

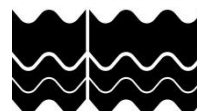
East Sussex County Council Schools' Forum

Friday 15 September 2023

08.30

Remote Meeting

**East Sussex
County Council**



Agenda

Item	Heading	Paper	Lead	Item for
1.	Welcome and Apologies	N	Chair	Note
2.	Minutes of previous meeting 14 July 2023	Y	Chair	Approval
3.	Matters Arising and Declaration of Interests	N	Chair	Discussion
4.	De-delegation	Y	Sarah Rice / Nathan Caine	Approval
5.	Review of School Forum Membership	Y	Ed Beale	Information
6.	Election of Chair / Vice Chair	N	Clerk	Approval
	AOB			

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EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 14 July 2023

PRESENT

Secondary

Hugh Hennebry - **Chair** (Uckfield College)

Helen Key (Chailey School)

Secondary Governors

Monica Whitehead (Claverham Community College)

Secondary Academy

Kelly Johnson (UoBAT)

Primary

Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary)

Laura Cooper (St John's CE School)

Primary Governors

Debra Vice Holt (Oak Tree Federation)

Primary Academy

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)

Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)

Special Schools

Jo Foulkes (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)

Special Academy

Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)

Non School Members

Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)

Jon Gilbert (Diocese of Chichester)

ESCC representatives

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Alison Jeffery (Director Children's Services)

Nathan Caine (HofEd SEND & Safeguarding)

Edward Beale (Schools Funding Manager)

Rachel King (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES (Note)

The chair welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance.

1.1 It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below.

Elizabeth Funge Assistant Director Education
Gemma White The Blue Bell Federation

Sian Hedger BSD finance
Kirsten Coe BSD finance
Sarah Rice BSD finance

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 13 January 2023 (Approval)

2.1 The minutes for the meeting held were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chair and scanned to clerk.

2.2 Actions noted from 13/01/23 minutes. 5.2 School Improvement - De-delegation approval, Elizabeth Funge confirmed that this information will be shared at the secondary headteachers meeting in February. Hugh asked that this information is also brought to Schools' Forum in the new academic year.

3. MATTER ARISING AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Discussion)

3.1 Matters arising - none
Declarations of interest - none

4. High needs - spend on commissioned places (Information)

4.1 Forum members were given detailed information in relation to the spend in 2022/23 on High needs commissioned places. Key points;

- 50% expenditure goes towards special school places
- 40% of that total number goes towards independent, non-maintained schools (INMS) making it an average spend per pupil significantly higher in that sector.
- Suggested that more context could be given for the high costs to explain the high cost, low incident nature of children's whose needs cannot be met in a special school/academy sector.
- Summerdown school has been set up to try and provide children with health needs without placing them in the INMS sector.

5. High Needs - Enhancing Inclusive Practice Programme Update (Information)

5.1 Members were given an update on the progress to date on the implementation of this programme following two rounds of applications from schools and settings.

Recommendations:

- To note the progress made on the implementation of the programme across the county
- Support for the proposals for a third round of bidding in the new school year.

Schools' Forum members support recommendation to have a third round of bidding. It was asked that 'best practice' and evidence is shared between schools.

6. Election of Chair for Schools' Forum (Approval)

This is following on from the recently sent email highlighting that a new Chair is required.

Members were asked for a "volunteer", at this meeting to replace the Chair who is stepping down from the position. There were no volunteers for a permanent replacement.

It was requested that a member volunteered to Chair for the September meeting only and Jo Foulkes as current vice chair was asked to step up for the September meeting initially and Monica Whitehead volunteered to be Vice Chair.
At the September meeting there will be another item on the agenda to appoint a new, permanent Chair for Schools' Forum.

Alison Jeffery thanked Hugh Hennebry for his service to schools' forum.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

New pay award - it was asked that something could be circulated to Headteachers and governors, to clarify if the 6.5% pay award is funded.

Meeting concluded at 09:00 am

Next meeting - Friday 15 September 2023 08:30am. To be held on Microsoft Teams

DRAFT

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Report to: Schools Forum

Date of meeting: 15th Sept 2023

Report By: Alison Jeffery

Title: De-delegating budgets for Primary and Secondary maintained schools

Purpose: To advise Forum which budgets were de-delegated by schools in 2023/24 and seek approval on de-delegated budgets for 2024/25.

Recommendations:

1. The Primary and Secondary maintained Schools Forum Representatives are asked to decide which services should be provided centrally by the Authority for 2024/25.

1. Background

- 1.1 Since 2013/14 the Department for Education (DfE) has required that Schools Forum agree to de-delegate budgets for certain services provided centrally by the Local Authority (LA). The DfE have confirmed that this arrangement will continue for financial year 2024/25.
- 1.2 The funding is automatically delegated to Academies who can choose to access some of the services by purchasing from East Sussex Services to Schools or source services from other providers.
- 1.3 The services to be considered for de-delegation in 2024/25 are shown below and Schools Forum can agree to de-delegate a service in 2024/25 where it chose not to in 2023/24.
 - Contingency
 - Behaviour Support Services (please see appendix B)
 - Support for ethnic minority pupils (please see appendix B)
 - Administration of free school meals
 - Jury service and union business
 - Headteacher Partnership (please see appendix C)

- 1.4 For 2023/24, the following decisions were agreed at schools forum on de-delegated services.

	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
	De-delegated in 2023/24	De-delegated in 2023/24
Contingency	Yes	Yes
Behaviour Support Services	Yes	No
<i>Support for ethnic minority pupils*</i>	Yes	No
Administration of Free school meals	Yes	Yes
Jury service and union business	Yes	Yes
Head Teacher Partnership	Yes	Yes

*subject to a 2 year commitment for 2022/23

- 1.5 Only members of the Schools Forum representing maintained primary and secondary schools are entitled to vote on the 2024/25 proposals. In accordance with regulations, representatives of each phase will vote separately, however it is possible that a decision not to de-delegate in one phase may affect the viability of provision overall and the withdrawal of the service for all phases.

2. The Services

- 2.1 Descriptions of the services which can be provided centrally to maintained schools are set out below in Appendix A B and C.
- 2.2 The De-delegated funding for 2023/24 to schools and academies for these services is summarised in Appendix D.
- 2.3 The calculation of amounts to be de-delegated from each school must be linked to factors within the funding formula. The calculations, applied in 2023/24, will continue for 2024/25 using the following basis:

De-delegated Heading	Formula Factor
Contingency	Per Pupil Amount
Behaviour Support Services	20% Per Pupil Amount 11% Free School Meals 22% Free School Meal Ever6 22% IDACI 25% Prior Attainment
Support for Ethnic Minority Pupils	50% Per Pupil 50% Per EAL Pupil
Administration of Free School Meals	Free School Meal Numbers
Jury service and union business	Per Pupil Amount
Head Teacher Partnership	Lump Sum Amount

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Maintained Primary and Secondary representatives on the Schools Forum are requested to agree the services to be de-delegated in 2024/25, as per paragraph 1.3.

Alison Jeffery

Director Children's Services

Contact Officer: Sarah Rice

Tel. No. 01273 482547

Email: Sarah.Rice@eastsussex.gov.uk

Description of De-delegated services

Appendix A

The framework for de-delegated budgets is set within the principles of shared responsibility between schools for all children and mutual support across all schools. The model allows for all maintained schools to have certainty of access to support at the point of need from services that continue to operate and provide support in a well managed and cost effective way.

Contingencies

Contingencies can be held for a limited range of circumstances

- Exceptional unforeseen costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to plan for
- Schools in financial difficulties
- Additional costs relating to new, re-organised and closing schools
- Managing extra ordinary personnel matters

It is recommended that maintained schools continue to fund a contingency which will be administered by the Local Authority for the approved purposes.

If schools decide not to have a central contingency, they will need to ensure that all schools are able to make any extraordinary payments this can put significant additional strain on individual school budget shares.

Administration of Free School Meals

The County Council's free school meals service enables schools to meet legal requirements relating to the provision of free school meals without the administrative burden.

The free school meals service is located within the Admissions and Transport Team and as a Local Authority, we have direct links with Government Departments (DfE and DWP). This enables us to determine eligibility for free school meals with one short telephone call from schools with the vast majority of individual applications only taking 30 seconds to process. Individual schools do not have access to the checking service meaning eligibility would need to be carried out at school level as a paper exercise.

We are able to give guidance on all aspects of eligibility and provide accurate data to support schools. Weekly changes are reported to schools securely and full entitlement reports are sent to individual schools. We will ensure that free schools meals data is accurate for the census returns.

NB Academies can buy into this service through Services to Schools.

Jury service and union business

This central budget currently pays for supply cover when members of a school's staff undertake Trade Union Duties or Jury Service. The amount each school may have to pay can vary significantly from year to year, whereas across the County the amount is more likely to be relatively stable. The benefit to maintained schools of pooling these budgets is that schools know exactly how much they will pay each year instead of facing the prospect of additional costs which are out of the schools control and which could present a significant budget pressure.

For primary schools, this budget also includes the costs of administering the County Funded Supply internal insurance schemes.

Behavioural Support, Support for Minority Ethnic Pupils and HeadTeacher Partnership

For discussions around these areas of de-delegation please see appendices B & C.

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1 Background

1.1 From April 2014, funding arrangements for centrally held Behaviour Support Services (BSS) and services for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EALS) were placed under the jurisdiction of Schools' Forum to decide whether the historic budgets could be pooled by the Local Authority or distributed to maintained schools by formula.

1.2 The framework for de-delegated budgets is set within the principles of shared responsibility between schools for all pupils and mutual support across all schools. The model allows for all schools who de-delegate funding to have certainty of access to support at the point of need from services that continue to operate and provide support in the most cost-effective way.

1.3 Following the restructure within the Education Division, behaviour support will now sit within the Team Around the School and Setting (TASS) and will be delivered through a broader agenda of inclusion support. The new TASS will provide support to all maintained primary schools delivering a range of interventions to support schools and settings around social, emotional and mental health needs, cohort work around emerging needs and including developing programmes for those groups of children who are at risk of permanent exclusion.

1.4 The Inclusion and Alternative Provision team will provide support for secondary and primary aged child is at risk of Permanent Exclusion through the Inclusion Partnership or Behaviour Support Network. A team of Inclusion Partnership Advisers will be available to support with children at risk of PEX. Although this support is funded outside of the de-delegated BSS budget, the capacity of this work will be impacted by the financial commitment of individual schools.

1.5 Support from the TASS team will be bespoke to the needs of the school and will include whole school expert advice, guidance, training, and support, as well as targeted group work alongside whole school approaches to behaviour and inclusion. As pupils who are at risk of exclusion often present with attendance difficulties, the behaviour offer will be supported by the new core attendance offer and termly attendance meetings. Schools at both phases will be offered a core behaviour meeting prior to the implementation of targeted work.

1.6 Schools and academies have a statutory duty to provide for pupils with EAL on their roll and funding is delegated within their individual budgets for this purpose. EAL is not a special educational need and pupils with EAL are able to achieve very well if effective support is in place for them. This includes support from staff who have a good understanding of their mother tongue and can build links with families who do not speak English as a first language. The EAL service offers a range of support for pupils and schools (1:1 support and training) as well as a translation service and support for pupils to take examinations in their mother tongue.

2 Behaviour Support: (Team Around the School and Setting - Inclusion)

2.1 Currently, resources for primary maintained schools are managed according to a published formula. Appendix A outlines the agreed allocation of support to schools. The restructure has provided an opportunity to reshape the behaviour offer

to support emerging needs in schools and to enhance the developing inclusion agenda. The central tenet of this proposal is to ensure there is a clarity and equity around distribution of resource for all schools and a targeted whole school support.

2.2 This new system aims to support whole school developments around behaviour and inclusion and to provide schools with access to specialist support for behaviour and guidance around inclusion.

2.3 *Implications for Cessation of De-Delegated Primary Behaviour Support:*

- Behaviour and inclusion capacity would be significantly reduced, and the service could only focus on statutory work (i.e. permanently excluded pupils). Behaviour and inclusion provision could not be reinstated at a later stage.
- No early intervention would be provided, except for statutory duties.
- The number of pupils requiring support in the secondary phase could increase as their barriers to learning support may not have been addressed in a timely and robust manner in the primary phase.
- A potential increase in the demand for special school provision in both primary and secondary phases.
- A potential increase in permanent exclusions, breakdown of placements of pupils with EHCPs, and a related increase in the number of pupils that schools have to reintegrate mid-year from other schools.
- A potential deterioration of attendance.
- Further pressure on High Needs Block funding and in turn funding available for schools.

2.4 The overall impact of a reduction in funding in this area would increase the challenge for schools, potentially creating additional budget pressures or demands on already stretched alternative and specialist provision. Outcomes for pupils in East Sussex could further decline.

3 English as an Additional Language Service

3.1 From April 2014 until 2019, units were allocated to schools based on the number of EAL pupils who have been in the education system in the UK for less than 3 years. This system weighted support towards newly arrived pupils who generally have lower levels of English and the greatest need for support.

3.2 In 2019, the service made a new offer of EAL support based on schools/academies contributing either 25% or 100% of their de-delegated amount. This provided two levels of access to the service and was the preferred model for most schools, academies, as well as unions and staff. Open cases to EALS at the time of the last consultation was 268 whereas it is currently 471 (a 55% increase). In April 2023, EALS were supporting 149 Ukrainian pupils and this has since increased to 179 showing the upward trend.

3.3 Schools' Forum in May 2021 agreed that schools/academies could opt to contribute either 25% or 100% of their de-delegation amount or sign up to a subscription option; this decision was made separately to the decision of maintained schools to de-delegate. Contact will be made with all academies following the decision at Schools' Forum to secure buy-in on the same basis from April 2024.

