



Schools Forum
Date: 1 December 2022
Time: 8.30 am
Venue: Via MS Teams

Item/Paper
A
 Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2022 – HELD VIA MS TEAMS

Present

School forum members

- Bill Dowell (Chair)
- Caroline Clode – Association secretaries
- John Hitchings – Academy governor
- Marilyn Hunt – Primary headteacher
- Sandra Holloway – Primary governor
- Sian Lines – Diocese of Hereford
- Sue Lovecy – Academy headteacher
- Stephen Matthews – Primary governor
- John Parr – Academy headteacher (absent 8.45 - 9.00)
- James Pearson – TMBSS
- Mark Rogers – Primary headteacher
- Andrew Smith – Post 16
- James Staniforth – Post 16
- Patrick Jones – Special academy headteacher (representing Brian Thomas)

Members

- Kirstie Hurst-Knight
- Gwilym Butler (until 9.00)

Officers

- Jo Jones
- David Shaw
- Neville Ward
- Stephen Waters
- Phil Wilson
- Helen Woodbridge

Observers

- Nick Bardsley (until 9.50)
- Roger Evans

David Shaw welcomed all to the meeting.

		ACTION
1.	<p>Apologies Apologies had been received from Shelly Hurdley, Karen Levell, Georgia Moss, David O’Toole, Alan Parkhurst, Michael Revell and Carla Whelan. Gwilym Butler had advised that he would need to leave for another meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Election of Chair and Vice Chair David Shaw proposed the appointment of Bill Dowell as Chair and John Hitchings as Vice Chair for the academic year 2022/23. This was unanimously agreed by Schools Forum members. The chair led a moment of silence in memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising 2. Consideration of whether increased high needs supplementary funding should be passed on to colleges. A meeting had been held regarding 2021-22 commissioning and confirming contracts. This item will need to be considered in light of the 2022-23 student numbers and will form part of the commissioning discussions</p>	

2. The constitution had been amended in respect of the union reference.

7. The chair had asked for a paper to be bought regarding the move to independent schools being in part due to underperforming local special schools which may also impact on post 16 placements. This had been partly covered in the presentation slides for this meeting. Further detailed review and analysis will need to be completed during the 2022-23 academic year as part of the SEND team improvement work.

4. Updated Dedicated Schools Grant 2022-23

Jo Jones provided an update confirming that there had been no major changes.

5. School Revenue Funding Update

Jo Jones provided a comprehensive update on the Schools Revenue Funding for 2023-24.

The chair spoke of the need to see this in the light of the upcoming cost of living item.

6. Response to Direct National Funding Formula (NFF) Consultation

Phil Wilson presented his report advising this was the second phase of consultation. There had been consideration of this at the last meeting of Schools Forum. It was noted that Shropshire's local formula already aligns to and mirrors the NFF and so the impact of the transition to the direct NFF should be minimal. Schools Forum members had received a copy of the submission ahead of the closing date of 9 September 2022.

A copy of the f40 response had been circulated to Schools Forum members.

The chair asked if there were any particular areas for concern.

Phil Wilson advised that there were not but suggested that there will be interest in the indicative SEND budget.

David Shaw added that there is guidance available from the DfE on the notional SEND which provides more clarity.

7. Funding for Ukrainian Refugees

Phil Wilson presented some information:

- The first payment to the LA has been made through the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) on 31 August.
- It covers arrivals on the Homes for Ukraine scheme from 1 March 2022 to 31 May 2022 only – as per the data submitted by the local authority to Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) – and will be a payment in arrears to cover 0.25 of the annual tariff.
- The remaining payment 0.75 (to cover the subsequent 9 months) will be made alongside the payment for arrivals in quarter 2.
- All future payments after the first quarter will provide the total amount of pro-rata funding per child for the 2022-23 financial year.
- Any arrivals via the Ukraine Families route are not included and so any children placed in schools through this route are not eligible to receive funding from this payment.

Allocation of funding for each phase of education:

Phase (Age)	Funding per child	Quarter 1 initial payment amount (March to May 2022)	Quarter 2 (June to August 2022) (Q1 balance payment amount March to May 2022)	Quarter 3 payment amount (September to November 2022)	Quarter 4 payment amount (December 2022 to February 2023)
Early years (2 to 4)	£3,000	Quarter 1 £750	Quarter 1 £2,250 Quarter 2 £2,250	Quarter 3 £1,500	Quarter 4 £750
Primary (5 to 11)	£6,580	Quarter 1 £1,645	Quarter 1 £4,935 Quarter 2 £4,935	Quarter 3 £3,290	Quarter 4 £1,645
Secondary (11 to 18)	£8,755	Quarter 1 £2,189	Quarter 1 £6,566 Quarter 2 £6,566	Quarter 3 £4,378	Quarter 4 £2,189

- The first payment for Shropshire for the period 1 March 2022 to 31 May 2022 is **£176,631.25** and can be analysed as follows:

	Q1 payment	DLUHC return	Total
Early years (2-4)	£750	15	£11,250.00
Primary (5-10)	£1,645	38	£62,510.00
Secondary (11-18)	£2,189	47	£102,883.00
			£176,643.00
	Funding allocated		£176,631.25
	Variation		-£11.75

- The Shropshire return to the DLUHC drew information from the Government's Foundry system which provides details on families arriving in-county via the Homes for Ukraine route.
- The grant conditions are available at [Homes for Ukraine education and childcare grant conditions of funding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/homes-for-ukraine-education-and-childcare-grant-conditions-of-funding)

Conditions of grant

The funding must only be used for the provision of education and childcare for children ages 2 to 18 who have entered via the Homes for Ukraine visa route, for example:

- to provide a place for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds accessing the 2-year-old, universal or 30 hours entitlements
- the provision of a suitable place for all other children up to the age of 18 (including time for staff resource and travel)
- funding placement of larger clusters of children into schools and early years settings, including the costs of additional and specialist teaching, non-teaching, and administrative staff
- providing suitable travel arrangements, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school or suitable education setting
- the provision of specialist and bespoke services, such as support for children with additional needs, and resources (this may include education materials for schools)
- free school meals and school uniform (including school bags, provisions for example, water bottles, etc.)
- to provide access to extra-curricular activities for example, sports
- on community services whose provision benefits the children
- any other reasonable costs associated with the provision of education and childcare for the children.
- The local authority can pool any amount of funding to fund activities that will benefit a group or all of the authority's children received via the Homes for Ukraine visa route.
- For any funding that is passed on to the child's education or childcare setting, processes for allocating the funds should be as simple as possible to avoid delay.
- Local authorities may allocate funding to independent schools and independent special schools or spend the funding themselves on additional educational support to raise the attainment for the eligible pupils. **Local authorities must consult schools about how to use funding to support eligible pupils.**
- Local authorities will be required to certify that they have passed on the correct amount of funding to schools or, where funding has been spent centrally, that it has been spent in line with these conditions of grant. The DfE will issue a certification form in April 2023.

Phil Wilson advised that some schools are now full and explained the use of a special Fair Access Panel to place pupils in alternative schools. Also, as 6 month placements are coming to an end, a few families are moving and there are some in hotels.

Amanda Jones from Shropshire Supports Refugees had advised that there are some Ukrainian speaking TAs in schools and more could be sourced. Some 'pooled' funding could be used for employing more centrally, particularly to support with initial arrival into schools.

Marilyn Hunt thought that this would be helpful.

Mark Rogers did not realise that there were two routes at the beginning. He asked if there was a sense of the percentage of pupils who were eligible.

Phil Wilson advised that there are around 150 pupils in schools and 21 of these have come via the Families route (they would have brought in £168k if they had come through the government route).

David Shaw confirmed that the LA has registered discontent with government.

He added that some children may be on the central missing education register.

He asked about the development of central support and thanked schools for the

work done to date.

James Staniforth spoke of economies of scale and established that this was an initial annual payment. He advised that there are 11 students in college and asked if they are covered. Phil Wilson asked for the names so that he can check if funding has been received for them.

Mark Rogers advised that his school uses the Multicultural Development Team (MDT) for children who have EAL. He suggested that a Ukrainian speaker (without education training) would not be helpful. He would be more comfortable if support was overseen by MDT recognising that this is hard for them as pupils often all arrive at the same time.

Stephen Matthews had MDT at his school yesterday who advised that they are only supporting four Shropshire schools. They had devised a cost-effective SLA and provide remote back up. He had found initially that a language speaker had proved very useful for pastoral support.

David Shaw, Phil Wilson, Mark Rogers, Stephen Matthews, and a secondary colleague are to work together to devise a way forward.

The chair stressed that all schools with Ukrainian refugees need to be brought up to speed with the funding arrangements – Phil Wilson agreed to add this to the weekly email to schools.

JS

DS+

PW

8. High Needs Place Planning

David Shaw provided an update.

A Vision and Strategy for SEND in Shropshire has been developed -

Shropshire children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy, safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect the same opportunities as other children and young people.

Young people had told the LA directly that they wanted a dream life which included:

- having a job or vocation
- having friends and being able to play a full part in their community
- being independent and living in their own home
- having a voice on how they live their lives, and
- having access to good and consistent support especially in times of transition

However, there is a wide range of national and local pressures.

There are increases in demand, yet the High Needs block is increasing at a slowing rate. The LA aims to support need through local planning aligned to the Shropshire Plan.

The spend on independent providers means that funding is moving out of Shropshire. This spend is forecast to increase to £7m in 2022-23 and an aim is for this to be reduced and more funding given to Shropshire providers.

Maps re travel demonstrated the excessive distances that some students are travelling eg to Ludlow Education Centre/Bettws Lifehouse.

There is an opportunity to think local first.

- focus on the best outcomes for the children and young people including reducing travel time
- review of all current children and young people placed address Shropshire and reasons for the placements
- reintroduce independent travel training to promote independence and access to the 'dream life' for children and young people

- strategic review an expansion of the SEND hub network across Shropshire including early years
- strategic focus on promoting and supporting all mainstream schools to be highly inclusive
- strategic review of alternative provision available across Shropshire in line with the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper
- reinvest funding currently leaving Shropshire back into Shropshire provision
- deliver the vision for SEND whilst also ensuring a long term balanced budget position by planning for, and managing, the growth in demand together.

