



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Condition Spend Data Collection (CSDC)

Data Collection Report

This document provides information about the uses of the School Condition Allocation (SCA) in the 2015 to 2016 financial year (FY)

October 2017

Of interest to local authorities and multi-academy trusts who received SCA funding in 2015 to 2016, and the general public.

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the uses of the School Condition Allocation (SCA) in the 2015 to 2016 financial year (FY). SCA is a capital fund allocated on an annual basis to local authorities (LAs) and larger multi-academy trusts (MATs)¹, to maintain the condition of their facilities.

Smaller multi-academy trusts and single academy trusts which do not get SCA, were instead eligible to apply for Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) funding, and do not feature in this report. Similarly, separate funding arrangements for the voluntary aided schools sector did not permit the Condition Spend Data Collection (CSDC) to collect comparable spend information for the purposes of this report².

Total SCA funding allocated in 2015 to 2016 was £614.2 million and the responsible bodies it provides for included 151 LAs and 55 MATs. The Condition Spend Data Collection (CSDC) gathered data from 163 of these responsible bodies, showing how they spent their allocations during the FY.

We compared the approach used by responsible bodies to identify the works to be delivered through the use of SCA and the expenditure then allocated to schools. This involved comparison of the total value of works supported by SCA, together with any supplementary funding if provided by responsible bodies.

The value of our 'condition' funding provided for use during the 2015 to 2016 FY was the sum of SCA and, in the case of some of the MATs, Academy Capital Maintenance Fund (ACMF) money brought forward from previous years.

We collected data directly from 55 MATs and 108 LAs using defined automated and manual processes. Responsible bodies carried out their own quality checks on their data. The department consulted a number of stakeholders and external advisors in developing this data collection and is grateful for their support.

The uses of our funding at each of the schools named in responsible bodies' CSDC returns, is given in Annex A³. Major works/repairs will also have been delivered at some schools, which are not named in the Annex, using purely funds other than SCA. The expenditure quoted in Annex A does not include details of supplementary funding which some responsible bodies told us about, as the principal purpose of this report is to provide information about use of SCA⁴. However, our analysis of how responsible bodies used condition funding did incorporate any supplementary funds that were reported to the ESFA.

The CSDC started on 27 June 2016 and closed 28 February 2017.

¹ Larger MATs: those responsible for at least 5 schools and 3,000 pupils.

² The Governing bodies of Voluntary-Aided schools receive capital funding through a dedicated pot of funding annexed to SCA, but paid directly at project level and for this reason, has not been included in the CSDC.

³ As ring-fenced (restricted use) funding, awarded by ESFA in previous financial years for the same purposes as SCA, we have used our records of ACMF remaining and brought forward to the 2015-16 FY. References to use of SCA during the 2015-16 FY, in this report, include the use of a fund of both SCA and any ACMF brought forward.

⁴ The Annex to this report gives details of the value of SCA used but not any other finances, e.g. supplementary funding.

Summary of Key Findings

Key findings are:

1. The responsible bodies studied made use of SCA across their estate in 2015 to 2016, delivering works at 4,688 schools.
2. The total value of SCA expenditure, (including ACMF funds which some MATs had brought forward from the previous year) was £65.0 million and £363.8 million for the MATs and LAs respectively. This concerns all 55 MATs and 108 of the 151 LAs which submitted CSDC returns.
3. 60% of the responsible bodies' returns quoted use of other funding sources to supplement SCA (supplementary funding). Reported supplementary funding varied greatly across responsible bodies, as a proportion of total expenditure ranging from less than 1% to around 95%. A number of items of works and major repairs delivered with SCA in 2015 to 2016 were supported by the use of high proportion of supplementary funding (4% of responsible bodies used supplementary funding to a value of between 75% and 95% of their total expenditure).
4. Of the total value of SCA and other funding allocated by the responsible bodies to their schools, as given in CSDC returns, 86% and 93% of this was used by MATs and LAs respectively, during the financial year.
5. MATs used 69% and LAs used 80% of the funding on a combination of condition, block replacement, compliance, health and safety works and emergency works. Turning to improving 'suitability' of facilities, MATs used more than 18% of funding on improving 'suitability' and LAs used 6% on this.
6. Responsible bodies' CSDC returns listed spend against a number of different work types. For both MATs and LAs the work type 'block replacement', had the highest average value, at around £153,000 and £723,000 per project respectively. This LA spend was often supported in part by the use of supplementary funding (and unlike MATs this may typically include government funds brought forward from previous years). MATs' CSDC returns did not report any use of supplementary funding for Block Replacements.
7. MATs spent proportionally more on compliance, health and safety than LAs, (12%, as compared to 4% for LAs). Any of the responsible bodies may however, use other funding streams to finance 'health and safety' projects, and many other types of capital works.
8. 97% of respondents reported that they used a capital planning process to determine how to use their SCA. 23 (42%) MATs and 65 (60%) LAs used condition surveys in prioritising the selection of works/major repair projects. Another 61 responsible bodies; 37 (34%) LAs and 24 (44%) MATs used a combination of information sources, eg surveys or bidding rounds.

Background

The department is investing £4.2 billion in maintenance and improvement across the schools estate between 2015 and 2018, enabling local authorities and multi-academy trusts to maintain their school buildings. This includes funding allocated through the CIF and LCVAP programmes as well as SCA. The department is also rebuilding or refurbishing buildings at over 500 schools through the Priority School Building Programme - an investment of £4.4 billion. Information on the PSBP can be found at [Priority School Building Programme: overview](#).

SCA is allocated to bodies directly responsible for the condition of the schools' estates, given that they are best placed to identify and address the condition needs of their schools.

Responsible bodies will be aware of the obligation to plan and prioritise delivery of works/major repairs. They are often guided by findings from statutory inspections and any condition surveys undertaken.

This report has been prepared to provide information on SCA so that those with an interest in the condition of school buildings can understand how responsible bodies have used this funding. This annual funding allocation directly supported £429 million of capital works and major repairs, for the responsible bodies that supplied CSDC data.

The CSDC is the first time the department has asked for this SCA data from MATs and LAs together.

The department continues to deliver various services to support responsible bodies in fulfilling obligations associated with the management of the estate and to increase understanding of this function; eg the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) published [Essential School Maintenance - a guide for schools](#) to assist responsible bodies in delivering the maintenance of facilities and to comply with prevailing legislation.

SCA funding to maintain the condition of an estate

SCA was introduced for the 2015 to 2016 FY. Along with CIF and the Local Authority Coordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP), SCA has replaced the department's previous maintenance funding streams, (eg the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund (ACMF)) and provides LAs and larger MATs with a capital fund.

SCA is for delivery of works/refurbishments, typically including major repairs or replacements within or around schools' built assets. It may support block (building) replacements and extensions.

Effective SCA use tackles poor building condition, substantial energy efficiency/improvement, suitability, or health and safety issues. Other financial resources

may be made available by a responsible body in addressing a planned requirement to deliver capital works.

The CSDC did not gather data on capital works not funded by SCA. It therefore does not necessarily give a full picture of all work undertaken to improve school condition. Some responsible bodies have other means of supporting an estate; eg the delivery of work/equipment/funds for a specific project by a MAT's sponsor.

CSDC did not include data on works carried out directly by the department, e.g. the rebuilding or replacement of whole schools or blocks as part of the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP).

Management of condition

Operating within the terms of any prevailing requirements, it is up to responsible bodies to decide how they spend their SCA according to local priorities and their strategic renewal/development plans. As a guide, the department has published high-level priorities as:

- Keeping buildings safe and in good working order
- Tackling building condition issues, including health and safety
- Improving energy efficiency of buildings

SCA may also be used to support expansion-projects which simultaneously address the condition of the buildings. An instance of this could be a building receiving an extension, involving the removal of an external wall which would otherwise have required major repairs.

The CSDC submissions indicate that the majority of responsible bodies are using condition surveys to support the decision making processes for managing investment in the estate. Surveys may identify the condition of school facilities and changes over time.