3.4 To deliver this model, which can be seen in Appendix B, the Local Authority requires a commitment from schools equating to a total of £468,564 a year for two years, from 1 April 2024. This is the absolute minimum required to retain enough staff to cover the full range of interventions within the offer and meet the needs of all schools across all locations in the county. If schools and academies decide not to provide the required level of funding, the EAL service will cease on 31 March 2024. In these circumstances, from 1st April 2024, schools/academies would need to make their own arrangements for discharging their duties for pupils with EAL on their roll.

3.5 The table below shows the implications for different levels of buy-in by schools/academies in terms of overall income for the service. You will note that should all schools opt for a 25% contribution, or for a subscription, then the income will not meet the required minimum of £468,564 and the service will cease.

Funding Level	25%	100%
Maintained Primary	89,440	357,759
Maintained Secondary	28,855	115,419
Academy Primary	76,586	306,343
Academy Secondary	81,472	325,889
Total	285,122	1,105,41

3.6 Schools' Forum representatives are asked to vote on the option to de-delegate EAL funding from all maintained schools, collectively, at 100%. If both primary and secondary maintained schools vote to de-delegate 100% of the de-delegated amount, then there will be sufficient resources to guarantee the service until 31 March 2026.

3.7 In the event that either primary or secondary schools do not agree to de-delegate funding collectively at Schools' Forum, then schools and academies will be asked individually if they wish to make a commitment from their de-delegated amount from the 1 April 2024 (for a period of 2 years). The decision as to whether the service is maintained or ceased would be based on these returns.

3.8 Due to the complexities with securing staff who speak the range of languages present in ES schools, the decision to fund will be on a two-year cycle. An EAL service will only be available to schools/academies who make an upfront commitment to the service; there will be no in-year opportunities to buy in support later.

3.9 *Implications for Cessation of De-Delegated English as an Additional Language Service*

- EALS would not be financially viable and would close. This decision will not be reversible at a later stage.
- Schools would not be able to access the full range of services currently provided by EALS in the private sector; there are some translation services available, but they are more expensive than EALS.
- Schools who currently receive a high level of support would experience a significant reduction in support.
- Support for unaccompanied asylum-seekers who are placed at schools near to available foster placements would cease.
- Mother tongue examinations would not be supported and would be the sole responsibility of schools.
- A likely impact includes a significant rise in the numbers of pupils requiring support in the secondary phase as their barriers to learning will not have been addressed in a timely and robust manner in the primary phase.

- The KS2 and GCSE outcomes for EAL pupils are highly likely to be detrimentally impacted.

4 Conclusions

4.1 Improved attendance and high standards of behaviours are key to improving standards. While there is some evidence of progress, East Sussex continues to under-perform when compared to national and statistical neighbours in relation to both attendance and exclusions. Developing and sustaining consistent, effective inclusive practice across all schools must be a priority.

4.2 There is evidence that where schools have assumed financial responsibility for behaviour support there has been no correlating improvement in pupil behaviour or school performance. Indeed, the evidence suggests that schools delay early intervention because appropriate support is more costly or difficult to access and later remedies to address the problems are less effective and much more costly for pupils and schools. Where pupils are permanently excluded, the burden falls on all schools to fund and provide ongoing support and places for pupils in special schools or Independent Non-Maintained Schools (INMS).

4.3 In light of the rising demand for high-cost provision for pupils who are permanently excluded in secondary schools, consideration should be given to re-establishing a de-delegation of funding for Behaviour Support Services across this sector and other approaches to ensuring consistent effective inclusive practice.

4.4 The continued use of the model for EALs is a fair and transparent model, representative of schools and academies who responded to the consultation in 2019. This model allows for the continuation of support whilst increasing the flexibility of the offer.

5 Recommendations

5.1 This paper sets out the rationale for continued de-delegation of primary behaviour support service and EALS, and for restoring de-delegated budgets from secondary schools for those services. The implications of any cessation of provision should be considered carefully in light of the likely impact across all schools.

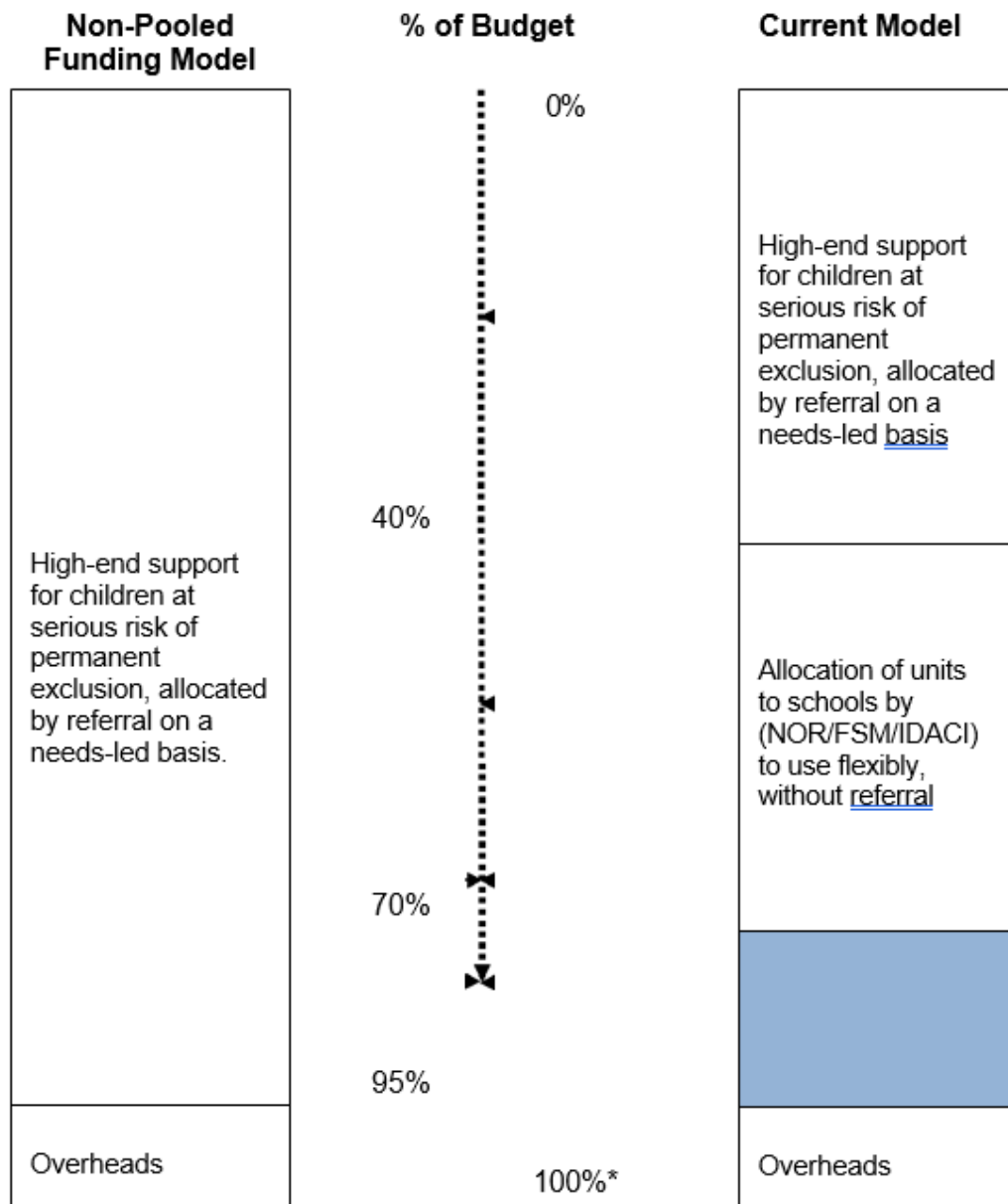
5.2 Schools' Forum is, therefore recommended to:

