

DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY 10TH DECEMBER, 2013

AT 6.00PM
AT SALTWELLS EDUCATION
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
BOWLING GREEN ROAD
NETHERTON
DUDLEY
DY2 9LY

If you (or anyone you know) is attending the meeting and requires assistance to access the venue and/or its facilities, could you please contact Democratic Services in advance and we will do our best to help you

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You can view information about Dudley MBC on
www.dudley.gov.uk



IMPORTANT NOTICE

MEETINGS AT SALTWELLS EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, NETHERTON

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Centre

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Your ref:	Our ref:	Please ask for:	Telephone No.
	HS	Helen Shepherd	01384 815236

2nd December, 2013

Dear Member

Dudley Schools Forum – Tuesday 10th December, 2013

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Dudley Schools Forum, which will be held at Saltwells Education Development Centre, Bowling Green Road, Netherton, Dudley, DY2 9LY on Tuesday 10th December, 2013 at 6.00 pm, to consider the business set out in the Agenda below.

Light refreshments will be available from 5.30 pm.

Yours sincerely

Director of Corporate Resources

Distribution:-

All Members of the Dudley Schools Forum, namely:-

Mrs Belcher	Mr Conway	Mr Dallaway	Mr Derham	Mrs Garratt
Mrs Hannaway	Mr Harris	Mrs Hazlehurst	Mr B Jones	Mr Kelleher
Mr Kirk	Mr Nesbitt	Mr Patterson	Ms Pearce	Mr Platford
Mrs Quigley	Ms Richards	Mr Ridley	Ms P Rogers	Mrs Ruffles
Mr Shaw	Mr Ward	Mr Warren	Mr Weaver	Mrs Withers

- c.c - Councillor Crumpton – Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services;
- Councillor Marrey – Chair of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee;
- Jane Porter – Director of Children’s Services;
- Pauline Sharratt – Assistant Director of Children’s Services
- Ian McGuff – Assistant Director of Children’s Services;
- Karen Cocker – Children’s Services Finance Manager, Directorate of Corporate Resources;
- Sue Coates – Principal Accountant, Directorate of Corporate Resources.

AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIR
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.
3. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS
To report the appointment of any substitutes for this meeting of the Forum.
4. MINUTES
To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 24th October, 2013 (attached).
5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
Any other matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 24th October, 2013 not included on the agenda for this meeting.
6. UNION FACILITIES TIME IN SCHOOLS FUNDED BY THE DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (PAGES 1 - 7)
To consider the report of the Director of Children's Services.
7. BEHAVIOURAL PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURE (PAGES 8 - 12)
To consider the report of the Director of Children's Services.
8. DE-DELEGATIONS: 2013/14 PROJECTED OUTTURN AND 2014/15 PROPOSALS (PAGES 13 - 25)
To consider the report of the Director of Children's Services.
9. BUDGET FACT SHEET (PAGES 26 - 27)
To consider the report of the Director of Children's Services.
10. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT PROJECTED OUTTURN UPDATE 2013/14 (PAGES 28 - 31)
To consider the report of the Director of Children's Services.
11. DUDLEY GRID FOR LEARNING - UPDATE
To receive a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services.

12. FORMER PENSNETT SCHOOL SITE - UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services.

13. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP UPDATE AND THE DfE OPERATIONAL AND GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES (PAGES 32 - 68)

To consider the report of the Director of Children's Services.

14. SCHOOLS FORUM WEBSITE (PAGE 69)

To consider the report of the Director of Children's Services.

15. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

21 st January, 2014	Saltwells EDC, Bowling Green Road, Netherton, DY2 4LY
25 th February, 2014	Saltwells EDC, Bowling Green Road, Netherton, DY2 4LY
18 th March, 2014	Saltwells EDC, Bowling Green Road, Netherton, DY2 4LY
3 rd June, 2014	Saltwells EDC, Bowling Green Road, Netherton, DY2 4LY
8 th July, 2014	Saltwells EDC, Bowling Green Road, Netherton, DY2 4LY

DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

Thursday 24th October, 2013 at 6.00 pm
at Saltwells Education Development Centre,
Bowling Green Road, Netherton, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Mr Ridley – Chair

Mr Patterson – Vice-Chair

Mrs J Belcher, Mr J Conway, Mr I Dallaway, Mr C Derham, Mr B Jones, Mr J Kelleher, Mr P Nesbitt, Mr B Patterson, Mr L Ridley, Ms P Rogers and Mr B Warren.

Person(s) not a member of the Forum but having an entitlement to attend meetings and speak

The Director of Children's Services

Officers

Children's Services Finance Manager, Senior Principal Accountant and the Assistant Democratic Services Officer

1. INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed Members that the Dudley Schools Forum meeting that was scheduled to be held on 20th November, 2013, had now been cancelled due to lack of items for consideration.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Mrs A Garratt, Mrs A Hannaway, Mr P Harris, Mr S Hudson, Mr P Jones, Mr D Kirk, Ms T Pearce, Mr S Platford, Mrs A Richards, Mr N Shaw, Mr M Weaver, Mrs G Withers and Councillor Crumpton.

At this juncture, the Vice-Chair expressed his disappointment at the lack of attendance by Members at the meeting and considered it to be unacceptable. The Chair agreed to address this situation.

3. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER

It was noted that Mr B Jones had been appointed as a substitute member for Mr S Hudson, for this meeting of the forum only.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 17th September, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No items were raised under this agenda item.

6. CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHANGES FOR 2014/15

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted to provide consultation feedback and to obtain the views from members of the forum in relation to the proposed changes to the school funding arrangements for mainstream schools for the 2014/15 financial year, prior to implementation.

As the closing date for the consultation exercise was 11th October, 2013, after the agenda was distributed to members, an updated Table 1 and Appendix A to the report were submitted, indicating all comments made, to members at the meeting.

The Senior Principal Accountant explained the voting procedure for those members present and as prescribed in the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, stated that only School members and Early Year representatives would be eligible to vote in relation to the formulae to be used by the local authority to determine the amounts to be allocated.

The Senior Principal Accountant referred to each question of the consultation individually and members expressed their views and voted on their preferred proposal option as follows:

Question 1 Proposal: Both the quantum and funding methodology for deprivation will be reviewed during 2014/15

Decision: The majority of members present at the meeting agreed with the proposal.

Question 2 Proposal: To fund lump sum for Primary schools at £130K and Secondary schools at £100K with re-allocation of funding released to pupils in KS3 and KS4 through the basic per pupil funding. (*Option 2*)

Decision: All members present at the meeting agreed with the proposal

Question 3 Proposal: To implement the proposed funding methodology in order to identify schools that receive insufficient funding to cover the first £6,000 of costs for High Needs pupils from April 2014.

Decision: The majority of members present at the meeting agreed with the proposal

At this juncture it was requested and agreed by the Director of Children's Services that the wording of the proposal for question 4 be amended so that it read the same as what was stated in the detail column for question 4.

Question 4 Revised Proposal: To fund 50% of the MFG in 2014/15 from a claw back of gains and 50% from all Schools.

Decision: All members present at the meeting agreed with the revised proposal.

With regard to question 5 – De-delegation of funding for services, it was stated that this would not be considered at this meeting and would be discussed further at agenda item 7.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in report submitted and as circulated at the meeting in relation to the school funding arrangements and changes for 2014/15, be noted.
- (2) That the views and comments of the forum members made at the meeting and the revision of the wording of the proposal for question 4, be taken into consideration by the Director of Children's Services when implementing the school funding arrangements for mainstream schools for the 2014/15 financial year.

7. SCHOOL FUNDING REFORMS – DE-DELEGATIONS 2014/15

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted to provide consultation feedback in respect of those services eligible for de-delegation in the 2014/15 financial year.

The Children's Services Finance Manager presented the report and in doing so stated that a further report would be submitted to the Forum in December, at which point members would be requested to make their decision and vote on the de-delegation of services for the 2014/15 financial year and emphasised which members would and would not be eligible to vote on this item.

She referred to table 1 and table 4 of the report submitted, which outlined the de-delegated services for 2013/14 and the proposed de-delegations for 2014/15 and stated that a full and frank discussion would need to be had at the Headteachers Budget Working Group highlighting the potential impact on services if they were not to be de-delegated.

Arising from a question raised by the Vice-Chair, the Children's Services Finance Manager confirmed that Union facility time was included in the services that were currently de-delegated, but as additional schools had now transferred to Academy status, the funding for this service in 2014/15 could potentially diminish. The Director of Children's Services stated that a national consultation was currently taking place with regard to Union facility time and feedback from this would be available in the New Year.

The Vice-Chair also requested that the eligibility criteria as to who could and could not vote on this item at the meeting in December be made clear to all members of the forum.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted in relation to School Funding Reforms De-Delegations 2014/15, be noted.

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING REFORM PRO-FORMA

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on Dudley's submission of the Local Authority Funding Reform Pro-forma for 2014/15 to the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

As referred to in the report submitted, the completed pro-forma was circulated to members at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted and circulated at the meeting, in relation to the Local Authority's funding reform pro-forma, be noted.

9. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP – UPDATE

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the current position in relation to new appointments and vacancies to the Schools Forum membership.

The Children's Services Finance Manager presented the report and in doing so referred to the previous meeting where the revised constitution was discussed and which, subject to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning approval, would be implemented from January 2014 to comply with statutory regulations.

Arising from a question raised in relation to the election process for Academy School nominations, it was confirmed that this process would be carried out by the Governors Support Team on behalf of the Director of Children's Services.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, in relation to Schools Forum Membership, be noted.

10. UPDATE ON THE SCHOOLS FORUM WEBSITE

The Children's Services Finance Manager gave a verbal update on the development of the Dudley Schools Forum website and confirmed that discussions with ICT had progressed and it was anticipated that a draft site would be available from mid November. It was also confirmed that the new webpage would be situated within the dudley.gov website under the Community Forums sections and a demonstration would be provided at the next meeting.

The Vice-Chair asked if Members could be notified when the site would be 'live', if it was prior to the meeting in December.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the verbal update on the development of the Dudley Schools Forum website, be noted.
- (2) That all members of the forum be notified when the new website would be live, if this date was to be prior to the next meeting in December.

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm.

CHAIR

Dudley Schools Forum - 10 December 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Union Facilities Time in Schools Funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant

Purpose of Report

1. To update Schools Forum in respect of a review of the funding of the school related union facilities time arrangements and to recommend the methodology for allocating funding for 2014/15.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – 16 October 2013. With recommendations as detailed at paragraph 19 of this report.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. As part of the 2013/14 school funding reforms the DfE prescribed which additional services were to be delegated to schools from 2013/14.
4. However, recognising that authorities had centrally retained these services for the greater good of all schools, the DfE allowed any of these delegated services to be 'de-delegated' where maintained mainstream schools agree that a service should be provided centrally on the grounds of economies of scale or pooled risk.
5. De-delegation is only available to maintained mainstream schools. Academy schools will have their funding delegated automatically and can buy back the services of the local authority independently outside of the de-delegation arrangements for maintained schools.
6. It is the responsibility of Schools Forum, in a phase of primary or secondary school members, to collectively agree if any of these services are to be provided centrally and the funding 'de-delegated'. Thus mainstream maintained schools agreement is to return their funding to the local authority on an annual basis.
7. The final delegated budget available to each school will then exclude these amounts and the services would be administered centrally through the Director of Children's Services together with any income from Academy or Special school's buying the service.

Action for Schools Forum

8. To note the report and the recommendations of the Director of Children's Services.

Ian McGuff
Assistant Director Children's Services
15th November 2013

Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Union Facilities Time in Schools Funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant

Purpose

1. To update Schools Forum in respect of a review of the funding of the school related union facilities time arrangements and to recommend the methodology for allocating funding for 2014/15.

Background and Context

2. The funding of union facility time enables trade unions to represent the interests of their members either individually or collectively on matters such as:
 - a. Terms and conditions of employment;
 - b. Health, safety, welfare, and other issues relating to the working environment;
 - c. Policies and procedures on matters affecting employment including matters of discipline;
 - d. Changes to services, functions and structures that have direct or indirect implications for working arrangements for employees;
 - e. Any other matters which either side may reasonably wish to bring.

(Dudley MBC Trade Union Recognition Agreement January 2012)

3. Arrangements for funding union facility time in Dudley have evolved over many years. The context is becoming increasingly complex as a result of changes to legislation and guidance surrounding the dedicated schools grant and academies. Therefore Dudley Schools Forum and its Budget Working Group have requested that the local authority provide a report about possible options for future funding arrangements.
4. The Department for Education have instigated a national review of the funding of union facilities time within schools with the aim of securing the best possible value for money. The consultation period closed in October 2013 and we are advised that the government's response will be published during December 2013 or early in 2014.

DfE Funding Arrangements from 2013/14 – Additional Delegation

5. From 1 April 2013 it was a DfE statutory requirement that the schools' union facility time budget of each local authority, funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant, be delegated to all mainstream and special schools, with nursery school funding being centrally retained.
6. However, there is permission within the Schools Finance Regulations which allows maintained mainstream schools to de-delegate the funding back to the local authority.
7. The process of de-delegation allows the local authority to administer the service collectively, on behalf of that sector of schools, if agreed by Schools Forum. The process of de-delegation is not allowed in respect of funding delegated to Academy Schools and Special Schools, but these schools can trade with the local authority and buy back the service at a cost, if they decide. This change in the funding arrangements from 2013/14 has made the administration of services, such as union facilities time, more complex to manage effectively and therefore a process review was necessary.