Aims and Objectives

The department's aim in gathering this data was to provide:

- high-level information which may usefully assist the public's understanding of the nature of works/major repairs being delivered by responsible bodies, through the use of SCA funding
- an assurance that the funding allocated is being used for the intended purpose

Methodology

The data collection identified the different purposes (work type) of delivering capital works/major repairs using SCA. Responsible bodies were also asked to state (using a limited a number of options), the process by which they prioritise allocation of SCA for capital works delivery.

A generic example of the template used to collect data is contained in Annex B of this report.

Each responsible body's Accounting Officer or Director of Children's Services was asked to verify that the information submitted concerned spending as effected in accordance with the prevailing funding agreements.

CSDC from 108 local authorities and all 55 larger MATs was reviewed and compared. (In total 163 or 79% of the responsible bodies we asked to supply data). This was a voluntary data collection from local authorities and not all chose to respond.

The use of funding reported in Annex A, accounts for approximately 90% of the sum of the 2015-16 FY SCA awarded to the relevant responsible bodies, (including ACMF carried forward).

The analysis work checked names of the schools listed in CSDC returns, which also included a unique reference number (URN) for each school. In some instances, the URN given in a CSDC return may have changed since the time of this data collection. URNs did however, allow each school location to be identified using the online public facility 'Get Information About Schools'⁵.

ESFA already has some comparable spend data from a limited sample of MATs from the 2014 to 2015 FY and this was reviewed with the aim of identifying any changes in patterns of spend (see 'Findings', overleaf).

Some of the SCA spend was not reported in a form which allowed identification of spend at an individual school or on a set work type. Examples included costs given for an estate wide project. For the purposes of analysis, in some cases expenditure was apportioned to the schools served, e.g. where a return advised a single cost for a project serving two named schools. In Annex A, the total cost of projects not linked to a specific work type is shown against 'Other/combined spend' for the applicable responsible bodies.

⁵ Named school locations were checked by reference to 'Get Information About Schools' (formerly EduBase2); an online database of schools in England and Wales, available to the public. The unique reference number (URN) for a school will change if the responsible body for the same changes. The name of the school given in the Annex to this report may differ to the name of the school at the time that the work was completed.

Findings

General

Information received provided a high-level picture of the investment in the estate.

The data set out in 'Annex A' is divided into responsible bodies, both LAs and MATs and lists schools which benefited from SCA funding during the 2015 to 2016 FY.

MATs and LAs used 50% and 57% respectively of the funding allocated on work types under the heading 'condition' e.g. roof replacement, whole block refurbishment. MATs used 18% of funding on suitability and LAs used 6%.

For both MATs and LAs the work type 'block replacement' featured the highest average unit value of spend per project (approximately £153,000 and £723,000 per project for MATs and LAs respectively). For block replacements LA spend was in part often supported by the use of supplementary funding whereas MATs did not use supplementary funding for block replacements.

MATs spent proportionally more of their allocations on compliance, health and safety (H&S) than LAs (12% MATs as opposed to 4% for LAs).

A comparison between items of MATs' 2015 to 2016 FY SCA spend data and the ACMF spend data for MATs from the previous FY, indicates similar patterns of spend. It should be noted that the two data sets cover a different number of responsible bodies (see Table 1 overleaf)

Percentage of all funding used on each area of work by multi-academy trusts in receipt of SCA

	Block replacements (eg, demolish building and erect new structure)	Condition (eg, remove leaking roof covering and install new)	Compliance and health and safety (eg, install new water piping to reduce risk of legionella)	Accessibility (eg, install new hand rails to assist persons using stairs)	Expansion (eg, provide building work to increase capacity of a building)	Suitability (eg, install increased power supply and additional plug sockets for a room, to permit increased use of computers)	Other Categories of spend (eg, efficiency)	Totals
2015 to 2016 FY SCA funding use	2.0%	49.5%	12.0%	1.1%	8.9%	17.7%	8.8%	100.0%
2014 to 2015 FY ACMF funding use ACMF funding was replaced by the SCA Funding from 2015	5.2%	51.0%	11.9%	1.3%	7.0%	15.6%	8.0%	100.0%

Table 1

Prioritisation of spend/underspend arising

97% of respondents gave information suggesting that management processes are used to ensure funding is suitably allocated. 54% of the responsible bodies employed the use of condition surveys. Whilst 23 MATs and 65 LAs used condition surveys in prioritising allocation of funding another 61 of all responsible bodies (44% of MATs and 34% of LAs who supplied the data) used a combination of information sources, including bidding rounds.

