## SEC response to the DfE consultation on [reforming how local authority school improvement functions are funded](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fconsultations%2Freforming-how-local-authority-school-improvement-functions-are-funded%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_campaign%3Dgovuk-notifications%26utm_source%3D27718766-59a0-4fa6-ae80-87f0faa1c1b0%26utm_content%3Dimmediately&data=04%7C01%7CPStobbs%40ncb.org.uk%7C00684e59a64a42aa93c008d9ae622b9b%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637732558918536007%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=eFsafCpdojmdwizr%2BVwCAKgrP0ULziqKdtB1uqz%2Bn8E%3D&reserved=0)

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| 10. We believe that instances of councils exercising formal intervention powers remain relatively low, and that since its introduction, this grant has primarily supported improvement functions such as early support and challenge to improve individual school performance, which overlaps with wider (non-core) improvement provision.Do you agree that this is the case. If not, please explain  |

This may be the case, but school improvement is an area where schools and local authorities have significant and overlapping responsibilities: both are required to identify and meet the needs of children with special educational needs, have regard to the Code of Practice, and to co-operate with each other.

The quality of each school's response to these duties is significantly determined by the quality of their overall provision. The role of high quality teaching as being a key starting point in meeting needs is recognised in a number of key frameworks: teacher standards, Code of Practice and the Ofsted inspection framework. School failure shifts responsibility for children with SEN to the local authority with LAs having to take responsibility for EHC needs assessments and EHC plans.

SEC believes the improvement grant is a small but important reflection of the local authority responsibilities in this area. Its removal leaves LAs without a small but important influence in this area.

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| 11. We are proposing to (i) remove the Grant (Proposal 1), and (ii) enable councils to de-delegate funds via their schools forum to ensure they are sufficiently funded to exercise all of their improvement activities, including all core improvement activities (Proposal 2).Do you agree that, taken together, these proposals will allow councils to continue to ensure they are adequately funded for core improvement activities; and therefore do not impose a new burden? If not, please explain. |

We think that the local authority improvement grant is a small but important recognition of LA responsibilities and influence in an area of overlapping responsibilities, so should remain directly funded.

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| 12. Bearing in mind Proposals 1 and 2, are there any aspects of our guidance to councils on their role in school improvement which could usefully be clarified to aid understanding of what councils are accountable for with respect to improvement and how it should be funded?(For example, our School Causing Concern guidance.) |

We think that the local authority improvement grant is a small but important recognition of LA responsibilities and influence in an area of overlapping responsibilities, so should remain directly funded.

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| 13. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires that public bodies consider the potential effects of key decisions on groups with protected characteristics. The relevant protected characteristics for the purposes of the PSED are: sex; race; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity; gender reassignment; and age.Please let us know, providing evidence where possible, if you believe any of the proposals set out in this consultation will have the potential to have an impact on specific groups, in particular those with relevant protected characteristics. |

With special educational needs as a proxy for disability, we think this proposal holds the potential to have a disproportionate impact on disabled pupils, see points made above.