Local Comparison of the School Related Union Facility Time Arrangements

8. The budget to fund this activity is provided by the Dedicated Schools Grant; for 2013/14, Dudley estimated that the cost of the service based on 2012/13 with all schools buying the service would be £280,051.
9. Table 1 provides statistical data in respect of union membership together with the estimated funding required from Dudley Schools.
10. It is difficult to gain comparable figures from other similar authorities as:
 - a. They are reluctant to provide such information; and
 - b. The methods used to calculate relevant figures are not consistent.
11. In recent years media reports appear to have indicated that some public bodies spend much less on this type of activity than Dudley. However, on close scrutiny it becomes apparent that published figures do not provide reasonable comparisons as some of the organisations that have been included have much smaller overall budgets and far fewer employees.
12. However from the limited figures that we have been able to ascertain it would seem that Dudley's Directorate of Children's Services is broadly in line with some other metropolitan children's services directorates in the West Midlands e.g. Wolverhampton and Birmingham, whilst we invest more than certain others e.g. Coventry and Solihull. Current figures are heavily influenced by the number of academies in each authority and whether or not they are buying into the service provided or not.

Table 1 – 2013/14 Estimated Funding Required for Union Facility Time and Membership Data

The allocation to each Union is historic. The details for 2013/14 are as follows:			<u>Total Estimated Budget 2013/14 – full buy back all schools</u>
<u>UNION</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Membership at March 2013</u>	
			£
NASUWT	2.0	1,920	103,399
NUT	1.4	1,155	66,612
ASCL	0.2	82	18,465
ATL	0.8	699	30,676
NAHT	0.2	211	17,754
GMB	1.11	1,650	24,640
Union Total	5.71	5,717	261,546
Teacher Reps	0.4		18,505
Overall Total	6.11	5,717	280,051

Funding Available For 2013/14 Financial Year

13. At the commencement of the financial year there were five Academy Schools in Dudley of which four agreed to purchase the service for the 2013/14 financial year; therefore the overall cost of the service, initially estimated at £280,051, would be short by £10,681.
14. Since April 2013 there has been a further five schools convert to Academy status. Table 2 indicates that part year funding, which totals £10,261, has been allocated directly to these schools from September 2013. These schools may choose to purchase the service from 1 September and discussions are now underway.
15. Table 2 indicates that if all schools return their funding in respect of union facilities time then the allocation of funding to each union would be in line with column 1. However, as one Academy School has already notified the local authority that they will not be buying the service for 2013/14 this reduces the allocation to the union to the amounts detailed in column 2. Furthermore, if all of the recent Academy Schools converting decided not to buy back the service from September 2013, then the funding available to the unions would be as detailed in column 3.

Table 2 – Union Facilities Time Funding Options for 2013/14

			<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
The allocation to each Union is historic. The details for 2013/14 are as follows:			<u>Total Estimated Budget 2013/14 – full buy back</u>	<u>Revised budget due to Windsor not purchasing service</u>	<u>Revised Budget if other Schools non buy back (Full Year impact)</u>
<u>UNION</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Membership at March 2013</u>			
			£	£	£
NASUWT	2.0	1,920	103,399	99,455	95,667
NUT	1.4	1,155	66,612	64,071	61,631
ASCL	0.2	82	18,465	17,760	17,084
ATL	0.8	699	30,676	29,506	28,382
NAHT	0.2	211	17,754	17,076	16,426
GMB	1.11	1,650	24,640	23,700	22,797
Union Total	5.71	5,717	261,546	251,568	241,987
Teacher Reps	0.4		18,505	17,802	17,122
Overall Total	6.11	5,717	280,051	269,370	259,109
Memo Note Reductions:					
Windsor – full year				£10,681	
Redhill – Sept					£5,146
Bramford - Sept					£1,212
Bishop Milner – Sept					£2,658
St Chads RC- Sept					£604
St Josephs RC Dudley – Sept					£641

16. Table 2 above demonstrates that continuation of funding union facilities time at the current level is dependent upon all Dudley schools including Academy Schools returning their funding to the local authority each year.

17. Therefore, as the budget available may fluctuate and is likely to reduce during the financial year there is a need to agree a clear approach to funding arrangements in order to ensure that the budget allocation is not overspent.

The Options

Methodology for Allocating the Budget Available for School Union Facilities Time

18. Options considered are as follows:

- a. Allocating the budget proportionate to membership;
- b. Allocating a proportion of the budget based on a fixed sum (e.g. 80%) with the balance being proportionate to membership;

- c. Retaining the status quo but with a pro rata reduction as a result of academies not buying back (recommended by HTCF-BWG 16 October meeting).
- d. Once the overall sum for facilities time is determined asking the trade unions themselves to determine how it is distributed.

Outcomes from 16 October 2013 Meeting

19. At the 16 October meeting it was a recommendation from the Budget Working Group that option c, as stated in paragraph 18 above, be adopted for 2014/15.

Process for Advising Union Representatives of the Funding Allocation Available

20. Once we have agreed the basis of allocation it is proposed that each Union is advised on a monthly basis:

- a. The budget available to support the union representation; and
- b. The expenditure incurred to date with a forecast of expenditure to the end of the financial year.

21. This will ensure that budgetary fluctuations which arise as a response to Academy schools non buy back can be reported to the Unions quickly for their remedial actions.

22. Overspending will not be permitted, unless Schools Forum agree that this is necessary and approve a top slice of funding from the following year's allocation.

23. Any under spend in respect of de-delegated funding will be carried forward to the next financial year as an earmarked element of the Dedicated Schools Grant reserve and returned to the contributing schools in the new financial year.

Finance

24. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2012.

25. Schools Forums are currently regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

26. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

27. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

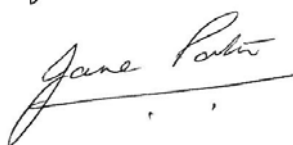
Equality Impact

28. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

29. Schools Forum to note that:

- a. The local authority will await the publication of the government's response to the national consultation about union facilities time in schools. It would not be sensible to take action at this stage without the benefit of being able to consider any advice or regulations published by the DfE.
- b. Therefore in principle for 2014/15 financial year the basis of allocation (FTE of Union representatives) and the overall sum provided from the Dedicated Schools Grant will remain at the 2013/14 level i.e. £280,051 (plus relevant inflation). However this will be subject to review once the DfE consultation response is published. The timing of any local changes in light of the consultation response will be dependent upon the date of its publication.
- c. In addition it is important to note that the actual budget available to the local authority to administer the Union Facilities Time arrangement for schools could be less than the original budget delegated to schools. If individual Academies and Special schools do not agree to buy in to the service, the overall figure will be reduced by the relevant amount across each trade union budget pro-rata to the original allocation (paragraph 18c refers). The rationale for this proposal is based upon several factors e.g.
 - i. Apart from the loss of funds due to the increasing number of academies there has been no significant additional reduction in the DSG;
 - ii. The functions and activities that are carried out as a result of the provision of funding for union facilities time are important to the interests of schools, the local authority and individual employees. It is difficult to discharge all the necessary business on the basis of the existing funding – any diminution may cause serious problems;
 - iii. No viable alternative method of funding the activity has been found. For example it is reported that in some authorities the allocation to each union is driven by a formula that places a major emphasis upon union membership numbers. However if adopted this method would seriously disadvantage “head teacher unions” or any organisation with relatively low membership numbers, thereby disadvantaging those members;
- d. Each union will be expected to work within a defined cash sum, as notified monthly by the local authority, and must decide which of its officers will be accredited representatives with paid facility time funded by the authority. The local authority will monitor spending closely and once the specified amount has been exhausted no further expenditure from this source will be forthcoming. In all cases unions may supplement the facility time budget from their own funds.



Jane Porter

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer :Karen Cocker, Children's Services Finance Manage

Karen.cocker@dudley.gov.uk

Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Behavioural Pupil Referral Unit Review and Restructure

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with the latest position in respect of the Pupil Referral Unit behavioural service review and restructure following the implementation of the 2013/14 DfE school funding reforms.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – 4 December 2013.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct Department for Education (DfE) grant: the Dedicated School Grant (DSG).
4. Schools Forum is the 'guardian' of the local Schools Budget, and its distribution among schools and other bodies, and therefore must be closely involved throughout the development process.
1. The Schools Forum Regulations 2012 include a section on the consultation on financial issues. Where the authority must consult the Schools Forum annually in respect of the authority's functions relating to the schools budget, in connection with the following:
 - arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
 - arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
 - arrangements for early years provision;
 - administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the authority.

The authority may consult the forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit.

Action for Schools Forum

5. For Schools Forum to note the information update in the respect of the Pupil Referral Unit review and restructure.

Attachments to Report

6. None.

Karen Cocker

Children's Service Finance Manager

Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Behavioural Pupil Referral Unit Review and Restructure

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with the latest position in respect of the the Pupil Referral Unit behavioural service review and restructure following the implementation of the 2013/14 DfE school funding reforms.

Background

2. At the March 2013 Schools Forum meeting the Dedicated Schools Grant budget planning report outlined the requirement for the local authority to consult with Schools Forum in respect of those functions relating to the schools budget, and in particular, the arrangements for the use of Pupil Referral Units and the education of children otherwise than at school was discussed.
3. With the introduction of the 2013/14 school funding reforms a review and restructure of Dudley’s behavioural Pupil Referral Units was required. An initial report was presented at the July meeting with a recommendation that a further update was presented in the Autumn.

2013/14 School Funding Reforms

4. As part of the national School Funding Reforms there have been a number of significant funding changes to affect Pupil Referral Units (PRUs).
5. From April 2013 they now have:
 - a. A similar autonomy over budget and staffing decisions to maintained schools and access to freedoms offered under Academy status. In particular:
 - The management committees of PRUs will have delegated budgets together with responsibility for all other financial decisions necessary to manage and spend budgets effectively, such as signing contracts and ensuring accurate accounts are maintained. They will have the power to carry forward deficit or surplus budget balances at the year end.
 - PRUs will have primary responsibility for all decisions about the recruitment and management of staff (including appointing, appraising, suspending or dismissing members of staff) and this responsibility will sit with the management committee of a PRU, rather than the local authority. As with community schools, however, the local authority as the employer

will carry out the actual appointments of staff, based on the Management Committee's decisions and the local authority will remain the employer of staff in PRUs and will continue to be responsible for agreeing pay and conditions of employment.

- The PRU Management Committee will be required to meet the requirements of the Consistent Financial Reporting (England) Regulations 2012 and will be responsible to satisfy the requirements of the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS).
- b. For the behavioural PRUs, all direct state-funded Alternative Provision institutions (including PRUs) now receive base funding of £8,000 per planned place, topped up by funding from the commissioning local authority or school for each pupil admitted to the PRU.

2013/14 Funding

6. Due to the low number of places commissioned this has had an adverse impact on the funding arrangements for Dudley' behavioural PRU from 2013/14 which makes the transition from a centrally funded service to a delegated place led provision more challenging financially.

Financial Support for PRUs

7. The July 2013 Schools Forum report outlined that Dudley's behavioural PRU was under review to ensure the structure and the service are fit for purpose and in line with the new funding arrangements. However, as the restructure would not be complete until 2014/15 then, as an interim measure, the Director of Children's Services outlined the need to provide additional financial support from the Dedicated Schools Grant to the behavioural PRU on a contingency basis over and above the place plus top up funding approach. This is permitted within the School Finance Regulations.
8. This action does mean that any financial decisions made by the Management Committee must be within the financial framework of funding approved, to include the contingency, and that the behavioural PRU will not have a roll forward, surplus or deficit, for 2013/14.

Dudley Behavioural PRU Review

9. The Dudley behavioural PRU provision of 52 places is currently located across 3 sites. The Sycamore site and Abberley Street site provide provision for secondary aged pupils with the Mere site provision for primary aged pupils.
10. Since September 2013, the provision now has a single DfE registration (Sycamore Short Stay School) with an interim leadership and management structure in place that covers provision across the three sites. As part of the Dudley Town Accommodation strategy the Abberley Street site is due to close at the end of the spring term 2014 and there is a plan in place to locate all secondary provision on the Sycamore site.

11. As part of the ongoing restructuring of the service it is anticipated that by September 2014 the primary provision will also be located on the Sycamore site. The move to locating all behaviour provision onto a single site is a key factor in ensuring a more cost effective service that incorporates a more flexible and targeted staffing resource.
12. Discussions have taken place with both Primary and Secondary colleagues to consider potential future working models of provision for permanently excluded pupils (centre based) and also outreach work. At secondary phase this discussion is still ongoing but Primary Heads have indicated their willingness to de- delegate the equivalent of a single primary pupil basic led funding amount of £3,126 per school in order to maintain the Mere outreach support for 2014/15. This would commence from the start of the financial year April 2014.
13. Given the new PRU funding model where only planned place Centre based work receives funding, it was extremely important that the Mere outreach work, which accounts for around 50% of the primary staffing and has been a contributing factor in zero permanent exclusions across Dudley primary schools over the last three years, was retained. Further information relating to the support schools receive is contained within the de-delegation report within this agenda.
14. New Management Committees have been set up for both Cherry Tree Learning Centre and The Sycamore Short Stay School in line with new Governance requirements. The membership consists of school, community, Local Authority, staff and parent members. In line with DfE requirements they have fully delegated powers although in the case of the Sycamore Short Stay School the Local Authority has retained an overview given the budget deficit.
15. There has been no further news on funding arrangements for Emotional and Medical PRUs from the DfE, post April 2015. Up to this point Cherry Tree Learning Centre will continue to be funded on a historical basis in respect of the 76 places.

