



Northumberland

County Council

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	Date: 26 February 2026	

To Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of All Maintained Schools,

Please find attached a copy of all Schools Budget Shares document for the financial year 2026/27 (commencing April 2026). The formula values contained within the funding statement have been agreed by Schools Forum and the Council, as part of a continuing transition towards a National Funding Formula (NFF).

Northumberland classified by the Department for Education (DfE) as an authority that ‘mirrors the NFF’ in all factors. The ESFA classifies a local authority as “mirroring” the NFF if each of its local factors is within 2.5% of the NFF Values. Northumberland was approximately 1% below NFF values for 2025/26, and while it has been possible to close that gap to 0.5% for 2026/27, it is not possible to match NFF values. Final Formula values for Northumberland for 2026/27 are attached at Appendix A

Other key features of this year’s Schools Block DSG settlement include:

Falling Pupil Numbers: As previously highlighted for 2025/26, the most significant influence on the 2026/27 Schools Block is the fall in pupil numbers in our mainstream schools between Reception and Year 11. For 2025/26, numbers fell by 607, but the October 2025 school census figures are showing a further fall of 529 pupils, split between Primary and Secondary as follows :

CHANGE IN PUPIL NUMBERS :					
Year	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	25/26 to 26/27 Change	
				Nos	%
Primary	22,172	21,716	21,399	-317	-1.46%
Secondary	16,380	16,229	16,017	-212	-1.31%
TOTAL	38,552	37,945	37,416	-529	-1.39%

To provide some financial context to this, if it is remembered that the minimum per pupil funding is £5,115 (Primary) and £6,640 (Secondary) this results in lost funding of over £3 million for Northumberland Schools.

The key contributory factors to this fall in pupil numbers are :

- **Falling Birth Rate:** Due to the age profile of children and young people in Northumberland, it is a fact that the number of students leaving year 11 is significantly higher than the incoming numbers of students at Reception. The previous October 2024 census used by the APT showed 3,130 students in year 11, whereas the reception group “replacing” them this year was 2,828 – a reduction of 302 students.
- **Increasing number of students in special schools:** A comparison of Special School numbers at the October 2024 and 2025 census points shows the number of students in Northumberland maintained special schools and special academies rise by 164 from 1,474 to 1,638.

Other contributory factors are the increases in permanent exclusions, and the number of students being educated out of school, whether EOTAS, EHE etc.

“Rolling in” of 2024/25 Specific Grants into the DSG: Our 2026/27 basic Schools Block DSG Grant figure is £254,598,886, which is some £9,662,853 (3.9%) higher than the equivalent 2025/26 figure of £244,936,033. However this does not represent a “like for like” comparison, as the National Insurance Contributions (NICs) Grant and the Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG), paid as separate grants in 2025/26, have been included in the Schools Block DSG for the first time in 2026/27. The impact of this is demonstrated below:

2025/26 DSG	:	244,936,033
ADD : NICS	:	3,837,756
SBSG	:	3,384,144
ADJUSTED TOTAL	:	252,157,933

It can be therefore suggested that a like for like comparison of the final 2026/27 Schools Block DSG allocation of £254,598,886 shows an increase of £2,440,953 (0.97%) on 2025/26. As highlighted above, falling pupil numbers in mainstream is a major factor in the “below inflation” level of annual increase, as such a high proportion of education funding is distributed on a “per pupil” basis.

Transfer to High Needs Block: Schools Forum in November 2025 agreed to the transfer of a maximum of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2026/27. Consultation with Schools was carried out in relation to this in December. After receiving details of the final figures in December 2025, a decision to transfer £1,271,296 (0.5%) was made, under delegated powers.

De-delegation: De-delegation decisions made by Schools Forum for maintained schools are in line with 2025/26. Both the services involved, and the amounts per unit are unchanged, with the exception of an increase in the Trade Union Facility Time per pupil rate, reflecting additional activity and support provided, which was agreed at School Forum in January 2026.

Capping and Scaling: A small element of capping and scaling has been used for 2026/27 solely to enable rates to be set at the level of 0.5% less than NFF.

The attached document in pdf format is organised in order of your School's 4 digit Department for Education number. All of Northumberland 157 mainstream schools are subject to the same funding formula and included but academies are reminded that their figures are illustrative only. They are funded on an academic year (September to August) basis and the DfE is responsible for the issue of their budget shares via their Annual Funding Letter.

Further information on the funding formula values and transition towards a National Funding Formula is available via Northumberland's School Forum website at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Professionals/Forum.aspx>

The Schools Forum is currently looking for new members, if you are interested, please contact me via the email address below.

Maintained Schools are reminded that Governors need to meet and approve the budget no later than 14th May 2026 and submit to their Accountancy Assistant no later than 15th May 2026. It may not be possible to wait until the next Full Governing Body meeting to approve the budget, where necessary an additional meeting should be arranged where approval of the budget can be the only agenda item.

Any licensed deficit application should also be submitted by the same date, this involves completing the licensed deficit tab in the budget spreadsheet.

Please liaise with your Accountancy Assistant over any queries in relation to your budget.

If there are any queries in relation to the funding formula, please send them to me via bruce.parvin@northumberland.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

Bruce Parvin
Education and Skills Business Manager

Appendix A

FINAL NFF and NCC FORMULA FUNDING VALUES FOR 2026/27

Factor (all figures £)	NFF Values 2025/26	Final NCC Values 2025/26	NFF Values 2026/27	# Final NCC Values 2026/27	Movement in NCC values 25/26 to 26/27	Difference between NCC & NFF 26/27
col (a)	col (b)	col (c)	col (d)	col (e)	col (f)	col (g)
AWPU Primary	3,847	3,800	4,064	4,044	6.42%	-0.49%
KS3	5,422	5,360	5,686	5,658	5.56%	-0.49%
KS4	6,113	6,040	6,410	6,378	5.60%	-0.50%
Lump Sum Primary / Secondary	145,100	143,300	152,700	151,937	6.03%	-0.50%
Deprivation - Free School Meals						
Primary	495	490	505	505	3.06%	0.00%
Secondary	495	490	505	505	3.06%	0.00%
Deprivation – FSM6						
Primary	1060	1,050	1210	1,204	14.67%	-0.50%
Secondary	1,555	1,540	1,725	1,716	11.43%	-0.52%
Deprivation – IDACI:						
Primary Band F	235	235	240	239	1.70%	-0.42%
Band E	285	285	290	289	1.40%	-0.34%
Band D	445	445	455	453	1.80%	-0.44%
Band C	490	490	500	498	1.63%	-0.40%
Band B	520	515	530	527	2.33%	-0.57%
Band A	685	680	700	697	2.50%	-0.43%
Secondary Band F	340	340	345	343	0.88%	-0.58%
Band E	450	450	460	458	1.78%	-0.43%
Band D	635	635	650	647	1.89%	-0.46%
Band C	695	695	710	706	1.58%	-0.56%
Band B	745	740	760	756	2.16%	-0.53%
Band A	950	945	970	965	2.12%	-0.52%
Low Attainment						
Primary	1,175	1,170	1,200	1,194	2.05%	-0.50%
Secondary	1,785	1,775	1,825	1,816	2.31%	-0.49%
EAL						
Primary	595	590	610	607	2.88%	-0.49%
Secondary	1,595	1,585	1,630	1,622	2.33%	-0.49%
MOBILITY : Primary	965	960	985	980	2.08%	-0.51%
Secondary	1,385	1,380	1,415	1,408	2.03%	-0.49%
SPARSITY(max): Primary	57,400	57,100	58,600	58,307	2.11%	-0.50%
Middle	83,400	83,000	85,200	84,774	2.14%	-0.50%
Secondary/All Through	83,400	83,000	85,200	84,774	2.14%	-0.50%
# notification of final ESFA approval of rates received 17 Feb 2026						
Capping		-		4.6%		
Scaling		-		50%		
Minimum Funding Guarantee		0.0%		0.0%		
<i>(range of -0.5% to 0% dictated by ESFA for 2026/27)</i>						