainstream. * Adequate respect and time, as well as transparency, should be afforded to schools and their Governing bodies/ Trustees. To raise the issue at Heads Partnership, of a Block Transfer, with only some Heads there and then not provide any clarity on impact/ deadlines etc, is not professional or conducive to shared working. NO time has been given to discuss this with my Trustees and a deadline to respond by, with no time for proper consultation is not a professional way of working and shows a disregard for the views of all Heads. * The current management of high needs provision in Solihull is not well managed, with funding missing in schools/ deadlines missed/ communication poor, so there isn't the faith that this money would be well managed to make a difference to our high needs pupils. * If the LA has reserves, why are these not being used to offset the deficit, where as schools will be expected to draw on their reserves (if they have any) in order to prop up a deficit budget that doesn't belong to them. There is no option for schools to transfer money from anywhere else to prop up their deficit budget, so what should schools be expected to hand over their money.</p>
7	anonymous	<p>We currently overspend our notional SEND budget by around £100 000 per year providing support for children not yet allocated an EHCP or making up the shortfall between the £6 500 school contribution, the additional allocated funding and the LA responsibility to meet the costed provision. As a school, we are already going over and above that which we are legally obliged to fund. Whilst I fully appreciate that this is a government funding issue, it is time to raise this with the appropriate bodies and not continue to take monies from those who cannot afford it.</p>
8	anonymous	<p>The consultation period to school leaders has been too short notice. The transparency of information has been inadequate, I do not feel fully informed yet of what the additional block would provide or difference it would make to our school budget in total for this year and subsequent years. What difference would this make to the pupils in our schools right now has not yet been transparently communicated to school leaders.</p>
9	anonymous	<p>I do not support a schools block transfer of either 0.5% or 1.0% to the High Needs block. I have had to reduce spending this year in order to provide a balanced budget. This has put greater pressure on staff, significantly increased workload and reduced the quality and amount of curriculum resources available for children in the classroom. The DfE has misinformed academy schools regarding their funding allocation for 24-25. Rather than a 2.7% increase in GAG for 24-25, there is only a 1.9% increase. A further reduction by transferring money would leave my school with insufficient funds to prepare a balanced budget. I would then have to approach the ESFA and request a loan. The LA should not be putting my school in this position. What would be more helpful would be if the value of EHCPs was not attributed to the number of hours that parents can expect their child to have, which is published on the LA website. This</p>

		would enable me better to plan mitigations and support the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme.
10	anonymous	Olton Primary is already trying to make cost cutting efforts to try and achieve a balance budget for the next financial year, to have to make additional savings would be detrimental on all the children.
11	anonymous	We have been here before. I remember attending the Council House meeting when this was last raised and the strength of feeling has only grown since then. It is ludicrous that the amount of specialist support has actually decreased since that last meeting and you are asking schools to shoulder the burden. This is happening at a time of reduced budgets. It is simply not possible to run a school with this happening. We are already projecting a significant budget deficit.
12	anonymous	As a school we are anticipating a deficit budget ourselves. If we agree, a member of staff will have to be made redundant. I do not feel comfortable explaining why they are being made redundant, - 'because the High Needs Block is over spent'. The impact on my school would be significant and I am unsure of the impact a transfer would make to the significant high needs deficit.. The LA are in a difficult position, as we are too, this is a much larger issue that needs addressing without further penalising the children of Solihull.
13	anonymous	Having been the Headteacher Representative at Finance Forum for many years, I have been involved in the challenging conversations regarding the deficit within the High Needs Block. I feel that school budgets are already under immense pressure; we should not be held accountable for some of the 'questionable' management decisions that have been made.
14	anonymous	We are already having to allocate a significant part of our schools budget to support high needs pupils, funding child specific support assistants to allow them to access our curriculum and environment.
15	anonymous	We are already predicting a deficit budget for next year and we do not feel we have enough funding currently to support our own pupils with SEND. This is going to make supporting those pupils even harder.
16	anonymous	We are already predicting a deficit budget for the period 24/25 therefore the budget being reduced further will have significant impact on the pupils in school. We already struggle to support our SEND pupils given their complex needs and a reduction in support staff, which would be the result of a further reduced budget, would impact negatively on these pupils in particular.
17	anonymous	We as a school have been able to set a balance budget for this year but we will find this more difficult going forward. A block transfer would compound this issue further.
18	anonymous	Support is hard enough to secure at the moment and this feels like it would make it harder
19	anonymous	Lyndon School currently operates with a shortfall of £59,000, increasing to £198,000 in 2024/25 before the proposed reductions in funding as set out in this consultation. This proposal could push our total shortfall for 2024/2025 and beyond in excess of £320,000 which would need to be managed through further staff reductions to the tune of at least two teachers or around four full time teaching assistants. It should be noted that leaders at Lyndon School have systematically reduced the school's full time equivalent workforce ( <a href="https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/School?urn=142075#workforceform">https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/School?urn=142075#workforceform</a> ) by around

		<p>10% in the last 4 years to ensure it is able to provide and effective and efficient curriculum against a backdrop of rising energy and staffing costs. However, despite this robust approach to rationalise our staffing it is important that forum members recognise that we have been unable eradicate our in year and projected deficit. Whilst our Trust is committed to operating efficiently - it does so with equity and equality in mind for all of our learners including the most vulnerable and those that are disadvantaged. Therefore, further reductions to the workforce at Lyndon School would undoubtedly lead to a decline in provision, care and outcomes for our learners – undoing the school's trajectory of improvement since becoming a sponsored academy with the Summit Learning Trust. We would ask that an alternative be sought to avoid jeopardising the academy's ambition to provide the highest quality of education our learners deserve. Therefore, we are unable to support any amount of funding to the high needs block for 2024-2025.</p>
20	anonymous	Exceptional damage to education provision in the academy
21	anonymous	<p>This was proposed some years ago I believe and was met with similar amounts of concern and to be blunt outrage, certainly amongst secondary school Headteachers. Our worry is that, as it was a number of years ago, this remedial action will do little to improve services whilst taking very important money away from schools and most importantly children. The Local Authority funding or overspend in this area has been well known for many years and appears to have been allowed to grow. Alternative provision in the local authority has been neglected for years leading to an overreliance in overpriced out of borough provisions. I accept that the current management (Tim) has played no part in this historically but proposing to take this money from already very tight school budgets is counterproductive and damaging to the already fragile relationships that exist between the LA and schools. With more and more high needs students in mainstream schools, school budgets have had to adapt to cope with extra staffing and dedicated intervention, this in our school has been at the cost of other areas of the school such as our administrative team and a reduction in teaching staff in key areas, ironically leading to larger class sizes in some areas - compounding the challenges that some of our most vulnerable students face. At a time of great challenge in terms of teacher recruitment and retention coupled with far more students in mainstream school with increasingly challenging and complex needs the proposal to remove budget is simply ridiculous. This is a longstanding issue that has been allowed to develop into a situation that is now exceptionally challenging to resolve. I do not underestimate the scope of the challenge that the LA faces but I firmly believe that removing funding from schools, with no immediate benefit or reduction to the pressures and challenges faced in schools is only going to further erode school and LA relationships and damage the education of the young people that we are all here to support.</p>
22	anonymous	<p>Much of the deficit is due to the historical mismanagement of finance and resources by the Council - not schools. Children who are currently in Solihull schools will feel the impact of these transfers and it will be the most vulnerable children with SEND who it will affect the most. It is increasingly difficult to get an EHCP and Headteachers have been informed that the number of EHCPs in the Local Authority must be reduced. This only makes supporting children with SEND in schools even more difficult. There are a number of schools within the authority who are already at breaking point with their budgets and the impact of this transfer would be significant and detrimental to the effective running of the school and their ability to provide a good education for all children.</p>
23	anonymous	<p>We need to be persuaded that absolutely all measures had been taken to control this budget at LA level before supporting any transfer from the schools block. Information about what has or hasn't been done has been very limited. The time frame for this consultation over a half term break is inadequate. We worry that</p>

		any such transfer will simply mean that schools will be paying for a limited, and sometimes non existent service, twice.
24	anonymous	School funding is tight and schools are already taking, within their funding, greater responsibility for matters historically provided by other services. Schools have to manage their budgets without external support and it seems appropriate that the Local Authority should manage the high needs block without resort to a top slice from funds provided to schools for other purposes
25	anonymous	School budget is tight and this top-slice will have a direct impact upon the quality of education that can be delivered to the very children who are needing support to be in mainstream - the higher needs children. It will lead to more children's needs not being met and these are the very children that are requiring the support in schools. This will be a self-perpetuating problem as it will only serve to increase the number of high needs children needing places.
26	anonymous	Schools are struggling to accommodate a range of extraordinary education and mental health needs from pupils using already challenged and in some cases depleted budgets. The root cause of the overspend is within the high level needs and the notion that building a £15-20 million 150 place special school as having a longer term impact on the pupils and the budget does not add up. The number of pupils attending provisions outside of Solihull - the figures - have not been disclosed so the validity of the build proposal cannot be rationally evaluated. Schools need to be empowered to have as many of these pupils in mainstream but with the right resources and staffing to ensure that our young people do not further impact the system in adult and social care later on in life.. To ask schools to contribute where it has been clearly identified that SEN and our current provision is not working contradicts the request for top slicing school budgets. Alternative options were not clearly explained during the meeting and therefore schools are rightly refusing top slicing as a viable option. Land usage and existing building which are not used to maximum capacity e.g. Council House/Sans Souci could be considered as an alternative funding stream. With an existing deficit of around £25 million and a recurring £2-4 million per annum addition, as a result of our higher needs pupils and those pupils who are not EHCP but require a high level of inclusion support the DSG plan should rightly address how Primary and Secondary schools are better resourced to ensure sustainability of this approach. During the meeting it was not raised as to how or when the suggestion given at Heads Partnership of reducing 11 forms of entry would be considered and the proposed impact this would have on budgets and forward planning.
27	anonymous	Following the recent communications regarding budget deficits and the proposals to withdraw current school funding to pay for shortfalls elsewhere the Governing Board of Dickens Heath CPS have reviewed the approach and cannot support the recommendations made. While we are acutely aware that the current budget adjustments do not directly affect Dickens Heath, we feel a sense of responsibility to stand alongside schools who will be affected in the belief that no children in our Borough should adversely affected by historic mismanagement within the Local Authority when the issues have been clear for all to see for a number of years. From a Dickens Heath perspective I would highlight the following initiatives have taken place at a local level here in the school in order to a) Cope with the increased Special Education demands placed on School b) holistically manage school budgets in a fiscally responsible way. Over a significant period of time, Dickens Heath has invested in developing and upskilling our internal workforce in their knowledge and understanding of the four broad areas of need, so that in each area we have our own expertise. In order to meet the needs of children with a dyslexia, or dyscalculia diagnosis, or profile, we directly employ a qualified dyslexia teacher, who is able to provide bespoke learning for key groups of children. In additional to this, we employ an SEMH



		<p>lead, a lead practitioner for early literacy and language development, as well as having expertise in ASD through our additional resource base for autism. We provide all our own level one assessments to provide the guidance and support that teachers and practitioners require in the classroom and have even developed an early years SEND provision to accommodate those children who struggle to access a mainstream environment. During the Autumn term of 2018, the school undertook a management of change process, in order to adjust and streamline the staffing structure to reduce costs, and to also create wider school roles for SEND. Our office team has also recently been restructured, as another proactive cost saving initiative, in order to reduce the overall head count, but increase areas of responsibility and all senior leaders, including the head teacher are timetabled to provide emergency classroom cover in the absence of the teacher. Budget lines for capitation have been cut year on year and we are doing everything we can to generate additional income through fundraising, lettings and by expanding our before and after school club. The above actions were taken pro-actively in order to manage future risk for the school and mitigate impact on the children we all serve. It is our view that in reaching solutions for the financial crisis the Authority finds itself in, the long term future of our children and thus the future prospects of the next generation should be firmly protected. To date there has been a lack of transparency as to the options that have been explored before reaching the recommendations you have outlined to give schools comfort you have tried hard enough to mitigate impact on education. This includes the opportunity to increase revenue through Council Tax increases which are among the lowest 10% in the UK, increase revenue through commercial initiatives or disposal of assets to settle the deficits. Equally no visibility is given on the efficiency challenges that have been set across other directorates and services in order the mitigate the impact on education which could be argued are less critical in the long term. The school fully appreciates and has sympathy for long-term erosion of funding that has been experienced over time which makes the affordability equation for the Local Authority a challenging one. However, within that context we cannot support a solution that puts children's education at the bottom of priority list and easy pickings for budget cuts.</p>
28	anonymous	<p>In the current funding climate, an up to £14k deduction to our school budget would be significant and unsustainable. Budgets are already facing increased demands and the money required is simply not available. The suggestion is that this would be a one off request, but the reality being that this would stretch to future years. Our school has been in a deficit position following Covid, and have worked incredibly hard on our own financial recovery. A reduction to our budget would subsequently put our school budget in a vulnerable position. The current education system, and the needs of the children, find us in a position where we are funding essential professional services, external to those offered by SMBC, to support the increasingly complex needs of children seen in schools currently. These professional services are being funded from our own budgets. The needs of children are not only of SEND, but an increase in mental health and SEMH needs have also increased, also requiring support. If the schools block transfer proceeded, we would struggle to continue to offer what we do for our current children. The suggestion of placing more children in mainstream schools who may have secured a special school placement, with less support and funding, supports our disagreement with the proposal. Taking a schools block transfer from the education sector is just not a viable or morally correct solution. We are a highly inclusive school, with only 1 child with an EHCP. We are successfully managing the needs of many other children without an EHCP as part of our school offer through our alternative provision. Post Covid, the level of SEMH and SALT needs in school have dramatically risen. We are addressing these needs in school and adapting our provision accordingly. It is a concern to hear at the extraordinary meeting that the council is concerned about job losses within the council and that the thoughts of the council are that schools are not being realistic to expect the council to fund the deficit. SMBC however are prepared via</p>

		<p>a school block transfer to put jobs at risk in schools. With less staff, schools would find it even more challenging to meet the increasing needs and demands. We feel it is absolutely realistic to expect the council to fund the deficit. We are aware of the fact that one of the concerns highlighted is that the high needs deficit will shortly hit the overall council balance sheet. This suggests that a disapplication being made for funding this via other means such as driving council efficiencies, sale of assets, local tax to cover this deficit should be made and other avenues should be fully explored prior to any funding being taken from schools. Education funding should not be a source of improving the balance sheet position of the council. As an academy we have ESFA and DfE expectations placed upon us to maintain a balanced budget year on year, operating on zero or minimal reserves to survive, criteria which is already increasingly difficult to manage with the ever increasing costs schools are facing without this additional pressure.</p>
29	anonymous	<p>We simply cannot afford to lose any more from our school budget. Our budget is already stretched to the limit and further reductions will mean a further loss in staffing. Our staffing capacity is already below where it needs to be. With a significant increase in the needs of the children in school, including some with very high needs (who would not previously have been placed in our school) our staffing is already insufficient to fully meet the needs of the children in our care. High needs children need very significant support meaning that others, including many with special needs or other vulnerabilities, do not receive the support needed on a daily basis. Losing staff will mean that children with SEND and other vulnerabilities who might otherwise cope and flourish in our setting will end up failing (and potentially being excluded), exacerbating their needs and leading to further need for specialist provision. This is a vicious circle. Although we fully recognise that this is not an easy task, the money needs to be found elsewhere as schools are already at the very limit. It simply is not an option to take money from schools on the front line who are doing everything they can to look after vulnerable children. All this will do is add further to pressures on SEND services and Children's Services as schools inevitably fail the most vulnerable children.</p>
30	anonymous	<p>As a small, VA, one form entry Primary School, we are already fighting to set a budget for 2023/24 and have identified that we will need to reduce staffing levels even further. Currently, there are times in the week where there is one class teacher to each class, one Teaching Assistant in Reception, a school Administrative Officer, Deputy Head and Headteacher (just 11 adults) to meet the needs of 200 children. At other times in the week, we have a small number of part-time Teaching Assistants who deliver SEND interventions and work to meet targets and provision linked to EHCPs and Needs Based Plans as well as working with other groups of children and supporting class teacher workload. This enables us to be an inclusive school, providing the best we can for every child, with the very limited resources we have. Any further squeeze on budget will mean we are no longer able to meet the needs of our most vulnerable and SEND children. The impact extends to other children in school and the workload and well-being of staff who are constantly being asked to do more with less. Staff are working under great pressure, with many now considering their future in education. We are the frontline service, dealing with increased numbers of children with more complex and challenging SEND issues with very limited support from external agencies. I believe a further reduction in school budget will be catastrophic to schools in similar situations to George Fentham Endowed School.</p>
31	anonymous	<p>There is acute pressure upon school budgets whilst the number of pupils, particularly in the Early Years, with complex needs having exponentially risen over the past 5 years. The schools in the North are already disadvantaged due to the high proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and are under extra accountability pressure for educational/attendance outcomes. Any loss of income</p>

		<p>will directly impact upon staffing levels for vulnerable pupils, as the only way to save any loss of income will be through staffing. It is a lose/lose for schools in highly deprived areas (the North) as they seem to be the most financially hit whilst having the most and highest number of vulnerable pupils. Kingshurst is also already having a fall in pupil numbers, is losing financial top up funding from the LA so is potentially losing income from three areas. It would seem the in year deficit in the High Needs Block is still being heavily impacted from mismanagement in the past and there needs to be more work carried out in controlling/improving this rather than taking money directly from front line school services. I understand the predicament the LA is in but taking money from schools, whilst being the simplest solution, is a worrying and depressing scenario for all schools, but more so for schools in the North. Whilst a more long term solution will be to have more EHCP pupils in mainstream school, there needs to be urgent support of expertise and resources for mainstream staff. The reality is that this has not been forthcoming to date and the LA SEND support is very mixed in quality and mixed in impact.</p>
32	anonymous	<p>By taking from the schools block, this is taking from schools when needs are higher than ever and would have a detrimental impact on students with high needs now. Part of the reasoning given for the need to make changes is that the % of students with EHCPs in mainstream schools is lower than the national average. Alderbrook has 5% of students with EHCPs, well above the national average, yet the proposal is to take £64k from Alderbrook should a 0.5% transfer be approved - this seems a huge contradiction in that the proposal is to increase the % of EHCPs in mainstream schools, yet this call on funding impacts schools with the highest EHCP % the most! Schools are more in need of funding to support students than ever, and other avenues and solutions must be explored.</p>
33	anonymous	<p>The pull on the school's resources is already extremely high and our school is not in a position to be able to lose a significant portion of funding. We feel it is really important that the Council explore all other options to cover this level of debt that was caused by decisions made by the Council.</p>
34	anonymous	<p>My views mirror those voiced by colleagues in yesterday's Teams meeting. A really difficult situation for everyone.</p>
35	anonymous	<p>Schools are dealing with pre-existing problems that have been amplified by Covid and the cost-of-living crisis. The collapse of services around schools, leaves staff desperately trying to deliver beyond their remit and expertise amid ever-more stretched budgets. We upskill the workforce but retaining staff, and paying them, is proving more and more difficult and when they leave their expertise leaves with them - and so the cycle starts again. Increasingly, more children and young people are unable to access the support they need in the right settings. For parents and staff the slogan published in the SEND review, 'right support, right place, right time' rings hollow. Strategic intentions without a plan, ensuring joined-up thinking across the different sectors that support children and young people, means that it will become increasingly difficult if not impossible to ensure students have real pathways to success. A Schools block transfer will add fuel to the fire that is already raging.</p>
36	anonymous	<p>We do not have enough funds to agree to any block transfer. We do not have any reserves and are facing a dramatic increase in the number of children requiring support whilst having to wait up to 12 months for additional funding. We are heading towards a significant deficit this year and could face another management of change.</p>
37	anonymous	<p>Whilst I understand the challenges, this approach just seems to move money from one area of essential need to another, increasing the difficulties elsewhere rather than being a more long term solution.</p>

38	anonymous	<p>Context Solihull Local Authority is discussing transferring money from the general school fund to the fund dedicated to special needs and alternative learning. They anticipate a shortfall of £4.2 million in the 2024-25 budget for special needs. This includes extra costs for alternative programs and specialized placements. They are already dealing with an overspend from previous years. Although they have plans to manage these costs in the future, they are currently looking at a potential deficit of £3.9 million this year, which could grow to £31.7 million by 2026-27. Transferring funds might be necessary, or else the Department for Education might doubt the credibility of their financial planning. The Local Authority are consulting on either a 0.5% or a 1.0% school block transfer. Arden and Dorridge are not affected by these changes as they only receive the national minimum funding rate per student. As a result, SMBC can't touch this. However, the remainder of our schools are contributing more than the proposed 0.5% and 1.0%. This is because Solihull cannot take any funding off schools who are at the minimum funding level, so they are taking more off other schools so they can still recover 1% of the total SMBC school's budget share. This impacts Lode Heath in particular who would be contributing either 0.77% of their budget or 1.59%.</p> <p>Impact on AMAT Schools – Park Hall, Lode Heath and Coppice To achieve a saving of £114,000 (5%) A reduction in funding within a school has direct and tangible consequences not only for its operations but also for the broader local authority services. One of the immediate repercussions of this cut would be on our Alternative Provision budget, leading us to reduce the available places from 14 to a mere 5. This not only reduces the opportunities for students needing an alternative learning environment but also hampers our ability to cater to their specific needs. Moreover, with limited funds, we'd be forced to reduce our staffing levels. Staff members who are addressing the needs of our persistently absent students, might no longer be with us. Lacking their specialised expertise, the school might struggle to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities and ensure regular school attendance. This would mean we would have to place further demands on local authority services, to make certain that the students' welfare and educational requirements are adequately addressed. To achieve a saving of £238,000 (10%) A reduction in school funding brings about significant challenges that directly affect both the educational infrastructure and the students it serves. A key impact of this financial cutback would be in our Alternative Provision budget, leading to a stark decrease in available places from 14 down to just 2. This reduction significantly limits opportunities for students who benefit from alternative educational settings. Additionally, we would face the difficult decision of diminishing our dedicated staff, particularly those like who play instrumental roles in addressing severe and consistent absenteeism. Alongside these changes, a restructuring of the pastoral system would be inevitable, altering the support for students and families. With these shifts, there's a palpable concern that the schools might find it challenging to fulfil its safeguarding duties. Without the right provisions in place, promoting regular school attendance and guaranteeing the holistic care of students could be jeopardised. Arden MAT do not support the school block transfer proposal because it will impact on the services we provide to our vulnerable children.</p>
39	anonymous	See Arden School MAT response
40	anonymous	As for Arden MAT response
41	anonymous	As for Arden MAT response
42	anonymous	As for Arden MAT