Finance

16. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2012.
17. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
18. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

19. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

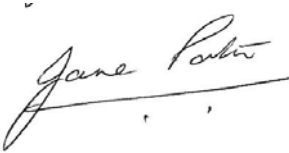
Equality Impact

20. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

21. Schools Forum to note:

- The ongoing work in respect of the behavioural Pupil Referral Unit service review; and
- That a further update will be provided in the Spring term.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Porter', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Jane Porter

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Karen Cocker, Children's Services Finance Manager
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Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

De-delegations: 2013/14 Projected Outturn and 2014/15 Proposals

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with a financial update in respect of the provisional outturn for the 2013/14 financial year de-delegated services and to agree the de-delegation options for 2014/15.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. 4 December 2013

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. In accordance with the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012, Schools Forum must authorise the deduction of budgets from Maintained Schools Budget shares in respect of certain central expenditure. (Under regulation 8(5)).

Where this central expenditure is to be 'de-delegated' to the local authority then the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 state that:

- a. **Regulation 8 paragraph 9A** - Only the Schools members of the schools forum who are representatives of primary schools (other than nursery schools) may vote to decide whether or not to authorise the matters referred to as de-delegation where they relate to primary schools (other than nursery schools); and
- b. **Regulation 8 paragraph 9B** - Only the Schools members of the schools forum who are representatives of secondary schools may vote to decide on whether or not to authorise the matters referred to as de-delegation where they relate to secondary schools.

Action for Schools Forum

4. To note the 2013/14 projected outturn in respect of the de-delegated budgets.
5. To discuss and approve the de-delegations for maintained mainstream schools for 2013/14.

Attachments

6. Appendix A – 2013/14 De-delegations Projected Outturn at 30 September 2013.
7. Appendix B – Detail of Consultation responses received.
8. Appendix C – Service Provider Information for 2014/15 De-delegation Options.

Rebecca Yates
Senior Principal Accountant
25 November 2013

Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

De-delegations: 2013/14 Projected Outturn and 2014/15 Proposals

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with a financial update in respect of the provisional outturn for the 2013/14 financial year de-delegated services and to agree the de-delegation options for 2014/15.

Background

2. De-delegation refers to a process whereby a school is entitled to funding via their delegated budget, but collectively, maintained mainstream schools' through a phase chose to return the funding to the Directorate of Children's Services where the management and co-ordination of that service will continue to be provided centrally on behalf of those schools.
3. The DfE's School Funding Reforms implemented on 1 April 2013 outlined which centrally maintained service budgets must be delegated to schools from 2013/14.
4. However, recognising that authorities had centrally retained these services for the greater good of all schools, the DfE allow for any of the newly delegated services to be 'de-delegated' but only by maintained mainstream schools. This action requires the maintained mainstream schools within a phase, via Schools Forum, to agree that a service should be provided centrally on the grounds of economies of scale or pooled risk.
5. The Schools Forum Regulations 2012 (amendment) determine that any budgets de-delegated must be approved by Schools Forum in the relevant phase (primary or secondary) to decide whether that service should be retained centrally.
6. For Academy schools, de-delegation of mandatory delegated budgets is not permitted under the 2012 School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. Therefore Academy schools cannot be invited to de-delegate their element of the delegated funds but they will be entitled to buy back the service, if traded through the local authority.
7. Where Schools Forum agrees to de-delegate any budget this will be for one financial year. Any surplus funds or overspending at the end of the financial year will be carried forward into the next financial year and schools' budgets adjusted accordingly.

2013/14 Approved De-delegations

8. For 2013/14 Schools Forum approved the following services for de-delegation totalling £1.282m; this related to 93 maintained schools.

Table 1 – De-delegated Services for the 2013/14 Financial Year

De-delegation for mainstream maintained schools for:	Budget for 2013/14
Contingencies - closed schools and rental payments	£245,963
Staff costs - supply cover – Union Facilities time	£226,457
Staff costs - supply cover – NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers)	£305,927
Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups. Family Support Workers	£256,485
LACES (Looked After Children Education Services)	£28,095
School Library Service	£219,483
Total De-delegations	£1,282,410

9. Upon conversion to Academy School status a former maintained school's de-delegated budget is pro-rated in year and returned to the school for allocation at their discretion. Academy Schools can choose to buy into the central service though a traded service option rather than a compulsory de-delegation. Due to the conversion of five schools to Academy status after the de-delegations budget was set for 2013/14 the de-delegation budget has now reduced and the revised budgets are shown in Table 2.
10. Table 2 summarises the projected outturn for 2013/14 de-delegated services in respect of 88 maintained schools. Appendix A provides the full details.

Table 2 – 2013/14 Projected Outturn for De-delegated Services

De-delegation for mainstream maintained schools	Latest Budget for 2013/14	Projected Outturn	Expected Under spending or over spending ()
	£	£	£
Contingencies - closed schools and rental payments	£234,819	£184,819	(£50,000)
Staff costs - supply cover – Union Facilities time	£216,196	£216,196	£0
Staff costs - supply cover – NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers)	£292,063	£292,063	£0
Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups. Family Support Workers	£250,590	£240,590	(£10,000)
LACES (Looked After Children Education Services)	£26,822	£26,822	£0
School Library Service	£209,535	£209,535	£0
Total De-delegations	£1,230,025	£1,170,025	(£60,000)

2014/15 Proposed De-delegations

11. At the October 2013 Forum meeting the issue of 2014/15 delegations was briefly discussed in the context of the report titled ‘School Funding Reforms: Funding Arrangements and Changes for 2014-15’, which included at Question 5 of the consultation document : “Do you have any comments regarding the de-delegation of funding for the services listed in Table 4 of the consultation?” The responses and backing data are attached at Appendix B. Forum was advised that a full report would be presented at the December meeting when members would be required to vote on the proposals for 2014/15.
12. The de-delegations for 2014/15 to be considered by Schools Forum are outlined in Table 3. Other than the reduction in the contingency budget by £50,000 and the addition of one new service, Behavioural Pupil Referral Unit primary outreach service, all other services are proposed as 2013/14. The budgets to be de-delegated, subject to further Academy School conversions before 31 March 2014, would be as outlined in Table 3.
13. Appendix C provides details from the service provider to support why the service should be de-delegated and centrally maintained for 2014/15.

Table 3 – De-delegated Services Proposed for the 2014/15 Financial Year

De-delegation Services for Mainstream Maintained Schools 2014/15	Proposed Budget for De-delegation 2014/15 Primary Sector £	Proposed Budget for De-delegation 2014/15 Secondary Sector £	Proposed Budget for De-delegation 2014/15 Total Funding £
Contingencies - closed schools and rental payments	106,804	70,052	176,856
Staff costs - supply cover – Union Facilities time	126,134	82,731	208,865
Staff costs - supply cover – NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers)	170,398	111,764	282,162
Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups. Family Support Workers	234,945	11,433	246,378
LACES (Looked After Children Education Services)	15,648	10,264	25,912
School Library Service	122,249	80,184	202,433
Behavioural Pupil Referral Unit – Primary Outreach Service	275,088	0	275,088
Total De-delegations	1,051,266	366,428	1,417,694

Schools Forum Voting Requirements for De-delegations

14. Taking into consideration the consultation feedback received in Appendix B and the service providers information in Appendix C, Schools Forum members will be asked to vote.
15. Members of the Schools Forum who are representatives of primary schools (other than nursery schools) can vote in respect of the primary sector de-delegations totalling £1,051,266 in Table 3. This relates to Mr B Jones, Mr D Ward, M/s P Rogers, Mrs J Quigley, Mrs P.Hazlehurst, Mr L Ridney, M/s T Pearce. Mr M Weaver, Mr P Harris and Mrs J Belcher.
16. Members of the Schools Forum who are representatives of secondary schools can vote in respect of the secondary sector de-delegations totalling £366,428 in Table 3. This relates to Mr B Warren, Mrs A Garratt, Mr N Shaw, Mr B Patterson, Mrs G Withers and Mr J Conway.

Finance

17. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2012.

18. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

19. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

20. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

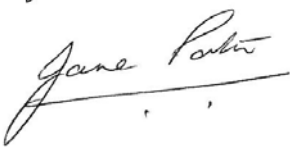
Equality Impact

21. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

22. Schools Forum to note the report in respect of de-delegated services for 2013/14 and after consideration of the information outlined within the report, Schools Forum **School Members** who are representatives of:

- a. primary schools, are asked to vote on the recommendations outlined in Table 3 in respect of de-delegated budgets for maintained primary schools for 2014/15 financial year; paragraph 15 refers and
- b. secondary schools are asked to vote on the recommendations outlined in Table 3 in respect of de-delegated budgets for maintained secondary schools for 2014/15 financial year; paragraph 16 refers.



Jane Porter
Director of Children's Services

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2013/14 De-delegations Projected Outturn at 30 September 2013

Details	Latest De-delegated 2013/14 Budget * £	Other Funding 2013/14 ** £	Total Funding 2013/14 £	Projected spend to 31/3/14 £	Variance to budget (£) = under-spending £	Comments
Contingencies - closed schools and rental payments	234,819	6,212	241,031	191,031	(50,000)	Projected spend includes costs of Pensnett school and Holt Farm until site disposal
Staff costs – supply cover – Union Facilities time	216,196	42,913	259,109	259,109	0	
Staff costs - supply cover – NQT	292,063	51,750	343,813	343,813	0	
Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups. Family Support Workers	250,590	20,343	270,933	260,933	(10,000)	Projected under spend relating to running costs
LACES (Looked After Children Education Services)	26,822	797	27,619	27,619	0	
School Library Service	209,535	4,259	213,794	213,794	0	
Total	1,230,025	126,274	1,356,299	1,296,299	(60,000)	

* Following 2013/14 academy transfers#

** Early Years, special schools buy back, academies buy back

Dudley Consultation on School Funding Reforms: Funding Arrangements and Changes for 2014-15

Appendix B

QUESTION 5

Do you have any comments regarding the de-delegation of funding for the services listed in Table 4?
(paragraphs 76-85 of consultation refer)

Yes	No	No response	Comments	Consultation response from:
	1			Amblecote Primary
1			The amount de-delegated in respect of Union facilities time is excessive and in the current environment very unattractive. Reductions should be investigated and alternative funding methods investigated.	Chair of Goves - Colley Lane
	1			Bishop Milner
1			I am happy for the de-delegation of funding for services listed to occur.	Bromley-Pensnett
	1			Windsor High School
	1		Agree with current situation	Cotwall End
	1			Mount Pleasant
1			I disagree with all de-delegation with the exception of the contingency fund. The union facilities time should be found by the unions. At present employers are paying both for their costs and the union costs. It is not unreasonable to expect the unions to pay for the facility time. The NQT supply time should be delegated to schools to make the arrangements for supporting NQT programme. They can then choose the level and type of cover required. The other costs should be available as traded services with the money in the delegated budget	Redhill School
	1			Our Lady & St Kenelm
1			It seems disproportionate that the NASUWT receive £83,368 and the NAHT only receive £14,315. Should it not be the case that unions fund themselves from their own budgets? Member's subscriptions?	St Mary's CE
	1		N/A - Academy School	Earls
	1			Wordsley
	1			Quarry Bank
	1		Not within the NDCS's remit to comment on the services	National Deaf Children's Society
		1		Lutley/Lapal
Designation		Comments		
Rufford Primary School		In relation to question 5 - I feel very strongly that it is vital for union facilities time to be maintained. The various union representatives provide crucial support for their members. Were the funds not to be de-delegated for this purpose, we would lose a support that is increasingly important in times of forced academisation, parental complaints, allegations etc. I would even go so far as to say that the amount de-delegated and allocated for NAHT representation would benefit from being increased. I understand that the amounts are calculated on the number of members that each union has and it is clear that NAHT membership will be lower than general teaching unions. However, school leaders are likely to need proportionally more assistance, which currently is not always available. With the implementation of the new Pay Policy and other changes in policy, there is likely to be an increase in the need for Headteachers and other school leaders to be supported by their NAHT representative.		

Consultation (Table 4) Delegated and De-delegated Services for 2013/14

De-delegation for mainstream maintained schools for:	Value for 2013/14	UOR Prim	UOR Sec	Comments	Financial Details
Contingencies	£245,963	£5.71	£8.14	This "expenditure on the schools specific contingency" is central expenditure deducted for the purpose of ensuring that monies are available to enable increases in a school's budget share after it has been allocated where it subsequently becomes apparent that a governing body has incurred expenditure which it would be unreasonable to expect them to meet from the school's budget share	£145,709 closed schools contingency £41,004 Assigned rents £59,250 contingency general
Staff costs - supply cover – Union Facilities time	£226,457	£5.26	£7.50	Expenditure in making payments to, or in providing a temporary replacement - taking part in trade union activities	NASUWT £83,368 NUT £53,708 ASCL £14,889 ATL £24,734 NAHT £14,315 GMB £19,867 Teacher Union Representative £15,576
Staff costs - supply cover – NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers)	£305,927	£7.11	£10.13	Expenditure in making payments to, or in providing a temporary replacement	£16,900 Primary Pool contribution £26,000 for Reg. Staff College training £263,027 Payment to schools with NQTs
Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups. Family Support Workers	£256,485	£134.85	£134.85	Expenditure for the purposes of improving the performance of under-performing pupils from ethnic minority groups; and meeting the specific needs of bilingual pupils Funding allocated on EAL numbers.	6.91 FTE: 1 HOS 4.91 Family Support Officers 1 Admin
LACES (Looked After Children Education Services)	£28,095	£0.65	£0.93	Cost of providing or purchasing specialist behaviour support services, both advisory and teaching	1 member of staff supporting schools
School Library Service	£219,483	£5.10	£7.26	Expenditure on services to schools provided by Library service.	Library service to Primary schools 5.88 fte
Total De-delegations	£1,282,410				

De-delegated Service Options for 2014/15 – Service Provider Information

1. Contingencies - closed schools and rental payments

Contingencies are retained centrally for maintained schools but only for a limited range of circumstances to cover:

- i. Exceptional unforeseen costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to meet including assigned rents for Castle High playing fields, Rufford School methane gas monitoring;
- ii. Additional costs relating to new, reorganised or closing schools. Until such times that all closed school sites are disposed there are short term ongoing liabilities to cover the ongoing costs at Pensnett and Holt Farm.

2. Staff costs - supply cover – Union Facilities time

The budget currently funds union facilities time required in all Dudley schools to represent: National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT); National Union of Teachers (NUT); Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL); National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT); Teacher representatives, General, Municipal; Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union (GMB).

The funding of union facility time enables trade unions to work with schools and the local authority on the development of employment policies and procedures, and other matters, which require a consistent and collaborative approach across the borough as a whole. This helps to foster a climate in which the conduct of business between employers and the workforce is efficient and less likely to be hindered by local disputes. It also helps to manage the workload of managers and governors in schools who would otherwise have to deal individually with a number of different unions on a wide range of employment and educational issues. In addition it enables trade unions to represent the interests of their members, both individually and collectively on matters such as:

- a. Terms and conditions of employment;
- b. Health, safety, welfare, and other issues relating to the working environment;
- c. Policies and procedures on matters affecting employment including matters of discipline;
- d. Changes to services, functions and structures that have direct or indirect implications for working arrangements for employees;
- e. Any other matters which either side may reasonably wish to bring.

3. Staff costs - supply cover – NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers)

It is proposed that Dudley LA continue to act as the provider of NQT and induction tutor support, the role of appropriate body and HR support for NQTs during 2014-15.

In previous years the LA has provided the full range of support to individual NQTs, their respective schools and induction tutors. The support falls into three broad categories –

- Role of the appropriate body
- Support and development package
- Support / administration / advice from HR

The LA has enabled this support by providing a dedicated officer to support induction tutors, NQT queries and act as the appropriate body. Regional Staff College has provided a training package for primary colleagues and a secondary programme consisting of a range of workshops throughout the academic year and HR have provided specific employment advice in relation to NQTs for schools and individuals.

Statutory role of appropriate body

The appropriate body provides a quality assurance role within the induction process and, in so doing, offers guidance to schools in meeting their responsibilities for monitoring, support and assessment of NQTs. It also provides an officer as a named contact with whom schools and NQTs, in particular, can raise concerns. The officer provides training for induction tutors and is available to respond to their requests for assistance and advice.

Training provision

The training programme delivered by Regional Staff College (RSC) aims to provide broad and balanced content linked to the Teacher Standards and themes that are important to understand in those crucial first terms for example managing behaviour, effective pedagogy and inclusion. There is a blend of knowledge and skill development within each session. There are also some key workshops that are imperative to Dudley teachers e.g. Child Protection and Health and Safety.

The training programme aims to compliment support and development that is taking place within the NQT's own school.

Evaluations have shown that participants have consistently found the sessions to be excellent or good.

Other workshop topics include –

- Numeracy
- Raising writing standards
- CAF and integrated working
- Self review and using your year's professional learning

NQT Induction tutor support / training

The named officer for the appropriate body provides annual training for induction tutors. This provides tutors with:

- an update on statutory guidance;
- an overview of the role of the induction tutor;
- advice on how and when to liaise with the appropriate body;
- an opportunity to explore the Teaching Standards in relation to NQTs;
- an opportunity to network and share experiences.

The named officer is available to provide follow-up advice/support and guidance to induction tutors throughout the induction period.

HR support - administration of NQT info / recording of info

HR provide a range of support for NQTs and schools including –

- Keeping a central database with NQT information and updating this on a term by term basis
- Liaising with other partners who may need to access NQT info e.g. Unions
- Working with finance to ensure that funding is claimed for and transferred to schools on a term by term basis
- Linking with the DFE to ensure they have an update of NQT information on a term by term basis. This includes obtaining information from schools about starters, leavers, number of terms completed, extensions, failures and passes on a termly basis
- Linking with schools to collect this information and chase up any missing records
- Updating individuals HR records and linking to payroll
- Communication with schools
- Notifying individuals by letter of the outcome of their NQT year

4. Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups. Family Support Workers Family support and liaison work

5. LACES (Looked After Children Education Services)

6. School Library Service -Support to Schools 2014 onwards

Dudley Schools Library Service (SLS) exists to assist schools (primary, secondary, special) to raise standards by providing high quality, well targeted resources and specialist expertise. The SLS experienced staff offer a quality service with a flexible approach to meet schools' individual needs.

To help support achievement in schools the SLS offers for loan resources such as – topic boxes, class reading sets, guided reading sets, Big Books, artefacts, photo-packs and DVDs. Also SLS offers advice and support including the re-organisation of school libraries.

There is excellent buyback from primary and special schools. Topic boxes usage has increased to an average of 2,000 boxes per term. Only one primary does not buy back the service currently.

Annual Book quizzes continue to be successful. 57 primary schools regularly take part in the Primary Literacy Quiz and 27 - 30 primary schools also take part in the Year 2 Book Quiz.

Secondary quizzes continue to be successful with four secondary schools taking part, of which three are academies. The Secondary School Book Award, now in its third year, saw eight schools attending the ceremony. One or two more schools not able to attend the ceremony also voted. Also, Secondary Schools Librarians Support meetings are held 2-3 times a year

Advice and support to schools has increased. Annually, SLS receive more phone calls and emails requesting help. Adding guided reading sets and artefacts to stock has provided added value. The Service regularly responds to requests to add to the variety of resources already held.

SLS remaining a centrally provided service is more cost effective for schools - to borrow resources regularly, rather than purchase individually when resources need to be replaced. Also, resources need to be replaced regularly due to poor condition, being out of date etc. In addition, it is time-saving for teaching staff as resource boxes are tailor-made and are selected by professionally qualified staff using expert knowledge.

The service supports schools to improve reading and enquiry skills and as such one measurable outcome is improvement in literacy. The impact of the service is continually reviewed and initiatives are developed and improved as appropriate.

Secondary schools de-delegating their portion of the fund will invest in literacy, embedding a firm foundation in primary years; supporting reading, transition from Year 6 to 7 and improvements in the literacy skills of pupils entering secondary education.

7. Behavioural Pupil Referral Unit Primary Outreach

As part of the review and restructure of the behavioural pupil referral unit, Primary Head teachers have indicated that they would support the need to maintain the primary outreach services of the behavioural pupil referral unit at The Mere and that they would wish the funding to be de-delegated for 2014/15. It has been agreed that the charge for each school will be equivalent to the primary basic pupil led funding, which is £3,126 per pupil for 2013/14.

This funding will provide a minimum core offer to all schools that includes both emergency support for serious behaviour issues and a wide menu of behaviour management support that builds capacity in schools. This menu of support is being tailored to meet the needs of all schools and specific issues/trends as they arise. The full menu of the support on offer for 2014/15 including arrangements for an initial planning meeting to determine the specific support a school requires will be discussed in greater detail with Head Teachers during the Spring Term.



Directorate of Children's Services

Budget Fact Sheet

No. 3 – November 2013

• **Dudley's Local Funding Formula Review for 2014/15**

The consultation in respect of proposed changes to the Local Funding Formula for Schools was discussed at the October 2013 meeting of Schools Forum. The Director of Children's Services can confirm that the changes for 2014/15 will be:

- Both the total value and method of funding for deprivation will be reviewed during 2014/15.
- The value of the Lump Sum for Dudley schools will be £130k for primary schools and £100k for secondary schools with a re-allocation of funding released in secondary schools to pupils in KS3 and KS4 through the basic per pupil funding.
- The methodology, as proposed within the consultation document to identify additional funding required for schools with a disproportionate number of High Needs pupils, will be implemented for 2014/15.
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee will be funded 50% from a claw-back of gains and 50% from all schools for 2014/15.

A summary of the responses to the consultation is available at:

http://insidedudley/education/library/childrensservic_1/fundingreforms_/consultationout/default.htm

- Dudley's Local Authority Funding Reform Pro-forma for 2014/15 mainstream school funding was submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) for scrutiny by the statutory deadline of 31 October 2013 and confirmation was received on the 8 November to advise that this adheres to the Financial Regulations and satisfies the EFA criteria.

• **Estimated Budgets for Mainstream Schools 2014/15 and 2015/16**

In order to assist schools with strategic financial planning, mainstream school budgets for 2014/15 and 2015/16 have been produced which are based on estimated pupil numbers and are available at:

http://insidedudley/education/library/childrensservic_1/budgets_/schoolsbudgets_/201415budgets_/october2013_/default.htm

and

http://insidedudley/education/library/childrensservic_1/budgets_/schoolsbudgets_/201516budgets_/october2013_/default.htm

If schools wish to adjust these estimated budgets in order to reflect more accurate pupil numbers then the following approximate values per pupil should be applied:

	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
Primary	£3,128	£3,123
Secondary	£4,491	£4,484

• **Estimated Budgets for Special Schools 2014/15**

Once confirmation has been received of the proposed funded places for 2014/15 estimated school budgets will be made available to Dudley special schools.

- **Review of Dudley's Pupil Referral Units**

The review and restructure of Dudley's behavioural Short Stay School Service is ongoing. Regular updates are reported to Schools Forum. It is anticipated that the restructure will be effective from 1 September 2014.

- **Top-Up funding for Mainstream High Needs pupils**

Mainstream schools were notified in October of the values for top-up funding for High Needs pupils for the summer term. The data for the autumn and spring terms will be notified during spring 2014 and actual funding will be transferred to schools prior to the end of the financial year.

- **Scheme for Financing Schools**

Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools has been reviewed and updates proposed. The proposed changes are currently published for consultation until 16 December 2013. The consultation document which contains a summary of the proposed changes is available at:

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/about/directorates/children-services/consultation-documents/>

- **Free School Meals**

The government has announced funding for free school meals for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in state primary schools from September 2014. Further details on funding will be announced in the autumn statement on 4 December 2013.

- **Employment Status (HMRC Guidance)**

The employment status of an individual determines how the tax liability for both the individual and the engager is calculated and HMRC are increasingly scrutinising this area.

Full guidance & training is available from the VAT team at the link below -

http://insidedudley/finance/financial/info&res/taxandvat/_adviceandguidan_/selfemploy edvem/default.htm.

HMRC have an Employment Status Indicator (ESI) tool on their website which can be used and it will give a uniquely numbered decision sheet that can be printed and retained as evidence, which is available at

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/calcs/esi.htm>

- **Dudley's Schools Forum**

A Schools Forum internet website for Dudley is to be implemented shortly and will provide useful information including DfE related consultations, regulations and guidance, member information, roles and responsibilities, dates of future meetings, current membership and the Constitution.

The website address will be: <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/community/community-forums/dudley-schools-forum/>

The next Schools Forum meeting will be on 10 December 2013 at which decisions will be taken in respect of de-delegation of mainstream schools funding for services in 2014/15.

- **Further Details**

Please contact sue.coates@dudley.gov.uk or telephone 01384 814217.

Jane Porter

Director of Children's Services

Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dedicated Schools Grant Projected Outturn Update 2013/14

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with the latest financial forecast in respect of the Schools Budget for the 2013/14 financial year ended 31 March 2014.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – 4 December 2013.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct Department for Education (DfE) grant: the Dedicated School Grant (DSG).
4. Schools Forum is the 'guardian' of the local Schools Budget, and its distribution among schools and other bodies, and therefore must be closely involved throughout the development process.

Action for Schools Forum

5. To note the 2013/14 forecast financial outturn in respect of the Schools Budget summarised at Appendix A.

Attachments to Report

6. Appendix A - Dedicated Schools Grant forecast Outturn Statement 2013/14.

Karen Cocker
Children's Service Finance Manager
25 November 2013

Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dedicated Schools Grant Projected Outturn Update 2013/14

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with the latest financial forecast in respect of the Schools Budget for the 2013/14 financial year ended 31 March 2014.