5.2.1 Continue de-delegated budgets for primary Behaviour Support for 2023/24

5.2.2 Consider restoring de-delegated budgets for secondary Behaviour Support for 2023/24

5.2.3 Continue de-delegated budgets for primary EALS for 2024-26 at 100%

5.2.4 Consider restoring de-delegated budgets for secondary EALS for 2024-26 at 100%



*This can be 'topped up' by individual schools by purchasing additional units from the Services to Schools offer.

Overview

In this model schools who opt for the Full service, contributing 100% of their allocated EAL funding, with a two-year commitment means schools will have access to the services listed in the offer outlined below and in addition schools experiencing higher levels of need at any time due to large numbers of new arrivals or pupils/families with higher levels of need will be given priority for extra support, within the county need and service capacity.

For schools opting for the Advisory level contribute 25% of school EAL allocation, will have access to the advisory services listed below. There is no direct teaching or BSO support included in the 25% model. Schools may request teacher or BSO interventions and the service would endeavour to source teachers and BSOs as required for purchase.

A flat rate subscription which gives the opportunity to trade with the Service.

It is therefore recommended that the LA adopts for non-de delegated access to the EAL Service during the period April 2024-2026. It is requested that school's forum ratify this recommendation. The preference remains for schools to commit 100% or 25% of their EAL funding to secure the required level of funding to run the service and provide the opportunity for further trading with schools.

	Subscription Primary *£1000 Secondary £1500	Advisory service 25%	Full service 100%
Access to a selection of advice and guidance documents on Czone and Services to Schools website and access to a traded service from EALS	✓	✓	✓
Enhanced access to EALS areas on the Services to Schools website		✓	✓
Access to the Good for EAL: Good for All offer of training and teaching resources		✓	✓
EALS newsletter issued three times a year	✓	✓	✓

Appendix B - EALS Model - 100% /25%, with option of subscription.

Advice for school staff, including teaching staff, SENCOs, and Exams Officers		✓	✓
Central or bespoke in-school training for individual schools or clusters		✓	✓
Access to remote training and advice sessions, Q&A drop-ins, delivered on MS Teams		✓	✓
Initial Assessments of pupils, including recommendations and advice and classroom observations as appropriate Home Language assessment and parent interview		✓	✓
The opportunity to take part in EALS events, e.g. The Val Larkin dual language Writing Competition	✓	✓	✓
New Referrals package for all new referrals Following initial assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blocks of bespoke interventions delivered by teachers and/or BSOs - Review of progress and access to further interventions as agreed 			✓
Extended interventions as appropriate and in liaison with school EAL Lead, for example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advanced learners exam preparation booster packages ▪ Focussed support on an area of language, e.g. writing, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy ▪ Remote support sessions as and when appropriate 			✓

Appendix B - EALS Model - 100% /25%, with option of subscription.

<p>Transition interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EAL friendly Pupil Voice - Additional visits with BSO if appropriate - Parent meetings 			✓
<p>Support with home-school liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BSOs available for translation and interpreting of short messages and one-off parent meetings 		✓	✓
<p>Enhanced Home-school liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BSOs available for translation and interpreting, e.g. at review meetings - Regular contact with parents - Postcards home sent to parents/carers 			✓
<p>Home Language exam package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of candidates through assessment of speaking, listening, reading, and writing - Mock and feedback - Three sessions for the speaking exam: familiarisation, mock and actual exam - Cross-County remote support sessions for candidates if necessary 			✓
<p>Twice yearly planning and Review meetings with EAL Lead in school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of EAL register - Progress of supported pupils - Requests for CPD - Feedback and evaluation of service 			✓

Appendix B - EALS Model - 100% /25%, with option of subscription.

- Agree priorities			
Pupil Ambassador programme for primary schools - Training for school EAL Lead on setting up package - Guidance on Ambassador-partner sessions			✓
Support for schools with EAL CYP with additional needs - Support with assessing additional needs - Internal referrals to other ISEND services as appropriate		✓	✓
Additional interventions on a traded basis			
Teacher	£300 per half day	£200 per half day	
BSO	£65/hr	£45/hr	

*For smaller primary schools it may be cheaper and better value to select an Advisory Package rather than a flat rate subscription.

* There is no direct teaching or BSO input included in the 25% model. The service would endeavour to source teachers and BSOs as required for purchase, however this would be additional to the contract and there would be some risk as to whether this capacity could be sourced. Lack of delivery of teaching or BSO support would not mean that the contract for the other provision outlined above has not been fulfilled.

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Headteacher Partnership Contribution

1.1 A school improvement monitoring and brokering grant was allocated to local authorities from September 2017 to support local authorities in fulfilling their school improvement duties, including monitoring the performance of maintained schools, brokering school improvement provision, and intervening as appropriate. The Department for Education removed the grant in full from the financial year 2023/24 and confirmed that in future these functions should be funded from maintained school budgets through de-delegation.

1.2 Schools Forum were updated at their meeting in March 2023 on how the removal of the grant would be managed in East Sussex. The local authority is managing the reduction of the grant through efficiencies in the resource allocated to the Primary and Secondary Boards, savings made as part of the re-structure of the Education Division and reduced spend on project activity. Schools Forum agreed a proposal for 2023/24 which would cover a small proportion of the loss of the grant for school partnership activities.

1.3 The Education Division leads for the local authority on our school improvement functions. The service has a range of responsibilities and is supported by funding from different sources, including government grants and local authority funding.

1.4 The local authority has worked with schools to develop a school-led system for improvement which sits alongside the delivery of the local authority's statutory school improvement duties. The EIPs and Area Groups, supported by the Boards, are the key mechanisms for schools to work together on improving practice and raising standards. We continue to work in a school system that is characterised by overlapping responsibilities and increasing pressure on resources. In this landscape, our partnership structures play an important role in holding the system together, avoiding further fragmentation and navigating future developments. Bringing school leaders together, by phase, across the academic year provides an important forum for shaping and delivering our shared ambitions for children's education.

1.5 There are a range of costs associated with facilitating the school-led system and providing opportunities for school leaders to collaborate with each other and hear from expert speakers. The costs for this activity have been modelled so that the following functions can be delivered for approximately £43,500 per annum:

- Chairing the Primary and Secondary Boards
- Chairing the 11-19 Headteacher meetings and Primary Headteacher meetings
- Venue and speaker costs for Primary Leadership conferences
- Venue and speaker costs for 11-19 Headteacher meetings

1.6 Schools Forum are asked to agree the same proposals as last financial year for the financial year 2024/25, where schools are asked to contribute to cover these partnership costs through a 'headteacher partnership contribution' of a flat fee of £250 per primary, secondary and all-through school.

