

# Lancashire Schools Forum

## eNewsletter

• Issue 126 • November 2022

# Fair Exchange?

Welcome to Issue 126 of 'Fair Exchange?' a pre-Forum Edition of the eNewsletter of the Lancashire Schools' Forum.

## FORUM UPDATE

### Schools Budget for 2023/24

The Schools Forum working groups will be considering a number of issues during meetings in November and December 2022. However, the main focus of this cycle of Forum meetings are the matters relating to setting the Schools Budget for 2023/24.

Final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations for 2023/24 and final pupil data from the DfE are not expected until later in December, with final budget proposals being presented to the full Schools Forum meeting, scheduled for 12 January 2023 and the Lancashire County Council Cabinet meeting on 19 January 2022.

Once Lancashire plans are agreed, a submission will need to be sent to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) so that our Schools Block proposals can be compliance checked before Individual School Budgets (ISBs) are issued.

Schools will receive their ISBs in the final week of February 2023.

Colleagues will be aware from Fair Exchange 125, that following a consultation with schools earlier in the autumn term, the Forum have already taken some decisions that impact on the Schools Budget relating to de-delegations and the level of Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG).

In recent years, a transfer was available as for headroom from the Schools Block to the to help mitigate the costs pressures facing the sector. For 2022/23 a £1m transfer has been agreed to support pressures in the Early Years Block. Initially Schools Block modelling for 2023/24 indicates that there is unlikely to be any available headroom from April 2023.

If final Schools Block allocations, which are expected in mid-December 2022, reveal any available headroom, then any urgent consultation may be issued at the very end of the autumn term 2022 or early spring 2023.

## Other Forum Matters

Other matters to be considered by the Forum Working Groups in this round of meetings includes:

- Ukraine Funding Form [Homes For Ukraine Education Funding \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk)
- Consideration of the High Needs Block places to be commissioned in 2023/24;
- SEND Sufficiency
- High Needs Deficit Management Plan
- Clawback Requests

## De-delegation Decisions

School Forum held two meetings on the formal voting for de-delegations. On 18 October 2022, the School Forums Primary and Secondary sectors agreed to;

- de-delegate Staff costs – Public Duties/Suspensions for primary schools in 2023/24, at 2022/23 levels.
- de-delegate the Heritage Learning Service for primary schools in 2023/24.
- de-delegate Schools in Financial Difficulty, for secondary schools in 2023/24.

There was no formal vote on School Improvement Function, further information was requested by the forum on what the offer provides. The meeting was held on the 9 November 2022.

The School Forum voted on the School Improvement Function at the next meeting on 9 November 2022.

The decision was split between Primary and Secondary. It was agreed that the sectors decisions would remain separate, as per government operational guidance.

### Thank You!

In the recent second delegation about the School Improvement Function, 85 responses were received.

The Schools Forum would like to pass on a big thank you to all the schools that responded, as these views are crucial in assisting the Forum in making de-delegation decisions.

- The Primary sector agreed with School Improvement Function de-delegations
- The Secondary sector was against it

## Clawback 2023/24

Please remember that following a period where clawback has been suspended, the Schools Forum has agreed to reintroduce the clawback policy on excess school balances at 31 March 2023. The current guideline balance is 12% of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) income for all phases of maintained school.

The Forum has agreed to raise the minimum balance threshold from £60,000 to £75,000 from 2022/23, taking into account inflation over the years since the last time that the minimum value was raised. This will provide smaller schools with a larger level of allowable balance as a protection against future costs pressures.

Please also remember that the clawback policy will exempt 5/12 any funding received in advance that is funded on an academic year basis to schools by the DfE, for example Covid catch up funding. As clawback was suspended at March 2022, no 100% clawback rate will be applied at March 2023.

The Forum have agreed that the reintroduction of clawback be kept under review to assess the impact on Lancashire schools. Further information was issued about the 2022/23 clawback policy via the schools portal on 12 July 2022.

## Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

As mentioned in Fair Exchange 125, there is a statutory requirement on all maintained schools to complete the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) each year and to provide a copy of the completed return to the authority, by 31 March each year.

A formal core agenda item is included on the autumn term governors meetings and governing bodies must formally discuss the SFVS annually with the head teacher and senior staff and ensure that the standard is completed in full. The approved SFVS spreadsheet should be uploaded on the 'Forms' section of the Schools Portal. This can be accessed via the schools portal home page under Forms > Finance > Schools Financial Value Standard.

The DfE have recently updated the template they provide for recording related party transactions. The original template was a word document, but the updated version is now in excel and includes formulae to assist with calculating totals.

The template is available from the DfE website [here](#).

Please could you use the updated DfE template to inform the LA of any related party transactions and ensure that all SFVS documentation is approved by governors and submitted to the LA by the statutory deadline of 31 March 2023.

## Who's Who? - Forum Membership



### **New Member**

1 nomination for the secondary school governor representative vacancy on the Forum were received.

School Forum would like to **welcome Rachel Bond as one of the formal Schools Forum representatives from November 2022.**

### **Questions?**

Remember, if you have any questions about the Schools Forum, please contact Sylwia Krajewska, Forum Clerk, 01772 532476, or email [schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk)