



**Confederation
of School Trusts**

Key Questions

Ten key questions for executive and governance leaders to ask

The Confederation of School Trusts (CST) is the national organisation and sector body for academy and multi-academy trusts, advocating for, connecting and supporting executive and governance leaders. More information about membership of CST can be found [here](#). CST is completely apolitical. We represent our members to advance education in the public interest.

What has gone before

1. Total school spending per pupil fell by 8% in real terms between 2009-10 and 2017-18. What did this mean in real terms in the context of the funding we received for our school/ group of schools? How did we/ have we dealt with this from a strategic financial planning point of view?
2. What assumptions did we make about additional employer costs and more recently the ending of the 1% public sector pay cap? How has this impacted on our budget?
3. There has been a 55% real-terms cut in local authority service spending and a real-terms cut of more than 20% to school sixth form spending per student between 2009-10 and 2017-18. How has this impacted on our school/ group of schools? How have we responded?

In the present

4. What assumptions have we made about the transition to the National Funding Formula? How will this affect our school/ group of schools? Is our local authority formula allocation different from the NFF allocation? What is our transition plan?
5. Do we know the likely scenarios resulting from changes to variable factors in our school/ group of schools? For example:
 - pupil numbers;
 - average teacher costs;
 - average cost of all other staff; and
 - inflationary costs including employer contributions to pensions and national insurance?
6. Have we undertaken benchmarking related to among other variables:
 - Teacher contact ratio;
 - Pupil-teacher ratio; and
 - Proportion of funding spent on teachers?
7. Have we examined closely the investment in our curriculum, and used an established sector-led approach to integrated curriculum financial planning to determine affordability? (insert hyperlink) What action have we taken/ do we need to take as a consequence of this exercise?

Looking to the future

8. What assumptions are we making about variable factors, cost pressures and income going forwards? Are these realistic? Have we undertaken a scenario analysis so that we know and can plan for both worst-case and best-case scenarios?
9. In the next three years, how many teachers can the school/ group of schools afford given income and inflationary cost pressures? How many are needed to deliver our curriculum ambition for the school/ group of schools? If there is a mismatch, what are our options?
10. Have we undertaken a comprehensive risk assessment that includes assumptions about variables, cost pressures and income? Is this regularly reviewed and are mitigations adjusted accordingly?