Both groups of responsible bodies reported underspends. For MATs, the terms and conditions of their SCA grants normally require funding to be spent by the end of the financial year. CSDC data and requests received separately from MATs to carry forward funding to the following financial year indicate that there are instances of works needing to be carried out across more than one financial year. This includes the need to carry out works during school holidays, or to deliver larger projects requiring more than one year to complete. (One instance was reported of a large underspend by an LA which was carrying forward the majority of its allocation for major projects the following year and using holiday periods for delivery).

Conclusions

SCA funding is a substantial part of the capital used to maintain the condition of schools. On the basis of the data we obtained from 79% of responsible bodies receiving this funding for the 2015 to 2016 FY, it appears SCA is being used for its intended purpose.

Responsible bodies have assembled information to inform them of condition and other needs when deciding the allocation of funding to schools. The data indicates that responsible bodies are using appropriate strategies to prioritise spend across their school estate. More than half of respondents told us that they used condition surveys to help them to prioritise spend, with other responsible bodies reporting use of bidding rounds or a combination of activities, typically operated under structured processes, to determine the allocation of funding to each school.

In general, levels of underspend by responsible bodies were not of concern although MATs had a greater proportion of unused funds than LAs. We do not have data on all MATs' sources of funding and investment in the estate so this data collection does not necessarily give a full picture.

We are however, aware that reduced spending within a financial year can occur due to complications with planned works, sometimes due to matters beyond the control of a responsible body:

- From our Property Data Survey and other records we have from surveyors inspecting parts of an estate, we have become aware that where a responsible body is newly formed or acquires older buildings, the effort to plan works to address condition may have to be increased.
- Good planning may mean that responsible bodies deliver projects over a long period/making use of specific holiday periods, having established this is more effective than delivering works in a very short timescale or within a single financial year.
- Poor weather can be a factor in slowing works delivery and the closing months of a financial year often include this. All of the spend reported is for work effected but may include part delivery of projects subject to completion early in the next FY.

The department has responded positively to the conclusion above:

- grant conditions for SCA have been amended for future years to make it easier for responsible bodies to save up funding across more than one year, in order to deliver better value for money works.
 - from the 2017 to 2018 FY, MATs and academy chains in receipt of SCA can carry forward up to 100% of their SCA into the following financial year.

- in addition, the department is updating its guidance for responsible bodies to help them use their SCA effectively. This will include new guidance for schools and responsible bodies on managing the estate incorporating updated advice from 'Essential School Maintenance'⁶.
- information from the Condition Data Collection (CDC) programme will further assist the department in recognising responsible bodies' effective use of SCA funding, addressing condition as a priority.

The CSDC is being repeated this year, in relation to SCA spend undertaken during the 2016 to 2017 FY. This will enable us to build on the evidence presented in this report and to increase awareness of how government funding is used to maintain the condition of the education estate.

⁶ A link to 'Essential School Maintenance' is included in page 13 of this report (Further information).

Further information

Other information sources on GOV.UK:

- [Essential School Maintenance - a guide for schools](#)
- [Schools financial health and efficiency](#)
- [Capital funding for multi-academy trusts \(MATs\)](#)
- [School capital funding allocations: 2015 to 2018](#)

Annexes

- [Annex A \(i\): Summary of capital spend data for multi-academy trusts \(MATs\)](#)
- [Annex A \(ii\): Summary of capital spend data for local authorities \(LAs\)](#)
- [Annex B: Generic Data Collection Template/Category Descriptors](#)



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