1.7 This model continues to represent good value for money for school leaders and mirrors arrangements in other local authority areas for headteacher associations. It is proposed that, as last year, the agreed amount is de-delegated from local authority maintained schools and that academy schools are asked to contribute through purchasing a 'headteacher partnership contribution' as a traded service through Services to Schools. As

academies buy into Services for Schools from the 1st September details were not available at the time of writing this report of how many brought in for September 2023. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

1.8 Discussion is ongoing with the Special School headteachers about how the local authority supports their partnership arrangements, we have therefore not included special schools in this proposal.

**Summary of De-delegation Amounts
(Alphabetical Order and By Phase)**

Appendix D

School	Contingency (100% per pupil)	Behaviour Support Service (20% per pupil) (11% per fsm) (22% per fsm Ever 6) (22% per IDACI) (25% prior Att)	Ethnic minority and bi-lingual (50% per pupil) (50% per EAL)	Free meal eligibility (100% per fsm)	Jury Service & union duties supply cover (100% per pupil)	Head Teacher Partnership	Total
	£	£	£	£	£		£
Alfriston School	1,107	933	1,323	35	205	250	3,854
All Saints' and St Richard's Church of England Primary School	1,039	827	1,025	31	193	250	3,366
All Saints Church of England Primary School, Bexhill	2,474	4,866	2,835	367	459	250	11,250
Ashdown Primary School	4,757	3,881	4,411	108	882	250	14,289
Barcombe Church of England Primary School	1,548	1,208	1,663	77	287	250	5,033
Battle and Langton Church of England Primary School	4,790	4,442	4,882	322	888	250	15,574
Beckley Church of England Primary School	1,073	766	1,054	45	199	250	3,387
Blackboys Church of England Primary School	1,480	1,046	2,001	42	274	250	5,093
Bodiam Church of England Primary School	904	822	711	45	168	250	2,900
Bonnars CofE School	1,390	1,320	2,204	105	258	250	5,526
Bourne Primary School	4,779	8,842	25,162	497	886	250	40,416
Brede Primary School	1,243	1,189	978	52	230	250	3,943
Burwash CofE School	1,819	1,431	2,102	59	337	250	5,998
Buxted CofE Primary School	2,079	1,423	3,354	66	385	250	7,558
Catsfield Church of England Primary School	1,152	1,008	1,131	35	214	250	3,790
Chailey St Peter's Church of England Primary School	1,299	1,450	1,226	112	241	250	4,578
Chantry Community Primary School	2,316	3,452	2,720	234	429	250	9,401
Chiddingly Primary School	1,152	1,102	907	73	214	250	3,698
Cradle Hill Community Primary School	6,926	7,158	7,242	339	1,284	250	23,199
Cross-in-Hand Church of England Primary School	4,327	4,037	5,216	213	802	250	14,846
Crowhurst CofE Primary School	1,085	1,248	854	70	201	250	3,707
Dallington Church of England Primary School	1,288	936	1,450	42	239	250	4,205
Danehill Church of England Primary School	1,028	830	1,035	24	191	250	3,359
Denton Community Primary School and Nursery	2,395	3,035	2,777	168	444	250	9,069
East Hoathly CofE Primary School	1,107	834	1,323	38	205	250	3,759
Etchingham Church of England Primary School	1,164	747	916	24	216	250	3,317
Firle Church of England Primary School	881	1,125	1,860	52	163	250	4,332
Five Ashes CofE Primary School	576	572	869	52	107	250	2,426
Fletching Church of England Primary School	780	1,018	1,020	63	144	250	3,275
Forest Row Church of England Primary School	1,898	1,735	4,798	112	352	250	9,145
Framfield Church of England Primary School	1,051	691	1,940	28	195	250	4,154
Frant Church of England Primary School	1,107	612	1,323	7	205	250	3,505
Groombridge St Thomas' Church of England Primary School	1,977	1,133	2,217	14	366	250	5,958
Grovelands Community Primary School	7,186	9,803	7,662	616	1,332	250	26,848

**Summary of De-delegation Amounts
(Alphabetical Order and By Phase)**

Appendix D

School	Contingency (100% per pupil)	Behaviour Support Service (20% per pupil) (11% per fsm) (22% per fsm Ever 6) (22% per IDACI) (25% prior Att)	Ethnic minority and bi-lingual (50% per pupil) (50% per EAL)	Free meal eligibility (100% per fsm)	Jury Service & union duties supply cover (100% per pupil)	Head Teacher Partnership	Total
	£	£	£	£	£		£
Guestling Bradshaw Church of England Primary School	2,407	3,661	2,785	189	446	250	9,738
Hamsey Community Primary School	1,130	1,258	1,345	56	209	250	4,248
Hankham Primary School	1,390	1,821	1,742	119	258	250	5,579
Harbour Primary and Nursery School	4,723	8,972	7,940	612	875	250	23,372
Harlands Primary School	2,339	1,751	3,184	84	433	250	8,041
Hellingly Community Primary School	2,226	2,045	1,752	108	413	250	6,793
Herstmonceux Church of England Primary School	2,361	2,074	2,308	129	438	250	7,560
High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School	1,107	747	1,308	31	205	250	3,649
Holy Cross Church of England Primary School	802	1,362	2,166	112	149	250	4,841
Icklesham Church of England Primary School	1,220	1,742	1,849	94	226	250	5,383
Iford and Kingston Church of England Primary School	1,876	1,668	1,914	66	348	250	6,122
Laughton Community Primary School	1,096	1,053	863	21	203	250	3,485
Little Common School	7,028	6,882	7,097	332	1,303	250	22,892
Little Horsted Church of England Primary School	972	668	1,176	31	180	250	3,278
Manor Primary School	4,384	3,923	4,776	269	813	250	14,415
Mark Cross Church of England Aided Primary School	1,028	596	809	21	191	250	2,895
Mayfield Church of England Primary School	1,796	1,250	4,958	56	333	250	8,643
Maynards Green Community Primary School	2,361	1,430	1,858	84	438	250	6,422
Meridian Community Primary School and Nursery	5,028	7,140	7,708	434	932	250	21,492
Motcombe Infants' School	2,791	3,381	9,677	182	517	250	16,798
Netherfield CofE Primary School	1,593	1,296	1,477	63	295	250	4,974
Newick Church of England Primary School	2,395	1,439	3,412	70	444	250	8,010
Nutley Church of England Primary School	938	678	738	38	174	250	2,816
Park Mead Primary School	1,175	1,261	925	73	218	250	3,902
Parkside Community Primary School	2,316	1,806	2,047	73	429	250	6,922
Pashley Down Infant School	2,949	3,645	10,269	196	547	250	17,855
Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School	847	907	667	52	157	250	2,881
Pevensey and Westham CofE Primary School	4,689	4,741	3,914	269	869	250	14,732
Plumpton Primary School	1,435	980	1,579	35	266	250	4,545
Polegate Primary School	7,118	9,053	7,612	458	1,319	250	25,810
Punnetts Town Community Primary School	1,175	729	1,144	10	218	250	3,526
Ringmer Primary and Nursery School	3,389	2,573	3,320	154	628	250	10,315
Rocks Park Primary School	2,327	1,955	2,057	80	431	250	7,101
Rotherfield Primary School	2,373	2,185	2,761	94	440	250	8,103

**Summary of De-delegation Amounts
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	£	£	£	£	£		£
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hastings	2,678	3,400	4,929	122	496	250	11,876
Salehurst Church of England Primary School	2,135	1,991	2,558	112	396	250	7,441
Sandown Primary School and Nursery	5,050	10,408	6,186	689	936	250	23,519
Seaford Primary School	4,700	4,309	7,278	175	871	250	17,583
South Malling CofE Primary and Nursery School	2,599	2,636	3,151	185	482	250	9,303
Southover CofE Primary School	3,480	2,735	5,223	150	645	250	12,484
St Andrew's Church of England Infants School	2,881	4,525	7,943	280	534	250	16,413
St John's Church of England Primary School	2,282	1,758	2,695	21	423	250	7,429
St Mark's Church of England Primary School	1,006	819	791	42	186	250	3,094
St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School	2,361	2,558	4,764	73	438	250	10,444
St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School	2,260	3,890	10,613	210	419	250	17,642
St Mary the Virgin Church of England Primary School	1,017	947	1,236	42	188	250	3,681
St Marys Catholic Primary School	2,463	2,085	3,936	66	457	250	9,257
St Michael's Church of England Primary School	994	1,361	998	84	184	250	3,872
St Michael's Primary School	813	465	640	14	151	250	2,333
St Pancras Catholic Primary School	1,220	1,800	2,226	140	226	250	5,862
St Peter and St Paul CofE Primary School	4,723	6,283	7,069	325	875	250	19,525
St Philip's Catholic Primary School	1,989	1,761	4,302	101	369	250	8,771
St Thomas A Becket Catholic Primary School	4,971	5,693	22,308	182	921	250	34,326
St Thomas' Church of England Aided Primary School	1,548	1,954	1,218	98	287	250	5,355
Staplecross Methodist Primary School	1,085	1,041	854	52	201	250	3,483
Stone Cross School	4,723	4,503	5,058	227	875	250	15,636
Stonegate Church of England Primary School	1,096	761	1,092	24	203	250	3,426
Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Primary School	1,277	1,707	2,534	164	237	250	6,169
Tollgate Community Junior School	4,395	6,510	6,904	444	815	250	19,318
Wadhurst CofE Primary School	2,802	1,957	3,595	112	519	250	9,235
Wallands Community Primary and Nursery School	2,666	3,880	2,525	255	494	250	10,070
West Rise Community Infant School	3,028	4,701	7,571	262	561	250	16,373
West Rise Junior School	4,067	6,851	3,775	444	754	250	16,142
Western Road Community Primary School	2,339	1,480	2,286	38	433	250	6,826
Westfield School	2,260	3,103	2,224	157	419	250	8,412
Willingdon Primary School	4,745	4,333	5,521	203	880	250	15,932
Wivelsfield Primary School	2,497	1,476	2,427	52	463	250	7,165
Chailey School	12,663	8,872	10,036	455	110	250	32,387

**Summary of De-delegation Amounts
(Alphabetical Order and By Phase)**

Appendix D

School	Contingency (100% per pupil)	Behaviour Support Service (20% per pupil) (11% per fsm) (22% per fsm Ever 6) (22% per IDACI) (25% prior Att)	Ethnic minority and bi-lingual (50% per pupil) (50% per EAL)	Free meal eligibility (100% per fsm)	Jury Service & union duties supply cover (100% per pupil)	Head Teacher Partnership	Total
	£	£	£	£	£		£
Claverham Community College	17,343	17,651	16,918	1,329	151	250	53,641
Heathfield Community College	18,206	14,362	13,088	916	158	250	46,980
Priory School	17,676	18,300	20,176	1,273	154	250	57,829
Robertsbridge Community College	11,481	12,612	8,163	972	100	250	33,578
St Richard's Catholic College	15,768	16,170	11,744	689	137	250	44,757
Uckfield College	19,600	15,805	25,584	1,009	170	250	62,418
Willingdon Community School	15,419	15,287	9,710	843	134	250	41,643
Primary Total	242,112	265,874	357,759	14,425	44,875	25,250	950,295
Secondary Total	128,156	119,059	115,419	7,486	1,114	2,000	340,847
Total	370,268	384,932	473,179	21,911	45,989	27,250	1,291,142

Unit rates for allocations

Primary total pupils	11.30	2.86	8.89		2.09	250.00
Primary total FSM		6.45		3.50		
Primary total FSM Ever 6		12.55				
Primary total IDACI total units		7.53				
Primary total Prior Attainment		15.02				
Primary total EALs			191.41			
Secondary total pupils	15.15	3.82	8.33		0.13	250.00
Secondary total FSM		9.47		6.15		
Secondary total FSM Ever 6		16.46				
Secondary total IDACI total units		10.48				
Secondary total Prior Attainment		20.58				
Secondary total EALs			614.49			

Report to:	Schools Forum
Date of meeting:	15th Sept 2023
Report By:	Alison Jeffery
Title:	Schools Forum Membership
Purpose:	To review the East Sussex Schools' Forum Membership

Recommendations:

1. To consider and agree the proposed Schools' Forum membership changes

1. Background

- 1.1 The membership of the Schools' Forum is reviewed regularly to ensure that there is proportionate representation of each phase in maintained schools and academies in line with the number of pupils in each category.
- 1.2 The latest review, which uses the October 2022 census data, has shown that the required membership is in line with the current membership profile in relation to the split between the Primary and Secondary Phases. However, since the last review, with some schools becoming academies, a small change is required to the current representation within the maintained Schools (Primary Phase). The outcome of this is that the number of representatives, for maintained schools, would reduce by 1 member.
- 1.3 Alongside ensuring that there is a representative allocation of places to the Forum, it is also essential that we secure members to fill these; this is something that we have struggled to do over the last year. There are currently 24 "posts" allocated to the East Sussex Schools' Forum. Of these, there are currently 9 vacancies, some of which have been vacant for some considerable time. A list of current members, and potential vacancies, are attached (Appendix B).
- 1.4 Although, historically, membership of Schools' Forum has predominantly been headteachers, the DfE's 'Schools' Forum operational and good practice' document (Appendix A) states that representatives, for maintained schools, do not have to be Headteachers. We feel, therefore, that there is an opportunity to broaden the professional representation of the forum to include senior school staff whose role links to work that the Forum oversees (for example SENCOs and School Business Managers). Furthermore, the guidance also states that there is no minimum or maximum number of members, so it is proposed that this is another area that could be reviewed.
- 1.5 Academy members do not have to be split into Primary and Secondary sub-groups and, in line with the maintained school sector, do not have to be represented by Head Teachers.
- 1.6 Historically, it has proved very challenging to generate interest in becoming a Schools' Forum representative, and more recently this has included the appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair. Therefore, as representatives of Schools' Forum, collective

consideration needs to be given as to how new members can be attracted and what additional support should be provided to achieve this aim.