James Pearson advised that the example of the Ludlow Education Centre is extreme and is largely caused by a lack of places elsewhere. He was pleased that processes for assessing young people are being looked at as the biggest frustration is going through the EHCP process (which causes a backlog of students).

David Shaw spoke of the need to ensure that statutory timescales are achieved. He added that there will be a reorganisation/transformation within the SEN team.

Andrew Smith spoke of the need for joined up thinking at Post 16.

Mark Rogers endorsed this as such an important piece of work which is impacting on schools and will make a real difference.

The chair closed this item by thanking David Shaw and recognising that this is a demanding piece of work.

9. **Dedicated School Grant Monitoring 2021-22**

Stephen Waters presented his report.

Neville Ward reminded colleagues of the lag in finding out the final funding allocations for early years but ensured them that careful monitoring is in place.

10. **Cost of Living**

Phil Wilson presented some information:

The Team Leader for the Schools Finance Team has provided the following summary of changes that are having to be made since the end of June, when maintained school budgets were set for 2022-23:

- Teachers - original budgets set for a 3.0% to 8.9% pay rise for teaching staff from September 2022 (based on information from March 2022). However announcements in July 2022 confirmed that this would rise to 5.0% to 8.9%. So an additional unexpected cost for all schools as the additional 2.0% relates to Leadership, Upper Pay Spine and Main scale 6. As an example the impact of this for a school with 120 on roll is £3,000. The announcement also changed the expected pay rise from September 2023 from 2.0% to 7.1% to a minimum of 3.0% so an extra 1.0% for Leadership, Upper Pay Spine and Main scale 6.
- Non-teaching staff – original budgets were set at 2.0% from April 2022. Information received in May half-term indicated a much higher pay rise and advised to increase this to 5.5% - schools were emailed regarding this and most opted to increase their budgets to the 5.5% or get a cost from their Finance Officer. New information dated September 2022 now indicates increases from between 4.04% and 10.5% adding £1,925 to

every scale point. This has had a significant impact, £7,000 for example for a school with 120 on roll.

- Energy – West Mercia Energy (WME) has provided information. Increases of 25% for electricity and 50% for gas from April 2022 were included in all 2022-23 maintained school budgets. WME will be communicating with schools via their newsletter.
- Insurance – the Council's corporate finance team has advised that internal recharges for insurances would increase by 15% - this has been factored into all 2022-23 budgets.

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy announcement – 21 September 2022

- For schools, the scheme will see rates reduced to a 'government-supported price' of £211 per megawatt hour for electricity and £75 for gas, which will equate to a saving of £4,000 for a school paying £10,000 per month for energy – saving of 40%
- For comparison, the government states wholesale costs this winter are expected to be around £600 per megawatt hour for electricity and £180 for gas

Note – only applies initially for energy use between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023, with a review planned in three months before making a decision about support from April 2023 onwards

- Support will be 'automatically applied to all eligible bills' and schools 'do not need to take action or apply to the scheme'
- Important – those who signed new contracts before 1 April 'would not have been exposed to the recent rises in wholesale prices, so will not be eligible for support under the scheme'
- West Mercia Energy (WME) has been contacted to clarify what this means for Shropshire schools contracted to them, particularly in relation to the point above
- Sector leaders' initial response relates to concerns regarding the temporary nature of the scheme and the uncertainty that remains for schools

A further allocation of grant through the Household Support Fund has been announced for the period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, though the sum has yet to be confirmed. The requirement to target funding at specific groups has been lifted for this third round of funding. It is intended that the support to vulnerable families with children with food costs during the school holiday periods will be continued. Funding will be allocated for October half-term, the two weeks over Christmas/New Year and February half-term. As Easter 2023 falls after 31 March 2023, it is unlikely that this grant can be used for this holiday period. In order to keep control on grant costs, the LA is looking at restricting vouchers to those children receiving benefits related free school meals, based on the most up-to-date numbers ahead of each holiday period. Schools will receive specific allocations based on these numbers

Phil Wilson advised that the Schools Finance team have collected and will continue to collect information from schools for reporting back to DfE. The chair suggested that this needs to be shared wider with schools. It was

confirmed that it will be addressed at LA maintained Headteacher forum

Mark Rogers advised that most schools are concerned as it is a very complicated picture which will become clearer in October/November.

Neville Ward added that the increase in settlement next year of between 1 and 3% won't cover increased costs.

James Staniforth spoke of increasing energy costs and the impact of this on teachers/support staff. He raised concerns about students not coming through from Shrewsbury schools but he was not sure that they have gone elsewhere.

11. Communications

There were no updates around communications.

12. Future meeting dates:

Thursday 3 November 2022 (subsequently cancelled)

Thursday 1 December 2022

Thursday 12 January 2023

Thursday 26 January 2023 (Provisional)

Thursday 16 March 2023

Thursday 15 June 2023

The meeting closed at 10.30 am