Background

2. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funds the Schools Budget. The Schools Budget is a combination of centrally retained budgets together with the ISB (Individual Schools Budget).
3. The DSG is a ring fenced grant and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined by the School Finance and Early Years Regulations 2012 which will shortly be replaced by the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.
4. At final outturn stage, the local authority is required to append an additional note to the Statement of Accounts confirming the deployment of the DSG in support of the Schools Budget, as required by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006. The Chief Finance Officer is also required to confirm final deployment of the DSG in support of the Schools Budget in connection with the section 251 outturn form.
5. This report is a mid year update position at 30 September 2013 in respect of the central budget areas of the DSG for the 2013/14 financial year. For the purposes of declaring the DSG outturn, the amount of Individual Schools Budget (ISB) actually distributed to schools is regarded, for DSG purposes, as spent by the authority once it is deployed to schools' budget shares. Thus whilst the Individual Schools Budgets (ISB) element of the DSG can be under-spent this is recorded as a school's roll-forward.

Dedicated Schools Grant for 2013/14

6. For the 2013/14 financial year the DSG is currently £234.323m which, after the Academy School budget transfers of £34.469m, is £199.854m of which £23.099m relates to central budgets and £176.755m to schools. A further £2.183m is payable by the Education Funding Agency in respect of the post 16 pupils in Dudley's 6th form maintained schools.

7. Appendix A indicates that there is forecast under-spending in respect of the central DSG budget for 2013/14 of £0.552m and a further £0.060m in respect of de-delegated services. The £0.552m relates to the high needs block top up contingency fund, which can now be partly released after actioning the September 2013 school transfers in special schools, however, the full impact of the post 16 further education top up funding is still to be determined and the remaining contingency will be available until these costs are known.
8. If an authority's actual spend on central expenditure is less than its central expenditure budget, the under-spend must be carried forward to support the Schools Budget in future years. Where the under spend includes funding in respect of de-delegated items then the surplus funds (or overspending) at the end of the financial year can be carried forward into the next financial year when the schools' budgets will be adjusted accordingly.

Finance

9. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2012.
10. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
11. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

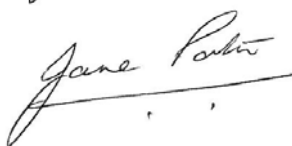
12. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

13. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

14. Schools Forum to note the 2013/14 forecast outturn position in respect of the Schools Budget, which is funded by the Dedicated School Grant.



Jane Porter
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Karen Cocker, Children's Services Finance Manager
Karen.cocker@dudley.gov.uk Tel: 01384 815382

Appendix A

Dedicated Schools Grant Forecast Outturn 2013/14 at 30 September 2013

Directorate of Children's Services DSG Budget Area	2013/14 DSG Latest Budget £m	2013/14 DSG Forecast Outturn £m	2013/14 Variance () =u'spend £m	Outturn to Budget %	Comments
ISB	176.755	176.755	0*	100%	*schools can roll-forward any under spend
Post 16 pupil - 6 th Form Funding (Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools)	2.183	2.183	0	100%	Bishop Milner's allocation is payable directly by the EFA from 1.9.2013 after conversion to Academy School status.
De- Delegated Budgets	1.230	1.170	(0.060)	95%	Contingency budget under spending by £50,000 and Family Support Workers in Ethic Minority service are under - spending on their running costs.
Centrally Retained Budgets	21.869	21.317	(0.552)	97.5%	Under-spend relates to the high needs block contingency allocation for in year adjustments in relation to special educational needs top up arrangements
EFA 6 th form grant	(2.183)	(2.183)	0	(100%)	Bishop Milner's allocation is payable directly by the EFA from 1.9.2013 after conversion to Academy School status.
Total DSG payable to Dudley	199.854	199.242	(0.612)	99.7%	
Academy Schools Funding	34.469	34.469	0	100%	Allocated to Academy School directly from the Education Funding Agency
Total DSG 2013/14	234.323	233.711	(0.612)	99.7%	

Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Schools Forum Membership Update and the DfE Operational and Good Practice Guides

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Schools Forum of the DfE Operational and Good Practice Guides issued in June and October 2013 and to provide a membership update.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. No.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. Schools Forum is responsible for ensuring that the constitution and membership meet the legislative requirements detailed in the School Forum (England) Regulations 2012, which were effective from 1 October 2012.

Action for Schools Forum

4. To note that the DfE have recently issued two best practice guides for Schools Forums to include the roles and responsibilities template.
5. To note the updated position in respect of the membership of Dudley’s Schools Forum.

Attachments to Report

6. Appendix A – DfE Guide for Schools and Academies on its Role and their Responsibilities June 2013.
7. Appendix B - DfE Operational and Good Practice Guide October 2013

Karen Cocker
Children’s Services Finance Manager
25 November 2013

Dudley Schools Forum – 10th December 2013

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Schools Forum Membership Update and the DfE Operational and Good Practice Guides

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Schools Forum of the DfE Operational and Good Practice Guides issued in June and October 2013 and to provide a membership update.

DfE Operational and Good Practice Guide

2. The DfE have recently issued two best practice guides for local authorities and members of Schools Forums.
3. The June 2013 document is a new and short four page summary guide for schools and academies roles and responsibilities on the Schools Forum. This is attached at Appendix A.
4. The October 2013 document, which is an updated and re-issued best practice review of the role of Schools Forum is attached at Appendix B. The roles and responsibilities template, which was previously separate, is now shown at Table 2 of the document with a new Table 1 outlining a Schools Forum structure.

Schools Forum Membership Update

5. At the October meeting of Schools Forum members were advised that elections were underway in respect of three vacant posts to be effective from 1 January 2014.
 - Two new Academy School members.
The closing date for nominations from the Academy Schools was 22 November 2013. There were no nominations received at this stage. The next opportunity for nominations will be in the Spring term 2014.
 - One new Post 16 provider of Further Education in Dudley.
Two nominations have been received, from Halesowen College and the Glasshouse at Stourbridge. The outcomes of the election process will be reported to Schools Forum at the meeting.

Finance

6. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School Finance (England) Regulations 2012 to be replaced in 2013 by the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.
7. Schools Forums are regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
8. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant; Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

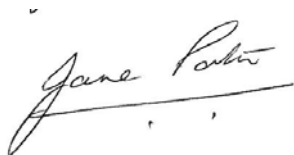
9. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

10. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

11. To note the contents of the report provided in respect of the:
 - Membership update; and the
 - Schools Forum best practice guides



Jane Porter
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Karen Cocker, Children's Services Finance Manager
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Schools Forum

**A guide for schools and academies on its
role and their responsibilities**

June 2013

Introduction

1. The reform and simplification of local authority formulae has raised the profile of the work of Schools Forums. There is still widespread misunderstanding about the role of forums. The aim of this note is to give schools and academies a clear understanding of the role of their local Schools Forum and how to ensure the voice of the school is heard. This note applies to both academies and maintained schools.

The role of Schools Forum

2. Schools Forum is made up of representatives from schools and academies, but with some representation from other non-school organisations, such as nursery and 14-19¹ education providers. The forum acts as a consultative body on some issues and a decision making body on others.
3. The forum acts in a consultative role for:
 - Changes to the local funding formula. (The local authority is responsible for the final decision, although in some cases it may delegate the decision-making power to the Schools Forum)
 - Proposed changes to the operation of the minimum funding guarantee
 - Changes to or new contracts affecting schools (e.g. school meals)
 - Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in pupil referral units and in early years provision
4. The forum is responsible for decisions on:
 - How much funding may be centrally retained within the Dedicated Schools Grant (e.g. for the Admissions Service, prudential borrowing costs, additional funding available for growing schools)
 - Any proposed carry forward of deficits on central spend from one year to the next
 - Proposals to de-delegate funding from maintained primary and secondary schools (e.g. for staff supply cover, insurance, behaviour support)
 - Changes to the scheme of financial management

Schools' representation

5. Schools and academies representatives on the forum should be roughly proportionate to the number of pupils in each sector and would generally include representatives from:
 - Maintained nursery schools
 - Maintained primary schools
 - Maintained secondary schools

¹ The requirement for a 14-19 representative will be replaced by a requirement for a Post-16 representative in the autumn of 2013

- Maintained special schools
 - Maintained pupil referral units
 - Academies and free schools
6. Middle schools do not form a category of schools in their own right and should be treated in accordance with their deemed status.
 7. Where there is at least one school in a particular category, there must be at least one representative for that group on the forum.
 8. Representatives should be elected by their peer group. In the case of maintained schools, representatives should be head teachers (or their representatives) or governors, elected by their appropriate phase. Academies members should be elected by the Academy Trusts in the local authority area.

Responsibilities of schools and their representatives

9. Schools can expect to have their views canvassed and to receive feedback from their representatives, who have a responsibility to represent the interests of their peer group rather than the interests of their own individual school.
10. When electing an individual to represent the interests of their respective group, schools should satisfy themselves that their chosen representative(s) is competent to act as their advocate.
11. School staff and governors should ensure that they are aware of business under discussion at Schools Forum and should provide feedback to their elected representatives to ensure that their views are considered when decisions affecting schools' finances are being made

Responsibilities of Local Authorities

12. Local authorities are required to publish all papers on a publicly-available website well in advance of the meeting. Papers should contain clear recommendations and the responsible officers should attend the meeting to provide further information and advice. Local authority officers should not dominate the meeting.
13. All meetings of the Schools Forum must be open to the public. Observers do not have an automatic right to speak at the meetings, although the Chair may allow contributions if it seems appropriate.

Further information

14. Further information on Schools Forums, including a simple table which shows the decision making responsibilities of the Schools Forum, can be found on our website [Schools forum guidance](#).



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Schools Forums: operational and good practice guide

**For local authorities and members of
Schools Forums**

October 2013

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Executive summary

The two tables in this section are provided as a summary of the structure of Schools Forums and the decision making powers of the local authority (LA) and the Schools Forum according to Regulations.

TABLE 1: SCHOOLS FORUM STRUCTURE			
Category	Schools Members	Academies Members	Non-School Members
Represented groups	<p>Where the LA maintains the following types of school, they must be represented on the Schools Forum:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Schools • Special Schools • Nursery Schools • PRUs <p>There is no specific requirement in Regulations for a primary rep, but this is captured by requiring membership to be based on pupil proportions</p>	<p>No specific groups, but academies members will represent academies, free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools</p>	<p>16-19 providers</p> <p>Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers</p> <p>Before considering other groups, the LA must consider diocesan representation</p>
Type of member	<p>Within each of the five groups above there are the following types of member:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteachers (or their representative) • Governors • Headteachers and Governors <p>In overall terms there must be at least one headteacher (or their representative) and one governor</p>	Any	Any

Category	Schools Members	Academies Members	Non-School Members
Schools Forum Structure	Schools members and academies members must comprise at least 2/3rds of the Schools Forum membership Primary schools, secondary schools and academies must be broadly proportionately represented on Schools Forum, based on the total number of pupils registered at them		
Voting	Only primary representatives can vote on primary school de-delegation Only secondary representatives can vote on secondary school de-delegation All schools members can vote on any other Schools Forum business, including the consultation on the funding formula	No voting on de-delegation All academies members can vote on any other Schools Forum business, including the consultation on the funding formula	No voting on de-delegation Only PVI representatives can vote on the consultation on the funding formula. All non-school members can vote on any other Schools Forum business
Elected by	The relevant sub-group of the relevant type of school e.g. primary school governor representatives are elected by the governors of primary schools, secondary school headteachers are elected by the	Proprietors of academies	Election only applies to the representative for the 16-19 providers, who is elected by all 16-19 providers ¹

¹ This is a change proposed in the draft 2013 School and Early Years Finance Regulations, expected to come into force in January 2014. Further information on the representative for 16-19 providers can be found in paragraph 1.38

	headteachers of secondary schools.		
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Category	Schools Members	Academies Members	Non-School Members
LA appointment of members	Only if no election takes place by the agreed date or in the event of a tie	Only if no election takes place by the agreed date or in the event of a tie	Can appoint a 16-19 representative only if no election takes place by the agreed date or in the event of a tie For all other non-schools members the LA appoints, but it is good practice to seek nominations from the relevant bodies
Other attendees who are permitted to contribute to a Schools Forum meeting	An observer appointed by the Secretary of State The Director of Children's Services The Executive Member for Children's Services The Executive Member with responsibility for resources	The Chief Financial Officer Officers providing financial & technical advice to Schools Forum Presenters (restricted to the paper they are presenting)	

TABLE 2 - SCHOOLS FORUMS: POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES 2014-15

Function	Local Authority	Schools Forum	DfE Role
Formula change (including redistributions)	Proposes and decides	Must be consulted [Voting restrictions in table 1 above] and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None
Contracts	Propose at least one month prior to invitation to tender, the terms of any proposed contract	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None
Financial issues relating to: arrangements for pupils with special educational needs; arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school; arrangements for early years provision; administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants	Consult annually	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None
Minimum funding guarantee (MFG)	Proposes any exclusions from MFG for application to DfE	Gives a view	Approval

Function	Local Authority	Schools Forum	DfE Role
De-delegation for mainstream schools for: contingencies administration of free school meals insurance licences/subscriptions staff costs - supply cover support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups behaviour support services library and museum services	Proposes	Primary and secondary school member representatives will decide for their phase	Will adjudicate where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on and the criteria for allocating funding from: growth fund (to meet requirements for basic need and infant class size regulations) falling rolls fund for surplus places in good or outstanding schools where a population bulge is expected in 2-3 years	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on: funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth equal pay back-pay places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils early years expenditure	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local Authority	Schools Forum	DfE Role
Central spend on: admissions servicing of schools forum	Proposes up to the value committed in 2013-14	Decides for each line	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on: capital expenditure funded from revenue contribution to combined budgets schools budget centrally funded termination of employment costs schools budget funded prudential borrowing costs special education needs transport costs	Proposes up to the value committed in 2013/14 and where expenditure has already been committed.	Decides for each line	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal
Carry forward a deficit on central expenditure to the next year to be funded from the schools budget	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal
Scheme of financial management changes	Proposes and consults the governing body and Head of every School	Approves	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal
Membership: length of office of members	Decides	None (but good practice would suggest that they gave a view)	None
Voting procedures	None	Determine voting procedures	None
Chair of Schools Forum	Facilitates	Elects <i>(may not be an elected member of the Council or officer)</i>	None

Introduction

1. This guide is designed to provide members of Schools Forums, local authority officers and elected members with advice and information on good practice in relation to the operation of Schools Forums.
2. It is organised in two sections:
 - Section 1 provides information on the constitutional and organisational requirements for Schools Forums; and
 - Section 2 covers a number of key aspects of the operation of Schools Forums at local level, drawing on good practice from a number of Schools Forums.
3. The guide draws on the experience and knowledge of Schools Forum members, local authority members and officers and the Department and its partners. Other than where it is describing requirements set out in the Schools Forum Regulations 2012 it is not designed to be prescriptive – what is good practice in one Schools Forum may not be appropriate in another, given the diverse circumstances of local areas. However, it is hoped the guide will stimulate some debate within Schools Forums and contribute to their ongoing development.
4. The Department hopes that Schools Forums and local authorities find this guide useful. It has been the subject of consultation with a wide variety of external partners. In particular, members of the Department’s Schools and Academies Funding Group, made up of representatives from central and local government, teaching associations, unions representing support staff as well as organisations representing academies and governors, have provided valuable input and advice on the content of the guide. The Department is grateful for their assistance.
5. The [Department’s website](#) contains details of all the announcements, documents and other information relating to school funding and Schools Forums. This website also has a range of useful links to other sites that may be of relevance to Schools Forum members.
6. The main [school funding page](#) on the DfE website has links to the latest news and information on schools funding. There are also dedicated [Schools Forums pages](#) and a [Quick guide to Schools Forums](#).
7. If you have any queries about the operation of Schools Forums please contact the Education Funding Agency: reformteam.funding@education.gsi.gov.uk.

The postal address of the agency is:
Education Funding Agency
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Section 1 – Schools Forum Regulations: Constitution and Procedural Issues

Regulations

- 1.1. National regulations² govern the composition, constitution and procedures of Schools Forums. Local authorities can provide Schools Forum members with a copy of these regulations or alternatively they are available from the [Department's website](#).
- 1.2. A [Quick guide to Schools Forums](#) for schools and academies is also available on the department's website. This explains the role of Schools Forums and the responsibilities of schools and academies.

Schools Forum powers

- 1.3. Schools Forums generally have a consultative role. However, there are situations in which they have decision-making powers. The respective roles of Schools Forums, local authorities and the DfE are summarised in Table 1 on pages 3-5. The overarching areas on which Schools Forums make decisions on local authority proposals are:
 - De-delegation from mainstream schools budgets (separate approval will be required by the primary and secondary phase members of Schools Forum), for prescribed services to be provided centrally.
 - To create a fund for significant pupil growth in order to support the local authority's duty for place planning (basic need) and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund.
 - To create a fund for falling rolls for good or outstanding schools if the schools' surplus capacity is likely to be needed within the next three years to meet rising pupil numbers and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund.
 - Continued funding at existing levels for prescribed historic commitments where the effect of delegating this funding would be destabilising.
 - Funding for the local authority in order to meet prescribed statutory duties placed upon it. Approval is required to confirm the amounts for each duty and no new commitments or increases in expenditure from 2013/14 are permitted unless agreed by the Secretary of State.
 - Funding for central early years expenditure, which may include funding for checking eligibility of pupils for an early years place and/or free school meals.

² Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/2261)

- Authorising a reduction in the schools budget in order to fund a deficit arising in central expenditure that is to be carried forward from a previous funding period.

In each of these cases, the local authority can appeal to the DfE if the Schools Forum rejects its proposal.

- 1.4. Local Authorities should be aware that the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 restrict the delegation of local authority decisions to Cabinet, a member of Cabinet, a Committee of Cabinet or an officer of the Council, which would not include Schools Forums. As a result the local authority cannot delegate its decision making powers to Schools Forum, e.g. decisions on the funding formula.
- 1.5. Regulations state that the local authority must consult the Schools Forum annually in connection with various schools budget functions, namely:
 - amendments to the school funding formula, for which the voting is restricted by the exclusion of non-schools members except for PVI representatives
 - arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs
 - arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school
 - arrangements for early years provision
 - administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the local authority
- 1.6. Consultation must also take place when a local authority is proposing a contract for supplies and services which is to be funded from the Schools Budget and is in excess of the EU procurement thresholds. The consultation must cover the terms of the contract at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender.
- 1.7. The Schools Forum has the responsibility of informing the governing bodies of all schools maintained by the local authority of the results of any consultations carried out by the local authority relating to the issues in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6.
- 1.8. For 2014-15, local authorities will need to discuss with the Schools Forum any proposals to:
 - vary the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)
 - use exceptional factors
 - vary pupil numbers
 - allow additional categories of, or spending on, central budgets
 - amend the sparsity factor
 - vary the lump sum for amalgamating schools
 - vary the protection for special schools and special academies
 - Proposals will need to be approved by the Secretary of State.

Membership

- 1.9. The Regulations provide a framework for the appointment of members, but allow a considerable degree of discretion in order to accommodate local priorities and practice.

- 1.10. There is no maximum or minimum size of a Schools Forum. Authorities will wish to take various issues into account in deciding the actual size, including the need to have full representation for various types of school, and the local authority's policy on representation of non-schools members. However, care should be taken to keep the Schools Forum to a reasonable size to ensure that it does not become too unwieldy.
- 1.11. Types of member: Schools Forums must have 'schools members' (para 1.16-1.32), 'academies member(s)' if there is at least one academy in the local authority's area (para 1.33-1.37) and 'non-schools members' (para 1.38-1.42). Schools and academies members together must number at least two-thirds of the total membership of the Schools Forum and the balance between maintained primary, maintained secondary and academies members must be broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category, so the structure of Forum should be regularly reviewed, e.g. annually. There is no requirement for academies members to represent specific phases, but it may be encouraged to ensure representation remains broadly proportionate to pupil numbers.
- 1.12. Schools Forum members will need the skills and competencies to manage Forum business (as detailed in Table 2 on pages 6-8) and to take a strategic view across the whole education estate whilst acting as representative of the group that has elected them. Furthermore, they should be easily contactable and pro-active in raising the profile of issues and communicate decisions, and the reasons behind them, effectively

Term of office

- 1.13. The term of office for each schools member and academies member should be stipulated by the local authority at the time of appointment. Such stipulation should follow published rules and be applied in a consistent manner as between members. They need not have identical terms – there may be a case for varied terms so that there is continuity of experience rather than there being a complete change in the membership at a single point. The term of office should not be of a length that would hinder the requirement for the structure of Schools Forum to mirror the type of provision in light of the pace of academy conversions. Examples of how this may work include:-
- Holding vacancies until the Schools Forum structure is reviewed providing that this does not mean holding vacancies for an unreasonable length of time
 - Increasing the size of Schools Forum temporarily to appoint additional academy members, then delete schools member posts at the end of a term of office or when a vacancy arises
 - Consider continuity of service – where an academy conversion affects the school of a current schools member, would academies consider appointing that person as an academies member?
- 1.14. The length of term of office for non-schools members is at the discretion of the local authority. Schools and academies must be informed, within a month of the appointment of any non-schools member, of the name of the member and the name of the body that that member represents.

1.15. As well as the term of office coming to an end, a member ceases to be a member of the Schools Forum if he or she resigns from the Schools Forum or no longer occupies the office by which he or she became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the Schools Forum. For example, a secondary schools member must stand down if their school converts to an academy. A schools member representing community primary school governors who is no longer a governor of a community primary school in the relevant local authority must cease to hold office on the Schools Forum even if they remain a governor of a school represented by another group or sub-group. Other situations in which membership of the Schools Forum ends are if a member gives notice in writing to the local authority and, in the case of a non-schools member, the member is replaced by the local authority, for example at the request of the body which the member represents.

Schools members

- 1.16. Schools members represent specified phases or types of maintained schools within the local authority. As a minimum, Schools Forums must contain representatives of two groups of schools: primary and secondary schools, unless there are no primary or secondary schools maintained by the LA. Middle schools and all through schools are treated according to their deemed status.
- 1.17. Where a local authority maintains one or more special schools the Schools Forum must have at least one schools member from that sector. The same applies to nursery schools and pupil referral units (PRUs).
- 1.18. The local authority then has discretion to divide the groups referred to in paragraph 1.16 and 1.17 into one or more of the following sub-groups–
- headteachers or headteachers’ representatives in each group;
 - governors in each group;
 - headteachers or headteachers representatives and governors in each group;
 - representatives of the particular school category.
- 1.19. Headteachers can be represented by other senior members of staff within their school. Governors can include interim executive members of an interim executive board. The sub-groups do not have to be of equal size – for example, there may be more representatives of headteachers of primary schools than governors of such schools, or vice versa. The membership structure of Schools Forum should ensure there is sufficient representation of each type of schools member in each group to ensure that debate within the Schools Forum is balanced and representative. As a minimum, there must be at least one representative of headteachers and one representative of governors among the schools’ members.
- 1.20. Whatever the membership structure of schools members on a Schools Forum, the important issue is that it should reflect most effectively the profile of education provision across the local authority to ensure that there is not an in-built bias towards any one phase or group.

Election and nomination of schools members

- 1.21. The relevant group or sub-group is probably best placed to determine how their schools members should be elected.
- 1.22. It is good practice for those who draw up the scheme to ensure that a vacancy amongst a represented group would be filled by a nominee elected according to a process that has been determined by all those represented in that group, e.g. community primary school headteachers, or secondary school governors, ensuring that everyone represented has had the opportunity to stand for election and/or vote in such an election.
- 1.23. It is not appropriate for a single person to be elected to represent more than one group or sub-group concurrently, i.e. if they were a governor at a primary and secondary school. They can stand for election from either group but can be appointed to represent only one of those groups.
- 1.24. The purpose of ensuring that each group or sub-group is responsible for their election process is to guarantee that there is a transparent and representative process by which members of Schools Forums are nominated to represent their constituents.
- 1.25. Appropriate support to each group or sub-group to manage their election processes should be offered by the clerk of a Schools Forum, or the committee/democratic services of a local authority. This may just include the provision of advice but may also consist of providing administrative support in actually running the elections themselves.
- 1.26. As a minimum, we would recommend that the clerk of a Schools Forum make a record of the process by which the relevant schools within each group and sub-group elect their nominees to the Schools Forum and be able to advise the Chair of the Schools Forum and local authority on action that needs to be taken, where necessary, to seek new nominees.
- 1.27. In determining the process by which elections should be operated it is perfectly legitimate for a local authority to devise, in consultation with their Schools Forum, a model scheme for the relevant schools within a group or sub-group to consider and be invited to adopt. However, such a model scheme cannot be imposed on that body of schools: adaptations and/or alternative schemes may be adopted. A single scheme need not be adopted universally.
- 1.28. Care should be taken to ensure that every eligible member of a group or sub-group has an opportunity to be involved in the determination of their group's election process, is given the opportunity to stand for election if they choose to do so, and is involved in the election of their representative(s).
- 1.29. It would not be compliant with the Regulations for the steering committee or Chair of a 'parent' group simply to make a nomination to represent their group or sub-group on a Schools Forum. Schools members must be elected, subject to paragraph 1.30 below.

- 1.30. The local authority may set a date by which the election should take place and must appoint the schools member if the election has not taken place by that date. The person appointed should be a member of the relevant group.
- 1.31. We would recommend that any scheme takes into account a number of factors:
- a. the process for collecting names of those wishing to stand for election;
 - b. the timescale for notifying all constituents of the election and those standing;
 - c. the arrangements for dispatching and receiving ballots;
 - d. the arrangements for counting and publicising the results;
 - e. any arrangements for unusual circumstances such as only one candidate standing in an election; and
 - f. whether existing members can stand for re-election.
- 1.32. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates, then the local authority must appoint the schools member instead. The local authority may decide to appoint someone else rather than one of the candidates and might wish to take into account the experience or expertise of the individuals, and the balance between the different types of school represented on the Schools Forum.

Election and nomination of academies members

- 1.33. Academies members must be elected by the proprietor bodies of the academies in the local authority's area, and they are probably best placed to determine the process. Academies members are there to represent the proprietor bodies of academies and are, therefore, not necessarily restricted to principals, senior staff or governors. The same factors should be taken into account as for the election of schools members, set out in paragraphs 1.21 to 1.32. For the avoidance of doubt, Free Schools, University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools are classed as academies for this purpose. There is no distinction between sponsored, non-recoument and converter academies.
- 1.34. Where there is only one academy in the local authority's area, then their proprietor body must select the person who will represent them.
- 1.35. There is no requirement for academies members to be split into specific sub-groups. e.g. primary, secondary, special, alternative provision. However, local authorities may wish to encourage academies to consider the pupil proportions across all academies when electing their representatives.
- 1.36. It is possible that a single person be appointed as an academies member to more than one Schools Forum, for example if an academy chain is located across multiple local authorities, providing they are elected on each occasion in accordance with the agreed election process for each separate Schools Forum.
- 1.37. As with schools members, the local authority may set a date by which the election should take place and must appoint an academies member if the election does not take place by that date, or if an election results in a tie between two or more candidates.

Non-schools members

- 1.38. Non-schools members may number no more than a third of a Schools Forum's total membership (excluding observers – see paragraph 1.51). A representative of providers of 16-19 education must be elected from those providers. This includes those in the FE sector (FE and sixth form colleges) and other institutions that specialise in special education needs (SEN) and learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) provision (ISPs), where 20% or more of their students reside in the local authority's area. As with academies the providers are probably best placed to determine the election process.
- 1.39. The local authority must appoint at least one person to represent early years providers from the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector. Early years PVI settings need to be represented because funding for the free entitlement for three and four year olds comes from the Schools Budget, and all settings are funded through the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) including funding for the free entitlement for disadvantaged two-year-olds.
- 1.40. Before appointing additional non-schools members to the Schools Forum, the local authority must consider whether the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses situated in the local authority's area; and, where there are schools or academies in the area with a different religious character, the appropriate faith group, should be represented on the Schools Forum. If diocesan authorities nominate members for appointment as non-schools members they may wish to consider what type of representative would be most appropriate – schools-based such as a headteacher or governor, or someone linked more generally with the diocese, e.g. a member of the education board.
- 1.41. It is also good practice for local authorities to ensure that the needs and interests of all the pupils in the local authority are adequately represented by the members of a Schools Forum. The interests of pupils in maintained schools can be represented by schools members. Some pupils in a local authority, however, are not in maintained schools but instead are educated in hospitals, independent special schools and non-maintained special schools. Certain types of non-schools members can play an important role in representing the interests of these groups of pupils. They can also play a role in representing the interests and views of the services that support those groups of vulnerable and at-risk pupils who nevertheless are on the roll of maintained schools, such as looked after children and children with special educational needs.
- 1.42. The purpose of non-schools members is also to bring greater breadth of discussion to Schools Forum meetings and ensure that stakeholders and partners other than schools are represented. Organisations which typically provide non-schools members are trades unions, professional associations and representatives of youth groups. Parent groups could also be considered. However, as there are clearly limited numbers of non-schools members able to be on a Schools Forum, care should be taken to ensure that an appropriate representation from wider stakeholders is achieved.

Other membership issues

- 1.43. There are three restrictions placed on who can be a non-schools member of a Schools Forum. The local authority cannot appoint:
- an elected member of the local authority who is appointed to the executive of that local authority (a lead member/portfolio holder) 'executive members',
 - the Director of Children's Services or any officer employed or engaged to work under the management of the Director of Children's Services, and who does not directly provide education to children (or manage those who do) ('relevant officer' (a) and (b)),
 - other officers with a specific role in management of and/or who advise on funding for schools ('relevant officer' part (c)).
- 1.44. Schools Forums have the power to approve a limited range of proposals from their local authority: the restrictions ensure that there is no conflict of interest between the proposing body (the local authority) and the approving body (the Schools Forum).
- 1.45. However, non-executive elected members and those officers who are employed in their capacity as headteachers or teachers and those who directly manage a service which provides education to individual children and/or advice to schools on, for example, learning and behavioural matters are eligible to be members of Schools Forums.
- 1.46. In the case of non-executive elected members, they may be a schools member (by virtue of them being a school governor), an academies member or a non-schools member. As a non-schools member they may be well placed to fulfil the broader overview and scrutiny role they have within the local authority in general.
- 1.47. However, the inclusion of non-executive elected members and certain officers is not a requirement. Many Schools Forums do not have such members on them and it is for each local authority and Schools Forum to consider how best to ensure the right balance of school and non-school representation on the Schools Forum, taking into account their local circumstances and preferences.

The role of executive elected members

- 1.48. A Schools Forum needs to ensure that there are systems in place for executive members of the Council to be aware of its views on specific issues and, in particular, any decisions it takes in relation to the Schools Budget and individual budget shares.
- 1.49. Executive members with responsibility for education/children's services or resources of the local authority are able to participate in Schools Forum meetings. By doing so such elected members are able to contribute to the discussion and receive first-hand the views of the Schools Forum: it is clearly good practice for this to be the case and the regulations provide the right for executive members to attend and speak at Schools Forum meetings. However, there is no requirement for this to happen so at the very least there should be clear channels of communication between the Schools Forum and executive members.

Communication may also be assisted if Schools Forum members attended relevant Cabinet meetings as members of the public, e.g. when the funding formula is decided.

Recording the composition of Schools Forums

- 1.50. Each local authority must make a written record of the composition of its Schools Forum detailing the numbers of schools members and by which group or sub-group they were elected, the number of academies members and the number of non-schools members, their terms of office, how they were chosen and whom they represent. This record should also indicate the term of office for schools and academies members.

Observers

- 1.51. The Regulations provide that the Secretary of State can appoint an observer to attend and speak at Schools Forum meetings, e.g. a representative from the Education Funding Agency (EFA). This allows a conduit for national policy to be discussed at a local level and provide access for Schools Forum to an additional support mechanism, e.g. where there are highly complex issues to resolve.

Participation of local authority officers at meetings

- 1.52. Only specific officers can speak at meetings of the Schools Forum. These officers are:
- Director of Children's Services or their representative
 - Chief Financial Officer or their representative
 - Any person invited by Schools Forum to provide financial or technical advice
 - Any person presenting a paper to Schools Forum but their ability to speak is limited to the paper that they are presenting.
- 1.53. In the majority of cases Schools Forums are supported by a specific officer. In the course of their work, however, Schools Forums will be required to consider a whole range of issues and they may consider it appropriate that other officers attend for specific items of business. Where this is the case, the local authority should meet the Schools Forum's requests as far as possible.

Procedures

- 1.54. Many procedural matters are not prescribed in the Regulations and are at the discretion either of the local authority or the Schools Forum itself. However, there are requirements in the Regulations relating to:
- a. quorum: A meeting is only quorate if 40% of the total membership is present (this excludes any observers, and it is 40% of the current

membership excluding vacancies). If a meeting is inquorate it can proceed but it cannot legally take decisions (e.g. election of a Chair, or a decision relating to funding conferred by the funding regulations). An inquorate meeting can respond to local authority consultation, and give views to the local authority. It would normally be good practice for the local authority to take account of such 'unofficial' views, but it is not legally obliged to do so. In practice, the arrangements for meetings should be made to reduce the chance of a problem with quora. The quorum stipulation is in the Regulations to help ensure the legitimacy of decisions;

- b. election of a Chair: Under the Regulations, if the position of Chair falls vacant the Schools Forum must decide how long the term of office of the next Chair will be. This can be for any period, but the Schools Forum should consider carefully whether a period exceeding two years is sensible. A long period will also cause problems if the member elected as Chair has a term of office as a member which comes to an end before their term of office as Chair ends. The Schools Forum must elect a Chair from amongst its own members, so it is not possible to elect an independent Chair. In addition any elected member of the local authority or officer of the local authority who is a member of a Schools Forum may not hold the office of Chair. Schools Forums can also appoint to a position of vice Chair to provide cover if the Chair is absent or the post vacant;
- c. voting procedures: The Regulations provide that a Schools Forum may determine its own voting procedures save that voting on:-
- the funding formula is limited to schools members, academies members and PVI representatives
 - de-delegation will be limited to the specific primary and secondary phase of maintained schools members.

The powers which Schools Forums have to take decisions on a range of funding matters increase the importance of clear procedures, e.g. decisions are made on a simple majority or the threshold to be met if higher. These procedures should take account of any use of working groups by the Schools Forum – for example a decision might be taken by voting to accept and adopt a report by a working group (see 1.58). As part of any voting procedure there should be clarity in the procedures for recording the outcome of a vote, and any resolutions a Schools Forum makes in relation to any vote taken;

- d. substitutes: The local authority must make arrangements to enable substitutes to attend and vote (where appropriate) at Schools Forum meetings. This applies to schools members, academies members and non-schools members. The arrangements must be decided in consultation with Schools Forum members.
- e. defects and vacancies: The Regulations provide that proceedings of the Schools Forum are not invalidated by defects in the election or appointment of any member, or the appointment of the Chair. Nor does the existence of any vacancy on the Schools Forum invalidate proceedings (see paragraph 1.52(a) on quorum).

- f. timing: Schools Forums must meet at least four times a year
- 1.55. Where the Regulations make no provision on a procedural matter, local discretion should be exercised. It is for the local authority to decide how far it wishes to establish rules for the Schools Forum to follow, in the form of standing orders. While it is entitled to do so, it is of course good practice to allow the Schools Forum to set its own rules so far as possible.

Public access

- 1.56. Schools Forums are more than just consultative bodies. They also have an important role to play in approving certain proposals from their local authority and are therefore involved in the decision making process surrounding the use of public money at local level. As a result Schools Forums are required to be open to the public. Furthermore papers, agendas and minutes must be publicly available well in advance of each meeting. It is good practice that notification that Schools Forum is a public meeting is included on the website and papers are published at least a week in advance.
- 1.57. Some Schools Forums already operate very much along the lines of a local authority committee. This is perfectly legitimate and will provide a consistent framework for the running of meetings that are open to the public, and the publishing of papers and agendas well in advance of the meeting and minutes published promptly as required under Regulation 8(13) of the Schools Forum Regulations 2012.

Working groups

- 1.58. It is open to a Schools Forum to set up working groups of members to discuss specific issues, and to produce draft advice and decisions for the Schools Forum itself to consider. The groups can also include wider representation - for example, an early years reference group can represent all the different types of provider to consider the detail of the early years single funding formula. The reference group would then be able to give its considered view on the local authority's proposals to the Schools Forum. The Schools Forum should not delegate actual decisions or the finalisation of advice to a working group, as this may have the effect of excluding legitimate points of view.

Urgent business

- 1.59. It is good practice for the local authority to agree with its Schools Forum an urgency procedure to be followed when there is a genuine business need for a decision or formal view to be expressed by the Schools Forum, before the next scheduled meeting. The local authority may of course call an unscheduled meeting; but it may also wish to put in place alternative arrangements such as clearance by email correspondence or some other means. Such instances should be avoided so far as possible but are legitimate provided all members of the Schools Forum have an opportunity to participate, the logistics provide a

reasonable opportunity for consideration and the local authority policy on data security is not compromised.

- 1.60. It is not legal for the Chair to take a decision on behalf of the Schools Forum, no matter how urgent the matter in question; but a Schools Forum may wish to put in place a procedure for the Chair to give the local authority a view on an urgent issue.

Resources of the Schools Forum

- 1.61. The costs of a Schools Forum fall in the centrally retained budget portion of the Schools Block of local authorities. Nationally there is variation in the level of funding local authorities identify against Schools Forum expenditure: the median budgeted expenditure in 2013-14 was £24,158.
- 1.62. It is legitimate to charge the running costs of Schools Forums to this budget including any agreed and reasonable expenses for members attending meetings, the costs of producing and distributing papers and costs room hire and refreshments and for clerking of meetings. Beyond these costs some Schools Forums have a budget of their own to use for activities such as commissioning research or other reports. The 2012 School and Early Years Finance Regulations provide that the level of resource devoted to running Schools Forums in 2013-14 is limited to 2012-13 levels unless the Secretary of State agrees an increase. Similar arrangements are in the draft 2013 Regulations.

Section 2 – Effective Schools Forums

Introduction

- 2.1. As the previous section outlined, local authorities have responsibility for establishing Schools Forums. They also have an ongoing responsibility to provide them with appropriate support, information and guidance in carrying out their functions and responsibilities.
- 2.2. The following outlines some aspects of what local authorities and Schools Forums should consider in ensuring that their Schools Forums are as effective as possible. The pace of academy conversions in particular means that this significant sector must be properly represented and feel that it is able to play a meaningful part in the discussions of the Schools Forum.
- 2.3. Central to the effectiveness or otherwise of a Schools Forum will be the relationship between it and its local authority. The local authority will have a significant influence on this: the support it provides; the resources it devotes and the weight it gives to the views of Schools Forums all contribute to the nature of the relationship. There are therefore a number of characteristics of this relationship that are particularly important:
 - *Partnership: Having a shared understanding of the priorities, issues and concerns of schools, academies and the local authority.*
 - *Effective Support: The business of the Schools Forum is supported by the local authority in an efficient and professional manner.*
 - *Openness: It is important that a Schools Forum feels it is receiving open, honest and objective advice from its local authority.*
 - *Responsiveness: Local authorities should as far as possible be responsive to requests from their Schools Forums and their members. Schools Forums themselves should also be aware of the resource implications of their requests.*
 - *Strategic view: Members of Schools Forum should consider the needs of the whole of the educational community, rather than using their position on a Schools Forum to advance their own sectional or specific interests.*
 - *Challenge and Scrutiny: Schools Forums may be asked to agree to proposals from their local authority that will have an effect on all schools and academies in the local area. The extent to which Schools Forums can scrutinise and challenge such proposals is an important aspect of their effectiveness.*
- 2.4. The characteristics identified above are just some of the aspects that will contribute to an effective Schools Forum. The following provides more detail on some of the specific issues that local authorities and Schools Forums may wish to consider in thinking about their own arrangements.

Induction of new members

- 2.5. When new members join the Schools Forum appropriate induction materials should be provided. These might include material relating to the operation of the Schools Forum together with background information about the local and national school funding arrangements. Typically they might comprise:
 - a. the constitution of the Schools Forum
 - b. a list of members including contact details and their terms of office
 - c. any locally agreed terms of reference explaining the relationship between the Schools Forum and the local authority
 - d. copies of minutes of previous meetings
 - e. the programme of Schools Forum meetings for the year
 - f. the local Schools Forum web address
- 2.6. This Operational and Good Practice Guide, suitably supplemented by local material, should also be provided to new members on their appointment.
- 2.7. Where there is sufficient turnover of Schools Forum members in any particular year the local authority may wish to organise a one-off induction event to brief new members. Such an event would usefully include an outline of the role of the Schools Forum and the national funding arrangements for schools and local authorities. It might also include an explanation of the local funding formula and any proposals for review. The opportunity could also be taken to explain the main reporting requirements for school and local authority expenditure.

Training

- 2.8. Ideally Schools Forum members should be able to use some of the budget set aside for Schools Forum running costs for accessing relevant training activities. Some training will be provided by officers of the local authority but members may wish to attend national or regional events, the costs of which, where necessary, can be supported from the Schools Forum budget.
- 2.9. Training will need to be provided in response to any changes in the role of the Schools Forum and national developments in respect of school funding.

Agenda setting

- 2.10. The process by which the agenda for a meeting or cycle of meetings is set is in many respects one of the key determinants of the effectiveness or otherwise of a Schools Forum.
- 2.11. The frequency and timing of meetings of the Schools Forum should be agreed in advance of each financial or academic year. In drawing up this cycle of meetings, in consultation with the Schools Forum, the local authority should provide a clear overview of the key consultative and decision-making points in the school funding cycle. These will be drawn from a combination of national and local information and should inform the basic agenda items that each meeting needs to cover. For instance meetings will need to be scheduled at appropriate points to enable the

Schools Forum to consider the outcomes of local consultations and national announcements.

- 2.12. Although the business of Schools Forums must be open and transparent, it is recognised that from time to time items of a confidential nature will need to be discussed. It is recommended that authorities apply the same principles that they apply to Council/Cabinet meetings when judging an item to be confidential and adopt similar practices for dealing with those reports in the meeting, e.g. placing them together at the end of the agenda.

Preparation for a Schools Forum meeting

- 2.13. It is vital that Schools Forum is transparent, open and has clear communication lines to all of the members that are represented. This ensures the wider school family are aware of the business discussed, the impact on their setting and the reasons for the decisions.
- 2.14. The vast majority of a Schools Forum's business will be transacted on the basis of prepared papers. It is therefore important that these are concise, informative and produced in a timely and consistent manner. Recommendations should be clearly set out at the beginning of each report. It is also helpful if the front of the report confirms whether the report is for information or decision and who is eligible to vote where relevant.
- 2.15. It is good practice for the Schools Forum and local authority to agree a standard for these. It is usual for papers to be dispatched at least one week prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed to allow members to consider them and if necessary canvass views from the group they are representing. Papers should be published on the local authority's website at this time to enable representations to be made to Schools Forum members.
- 2.16. Consistency in the presentation of papers also contributes to the effectiveness of meetings: it helps set the tone of meetings, facilitate the engagement of all members and signal the importance the local authority attaches to the work of the Schools Forum. Ideally such a standard should be agreed between the Schools Forum and local authority. The publishing of papers as a single pdf file is helpful as it saves time and avoids accessing multiple documents both in advance of, and during, the meeting. An Executive Summary of the reports can provide Schools Forum members and members of the public with an overview of the agenda and the decisions required.
- 2.17. The publishing of papers on a publicly available website well in advance of the meeting ensures that all interested parties are able to access papers. Some Schools Forums ensure that each represented group meets in the days immediately prior to the Schools Forum meeting to ensure the agenda is discussed and Schools Forum members are properly briefed by the group they represent. Although on occasions it is inevitable that Schools Forums will receive late, or tabled reports it does create some difficulty for members as they will not have been able to seek the views of those they represent.

- 2.18. Schools Forums can consider adopting a flexible arrangement for time immediately prior to the meeting. For example it could be used for training of new members, or as a drop-in session for members to ask items of clarification, or for members to meet without officers to discuss the agenda.

Chairing the Schools Forum

- 2.19. The Chair of a Schools Forum plays a key role in setting the tone, pace and overall dynamic of the Schools Forum. They should provide an environment within which all members are able to contribute fully to discussions and guide the Schools Forum to making well informed decisions.
- 2.20. The relationship between the Chair and the local authority is therefore vital. The Chair should be very clear on the substance of the agenda items, understand the issues involved and the decisions and/or actions that need to be taken in respect of School Forum business. It is good practice for there to be a pre-meeting between the senior officer of the local authority supporting the Schools Forum and the Chair of the Schools Forum to ensure that all the issues are clearly understood.
- 2.21. Equally, the Chair has the responsibility of representing the views of the Schools Forum back to the local authority: for instance, they should, where appropriate, take the initiative to make suggestions for improvements to the way the business is conducted, and, in exceptional cases and with support of the members of the Schools Forum take the view that they do not have sufficient information on which to base a decision and ask that an item is deferred until further information is available. However, in doing so, the Chair and Schools Forum should be fully aware of the consequences of deferral.
- 2.22. The independence of Schools Forum is paramount. Enhancing the role of Chair to a paid position, rather than the reimbursement of reasonable expenses, could blur the lines of independence. Similarly, if the Chair undertakes significant work for the LA in another capacity, e.g. as an external consultant, they could be viewed as equivalent to an officer of the local authority.
- 2.23. Local authorities could consider if sharing contact details of the Schools Forum Chair with neighbouring authorities would be helpful for peer support and improving networking opportunities.

Clerking the Schools Forum

- 2.24. Clerking of a Schools Forum should be seen as more than just writing a note of the meeting. A good clerk provides an invaluable link between the members of the Schools Forum, the Chair and the local authority. It is a role often undertaken by an employee of the local authority though we would recommend consideration is given to the use of an independent clerk.
- 2.25. Clerks should manage the logistics of the meeting in terms of ensuring dispatch of papers and producing a note from the meeting. In considering the style of meeting notes consideration should be given to making them intelligible enough for non-attendees to get a sense of the discussion as well as clearly indicating the

conclusion and action agreed in relation to each agenda item. Verbatim reports of a Schools Forum's discussion, however, are unlikely to be very useful. Schools Forums may consider whether a simple action log should be maintained by the clerk to ensure all action points agreed are followed up.

2.26. Beyond this a good clerk can:

- a. provide the route by which Schools Forum members can access further information and co-ordinate communication to Schools Forum members outside of the formal meeting cycle;
- b. respond to any queries about the business of the Schools Forum from headteachers, governors and others who are not on the Schools Forum themselves;
- c. be responsible for ensuring contact details of all members are up to date;
- d. maintain the list of members on the Schools Forum and advise on membership issues in general;
- e. assist with the co-ordination of nomination/election processes run by the constituent groups;
- f. keep the Schools Forum website up to date: e.g. by posting latest minutes and papers etc;
- g. monitor, on a regular basis, the Schools Forum and general Schools Funding section of the Department for Education (DfE) website or the gov.uk website; and arrange for the distribution of any relevant DfE information to Schools Forum members;
- h. if appropriate, provide technical advice in relation to the Schools Forum regulations and in relation to the operation of a Schools Forum's local constitution; and
- i. organise, operate and record any voting activity of the Schools Forum in line with the provisions of its local constitution.

2.27. Not all of these tasks may be able to be undertaken by the Schools Forum clerk. However, each one is important and there should be arrangements in place to ensure they are discharged adequately.

Good practice for Schools Forum meetings

2.28. Schools Forums should ensure there is a clear debate of all agenda items. Whilst sub-group meetings are valuable in working through detailed issues, Schools Forum should consider that the level of debate held at the Schools Forum meeting and recorded in the minutes will be the official reflection of the level of challenge and discussion on each issue.

2.29. The use of nameplates for Schools Forum members also showing which group they are representing can be helpful to members of the public and presenters of papers.

2.30. The use of coloured cards or coloured nameplates can be helpful when specific members of Schools Forum are eligible to vote on specific items, e.g. de-delegation or changes to the funding formula.

2.31. Consultations with Schools Forum are a key responsibility of a local authority, ranging from the funding formula to the letting of contracts. Each consultation will be different and depend on the subject being consulted on, but local authorities should consider the following factors as good practice for effective consultation:-

- Plan and consult early
- Allow reasonable timescales for response (as Forum members may need to consult the groups they represent)
- An open and honest approach
- Fully inclusive
- Allow for ongoing dialogue
- Provide feedback
- Clear communications.

Meeting notes and recording of decisions

2.32. A vital part of the effective operation of a Schools Forum is to ensure that an accurate record of the meeting is taken. This must include the clear recording of votes where there are contrary views. Recommendations to, and decisions of, Schools Forum must be clearly set out.

2.33. Notes or minutes of each Schools Forum meeting should be produced and put on the website as soon after the meeting as possible to enable members and others to see the outcome of any discussions and decisions/votes. It is good practice to formally agree the accuracy of the note/minutes at a subsequent meeting but the publication of the draft minutes should not be delayed as a result.

2.34. In order to provide clarity about representation at each meeting, it is good practice for the minutes to record the group and/or subgroup that each member represents against their name.

Communication

2.35. Communication to the wider educational community of the discussions and debates of, and decisions made by, Schools Forum is fundamental to their effective operation. The more schools and other stakeholders know about the proceedings of the Schools Forum, the more their work will be an important and central part of the context of local educational funding. This is particularly important given the decision making role that the Schools Forum has. Local authorities should consider the operational differences between the types of stakeholders and plan their communications accordingly. For example ensuring effective communications across the PVI sector may be more difficult than with schools, who are more likely to have existing channels of communication e.g. headteacher meetings.

2.36. Each Schools Forum should therefore be clear what its channels of communication are. One channel is the requirement that all its agenda, minutes and papers are publicly available on the local authority's website. However, the Schools Forum should also consider additional communication processes. These could include:

- a. the reporting back by Schools Forum members to their 'parent' group of the business of the Schools Forum is a key responsibility of Schools Forum members. This can be a particularly useful method of ensuring that Schools Forum members have an ongoing dialogue with the constituents of their group or sub-group and are therefore well able to represent their views at Schools Forum meetings;
- b. an annual report on the proceedings of the Schools Forum;
- c. attendance by the Chair, or other Schools Forum member, at other relevant consultative or management groups such as any capital working group; or senior management meetings of the Children's Services Department; or
- d. a brief email to all schools, early years providers and other stakeholders after each Schools Forum meeting informing them of the discussions and decisions with a link to the full papers and minutes for further information
- e. a Schools Forum newsletter can be a less formal and more interesting way of communicating forum business and raising the profile of Schools Forum and its members.

News updates

- 2.37. Most, but not all, members of the Schools Forum will already be in receipt of regular information on school funding matters from the local authority and DfE. Other Schools Forum members should be copied into such information flows so that they can be kept abreast of developments between meetings.
- 2.38. Many local authorities have already established dedicated Schools Forum websites on which they post key information for Schools Forum members and other interested parties.



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Dudley Schools Forum



Introduction

It has been a requirement since 2003 that Local Authorities establish a Schools Forum for their area.

The Dudley Schools Forum is a body comprising of representatives of maintained schools and academies and early years providers together with other local partners and stakeholders.

The Forums role is both consultative and advisory.



DFE Related

- ▶ [Consultations](#)
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Information for Members

[Information for members](#) includes dates of meetings, [Forum minutes and agendas](#), current membership, constitution, [Decision Sheets](#), Budget Fact Sheets, Training and Literature

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Latest News

Dudley's Schools Forum Constitution update is effective from 1 January 2014.

Pauline Sharratt, currently the Assistant Director for Children and Families, has been appointed as Dudley's Interim Director of Children's Services from 1 January 2014 to succeed Jane Porter, who will be retiring in December 2013.

Bulletins

Next Meeting:

10th December 2013
18:00 - 20:00
Saltwells EDC

Contacts

Chair of Schools Forum:
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Vice Chair of Schools Forum:
Mr Brian Patterson

Clerk to Schools Forum:
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