2. Membership Proposals

- 2.1 The proposal is to reduce the overall membership number from 24 to 20. This will still maintain the required School Members proportion, which has to be at least 2/3rds of overall membership.
- 2.2 To seek membership of Schools' Forum from the wider school community (as indicated in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5). This would enable the Forum to maintain a good cross-representation whilst also opening up the opportunity for senior school staff whose roles are linked to decisions made at the Forum.
- 2.3 To review the training offer to new members to ensure that it meets the needs of members and promotes broader representation.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Schools Forum are asked to consider and agree the proposed changes to Schools Forum membership.

Alison Jeffery

Director Children's Services

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Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Schools Forum

Operational and good practice guide

March 2021

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Introduction

1. This guide is designed to provide local authority officers and schools forum 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
 - 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. GOV.UK contains details of all the announcements, documents and other information relating to school funding and schools forums, including the National funding formula (NFF) The website also has a range of useful links to other sites that may be of relevance to schools forum members.
4. A short [guide to the schools forum for schools and academies](#), which may be helpful to stakeholders and the wider school family, is available on GOV.UK.
5. If you have any queries about the operation of schools forums please contact Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) using the [ESFA enquiry form](#).

Section 1 – schools forum regulations: constitution and procedural issues

Regulations

6. [National regulations](#)¹ 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 can be accessed at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2261/contents>.

7. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021 amended The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to make permanent provisions to enable schools forums meetings to be held remotely. This includes (but is not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming. Where a schools forum decides to hold a public meeting by remote means only, the forum should provide support or make alternative arrangements so that any interested parties who do not have telephone or online access can attend virtual meetings.

Schools forum powers

8. 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 [schools forum powers and responsibilities](#). The overarching areas on which schools forums make decisions on local authority proposals are:

- de-delegation from mainstream maintained 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), including pre-opening and diseconomy of scale costs, 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

¹ Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/2261) (as amended)

- agreeing other centrally retained budgets, including for local authority statutory responsibilities (where these relate to maintained schools only, voting is by the primary, secondary, special and PRU members of schools forum)
- funding for central early years expenditure, which may include funding for checking eligibility of pupils for an early years place, the early years pupil premium and/or free school meals
- authorising a reduction in the schools budget in order to fund a deficit arising in central expenditure, or from de-delegated services, which is to be carried forward from a previous funding period in the 2018 to 2019 funding year the schools block is ring-fenced. Local authorities require schools forum approval in order to move up to 0.5% from the schools block to other blocks
- in each of these cases, the local authority can appeal to the Secretary of State if the schools forum rejects its proposal.

9. 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, for example, decisions on the funding formula.

10. 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 in particular the places to be commissioned by the local authority and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding
- arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the local authority and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding
- arrangements for early years provision
- administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the local authority
- There's no specific definition of these consultation requirements over and above the wording in the regulations. It's a matter for the local authority to decide on the appropriate level of detail it needs to generate a sufficiently informed response from schools forum.

11. 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.

12. 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 12 and 13 above.

13. Local authorities will need to discuss with the schools forum any proposals that they intend to put to the Secretary of State to:

- vary the MFG
- use exceptional factors
- vary pupil numbers (Secretary of State approval is no longer required for increases relating to changes in admission limits or reorganisations)
- 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
- move up to 0.5% from the schools block, where the schools forum do not agree, or move more than 0.5% from the schools block

Proposals will then need to be considered by the Secretary of State.

Membership

14. The Schools Forums Regulations provide a framework for the appointment of members, but allow a considerable degree of discretion in order to accommodate local priorities and practice. A quick guide to the [structure of the schools forums](#) is available.

15. 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.

16. Types of member: schools forums must have 'schools members', 'academies member(s)' if there is at least one academy in the local authority's area and 'non-schools members'. 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, we would suggest good practice is to review the membership as a standing agenda item at each meeting. Academies members must represent mainstream academies and, if there are any in the local authority area, special academies and alternative provision academies. There is no requirement for academies members to represent specific primary and secondary phases, but it may be encouraged to ensure representation remains broadly proportionate to pupil numbers. Academy members must be separately elected and designated from maintained school representatives, please see paragraph 28.

17. Schools forum members will need the skills and competencies to manage Forum business (as detailed in [school forum powers and responsibilities](#)) 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 communicating decisions, and the reasons behind them, effectively. Good practice for schools forums would be to offer training to new or existing members who may benefit from this.

Term of office

18. 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 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 the 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, for example, we would expect this vacancy to be filled for the following term
- increasing the size of the schools forum temporarily to appoint additional academy members, then deleting schools member posts at the end of a term of office or when a vacancy arises
- considering 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

19. 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.

20. 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

21. 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 local authority. Middle schools and all through schools are treated according to their deemed status.

22. 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).

23. The local authority then has discretion to divide the groups referred to in paragraph 16 and 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 a particular school category, for example, voluntary aided

24. 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 the 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.

25. 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

26. The relevant group or sub-group is probably best placed to determine how their schools members should be elected.

27. It's 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, for example, 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. The process must be restricted to the group in question; a headteachers phase group could only vote as a whole for headteacher members if the voting excluded academies, as academies members form a separate group.

28. It's not appropriate for a single person to be elected to represent more than one group or sub-group concurrently, for instance, 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.

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. 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.

33. 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).

34. 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 39 below.

35. 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.

36. We would recommend that any scheme takes into account a number of factors:

- the process for collecting names of those wishing to stand for election
- the timescale for notifying all constituents of the election and those standing
- the arrangements for dispatching and receiving ballots
- the arrangements for counting and publicising the results
- any arrangements for unusual circumstances such as only one candidate standing in an election
- whether existing members can stand for re-election

37. 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

38. 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 28 to 39. 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 and converter academies.

39. There are three sub-groups for academy members: mainstream academies, special academies and alternative provision academies and it is for the proprietors of academies within each of these sub-groups to elect their representatives. It is not appropriate, therefore, for headteacher phase groups to determine representation unless the academy proprietors have agreed and even then the voting would need to exclude maintained school representatives. There is no requirement for academies members to be split into primary and secondary sub-groups. However, local authorities may wish to encourage academies to consider the pupil proportions across all academies when electing their representatives.

40. Where there is only one academy in a sub-group in the local authority's area, then their proprietor body must select the person who will represent them.

41. 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.

42. 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

43. Non-schools members may number no more than a third of a schools forum's total membership (excluding observers, see paragraph 58). 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 post-school institutions that specialise in special education needs (SPNs), 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.

44. 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 and eligible two year olds comes from the Dedicated Schools Grant, and all settings are funded through the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF).

45. 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, for example a member of the education board.

46. It's 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.

47. 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

48. 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))

49. 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).

50. 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.

51. 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.

52. 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

53. 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.

54. 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, for example, when the funding formula is decided.

Recording the composition of schools forums

55. 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. It would be helpful if this were published on the schools forum website so schools and wider stakeholders can easily find who their representatives are.

Observers

56. The Regulations provide that the Secretary of State can appoint an observer to attend and speak at schools forum meetings, for example a representative from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). 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, for example, where there are highly complex issues to resolve.

Participation of local authority officers at meetings

57. 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 the schools forum to provide financial or technical advice
- any person presenting a paper to the schools forum but their ability to speak is limited to the paper that they are presenting

58. 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. It is best practice to record attendance at meetings as well as membership to ensure elected members are attending and contributing to discussions.

Procedures

59. 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:

- **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 (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's not legally obliged to do so. In practice, the arrangements for meetings should be made to reduce the chance of a problem with the quorum. The quorum stipulation is in the regulations to help ensure the legitimacy of decisions
- **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
- **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 is limited to the specific primary and secondary phase of maintained schools members
 - retaining funding for statutory duties relating to maintained schools only is limited to maintained primary, secondary, special and PRU members
- **The powers which schools forums:** have to take decisions on a range of funding matters increase the importance of clear procedures, for example, 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 paragraph 65). 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

- **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
- **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 61 on quorum)
- **Timing:** schools forums must meet at least four times a year
- **Meeting:** schools forums can meet remotely. This includes (but is not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming.

60. 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

61. 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's good practice that notification that the schools forum is a public meeting is included on the website and papers are published at least a week in advance. Local authorities should ensure that the websites are accessible and easy to find.

62. 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.

63. Local authorities should ensure that their schools forum clerk's contact details are published on their website and that it is clear to interested parties how they can attend the meeting remotely.

Working groups

64. It's 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. These have proved effective for larger local authorities; examples of some working groups are for high needs and early years.

Urgent business

65. It's 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.

66. It's 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

67. The costs of a schools forum fall in the Central School Services Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

68. It's 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.

Section 2 – effective schools forums

Introduction

69. 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.

70. 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.

71. 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's 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

72. 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

73. 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:

- the constitution of the schools forum
- a list of members including contact details and their terms of office
- any locally agreed terms of reference explaining the relationship between the schools forum and the local authority
- copies of minutes of previous meetings
- the programme of schools forum meetings for the year
- the local schools forum web address

74. This Operational and Good Practice Guide, suitably supplemented by local material, should also be provided to new members on their appointment.

75. 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

76. 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. Local and national bodies have a key role to play in developing the competencies of forum members.

77. 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, to ensure that members can be fully effective when detailed discussions are taking place.

Agenda setting

78. 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.

79. The frequency and timing of meetings of the schools forum should be agreed in advance of each financial or academic year; these should take into consideration deadlines for the local authority such as disapplication requests and the submission of the authority proforma tool (APT). It's good practice to publish the dates of meetings on the schools forum website. 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.

80. 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's recommended that authorities apply the same principles that they apply to Council or Cabinet meetings when judging an item to be confidential and adopt similar practices for dealing with those reports in the meeting, for example placing them together at the end of the agenda.

Preparation for a schools forum meeting

81. It's vital that the 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.

82. 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's 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.

83. It's good practice for the schools forum and local authority to agree a standard for papers. 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.

84. 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.

85. 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's 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.

86. 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

87. 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.

88. 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's 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.

89. 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.

90. The independence of the 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 local authority in another capacity, for example as an external consultant, they could be viewed as equivalent to an officer of the local authority.

91. 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

92. 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's 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.

93. 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.

94. Beyond this a good clerk can:

- 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
- respond to any queries about the business of the schools forum from headteachers, governors and others who are not on the schools forum themselves
- be responsible for ensuring contact details of all members are up to date
- maintain the list of members on the schools forum and advise on membership issues in general
- assist with the co-ordination of nomination or election processes run by the constituent groups
- keep the schools forum website up to date, for example by posting latest minutes and papers

- monitor, on a regular basis, the schools forum and general schools funding pages on the GOV.UK website; and arrange for the distribution of any relevant DfE information to schools forum members
- 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
- organise, operate and record any voting activity of the schools forum in line with the provisions of its local constitution

95. 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

96. 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 forums 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.

97. 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. In addition the use of coloured cards or coloured nameplates can be helpful when specific members of a schools forum are eligible to vote on specific items, for example, voting on de-delegation or changes to the funding formula.

98. Consultations with the 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

99. 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 forums must be clearly set out.

100. Notes or minutes of each schools forum meeting should be produced and published on the local authority website as soon after the meeting as possible to enable members and others to see the outcome of any discussions and decisions and/or votes. It is good practice to formally agree the accuracy of the note and minutes at a subsequent meeting but the publication of the draft minutes should not be delayed as a result. We would recommend that a log of the decisions is published within three working days of the meeting, and the draft minutes within 10 working days so that interested parties can access them and consult on them, if necessary, before the next meeting.

101. 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

102. Communication to the wider educational community of the discussions and debates of, and decisions made by, the 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, which are more likely to have existing channels of communication for example, headteacher meetings.

103. Each schools forum should therefore be clear what its channels of communication are. It is fundamental that each member of schools forum represents the views of the group or sub-group that they represent and that all those with an interest in funding work together to ensure that their views are taken into account. Therefore communications directly between members and those they represent is essential; professional associations and phase groups could be suitable channels. This will ensure 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. However, the schools forum should also consider additional communication processes. These could include:

- drawing schools' attention to the fact that all its agendas minutes and papers are publicly available on the local authority's website (this should include the publication of formula consultation documents)
- an annual report on the proceedings of the schools forum
- 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
- 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
- a schools forum newsletter can be a less formal and more interesting way of communicating forum business and raising the profile of the schools forum and its members

News updates

104. 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.

105. Many local authorities have already established dedicated schools forum websites on which they post key information for schools forum members and other interested parties and updated on a regular basis.



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Name	School
Maintained Primary Headteachers (3)	
Vacancy	-
Richard Blakeley	Harlands Primary
Laura Cooper	St John's Crowborough
Vacancy	-
Primary Governors (2)	
Peter Hughes	South Malling
Debra Vice Holt	Oak Tree Federation
Maintained Secondary Headteachers (2)	
Vacancy	-
Helen Key	Chailey School
Secondary Governors (1)	
Monica Whitehead	Claverham Communtiy College
Academies (Primary / Secondary Phase) (4)	
Gavin Bailey	Swale Academy Trust
James Freeston	King Offa Primary
Kelly Johnson	University of B'ton Academies Trust
Vacancy	-
Vacancy	
Vacancy	
Vacancy	
Special Academies (1)	
Richard Preece	Saxon Mount and Torfield
Special Headteachers (1)	
Julie Campion	Grove Park
Pupil Referral Unit (1)	
Jo Foulkes	Sabden Multi Academy Trust
Non School Members (5)	
Joanna Sanchez	Diocese of Arundel & Brighton
Vacancy	Early Years
Vacancy	16-19 Representative
Jon Gilbert	Diocese of Chichester
Phil Clarke	Trade Union Representative

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