

Lancashire Schools Forum eNewsletter

• Issue 104 • March 2020

Fair Exchange?

Welcome to Issue 104 of 'Fair Exchange?' a pre-Forum Edition of the eNewsletter of the Lancashire Schools' Forum.

Schools Budget for 2020/21

Information about the key school funding decisions relating to the 2020/21 financial year taken by the Schools Forum and the LCC Cabinet in January 2020 were set out in Fair Exchange, Issue 103.

Proposals for the Schools Block budget then had to be submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for compliance checking against the relevant Regulations. The ESFA subsequently contacted the LA seeking various clarifications and explanations and once satisfied with the responses provided issued the following approval:

"The authority's adherence to the finance regulations and proforma appear to meet the required criteria, and we would like to thank you for the work done to achieve this."

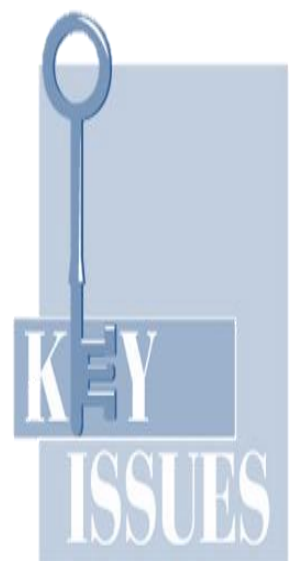
Budget information was subsequently prepared and issued to all schools and early years providers on 26 February 2020, including:

- Individual School Budgets (ISBs);
- Forecast High Needs Block allocations;
- Forecast Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) allocations;
- Forecast Early Years funding statements.

Forum Update

In addition to information about the 2020/21 Schools Budgets, key issues being considered at the Spring term cycle of Forum meetings include:

- Consideration of early information about future DfE budget options and proposals;
- An update about High Needs Block Task and Finish Groups;
- Information on School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) deployments;
- Inclusion Hub Funding allocations;
- Information on the Local Government Association (LGA) Early Years Peer Review;
- Developing the Approach and Provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities



What else is happening?

Closure of Accounts 2019/20

Notes on the Closure of School Accounts for 2019/20 have been issued via the schools portal on 4 February 2020.

The guidance documentation is also available on the Schools Forum website, which can be accessed [here](#)

School Teaching & Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme

Confirmations letters about the 2020/21 The School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme level of cover were issued on the Schools Portal 25 February 2020.

There is still an opportunity to alter the level of cover you require in 2020/21 and a link to a clickquestion eform was included in the confirmation letter. If you have any queries please email schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk

School Energy Contracts

Asset Management and Procurement Service are in the process of awarding new energy contracts for 2020-24. Subject to Cabinet approval, the suppliers will continue to be Npower Ltd and Total Gas & Power, with purchasing made through the framework provider LASER Energy. The contracts will continue to utilise a flexible purchasing strategy.

In response to feedback from schools, a new flexible strategy will be implemented providing prices issued at the start of the contract period which remain in place for a full 12 month period. This replaces the current process of pricing adjustments made every 6 month period. The new strategy (known as purchase in advance) has achieved competitive prices compared to other purchasing strategies in recent years.

Any queries or questions about the new contract, please e-mail: energy.team@lancashire.gov.uk

Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire

We understand that there have been a couple of recent queries from schools looking for the Scheme for Financing Schools. The Scheme is available on the County Council website and can be accessed [here](#)

Copyright Licences for Schools

The DfE directly buys copyright licences for schools in England, the funding for which is taken from our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation. These licences cover schools for almost all copyright requirements.

Recently, the DfE have updated their copyright guidance and schools are asked to ensure that:

- all intended activities are covered adequately by the licences
- all staff follow the terms and conditions

The updated guidance from DfE can be accessed via the Schools Portal, and also includes other relevant information. A link to the copyright page can be accessed [here](#). (A Schools Portal login is required).

What's Happening Nationally?

Benchmarking report cards issued to local authority maintained schools

On 24 January 2020, DfE distributed benchmarking report cards to local authority maintained schools. The cards use spending data updated for the 2018 to 2019 financial year.

These individual report cards contain highlights of a school's spending compared with statistically similar schools in terms of levels of deprivation and special educational needs.

The DfE sent the cards to the school contact email address recorded on [Get information about schools \(GIAS\)](#).

If schools have any queries about these report cards, please contact the DfE using the email below: School.RESOURCEMANAGEMENT@education.gov.uk.

Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)

The DfE have now confirmed the new PPG rates for 2020/21 and information is available below:

- Free School Meals
 - £1,345 per qualifying primary-aged pupil (was £1,320)
 - £955 per qualifying secondary-aged pupil (was £935)
- Looked-after and previously looked-after children
 - £2,345 per qualifying pupil (was £2,300)
(Locally this remains £600 per term)
- Service premium
 - £310 per qualifying pupil (was £300)

Further information is available from on the Government website [here](#):

Buying for schools

The DfE are providing advice and guidance for schools to assist with procurement, which is available on the Buying for schools website, available [here](#)

A new section has recently been added by the DfE relating to Multi-functional devices (MFD) and printing. The new section can be accessed [here](#)

Forum Membership

Current membership

A current list of Forum members is provided in the link [here](#).



QUESTIONS?

Remember, if you have any questions about the Schools Forum, please contact Paul Bonser, Forum Clerk, 01772 531815, or email schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk