

Schools Forum
26 February 2014

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Agenda – 59th Schools Forum

Wednesday – 26th February 2014 at 6.00 – 8.00 p.m.

Venue: Room Q309 - Queen's Park Community School
Aylestone Avenue
London NW6 7BQ

(Refreshments from 5.30 p.m.)

AGENDA

Items:

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes of the Meeting of 15th January 2014
- 3 Review of the Funding Formula for Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) Carmen Coffey
- 4 Free School Meals Paula Buckley
- 5 Budget Review of Alternative Education Service Sara Kulay/
Sara Williams
- 6 Review of Early Intervention Team Sue Gates
- 7 Review of the Schools Forum Membership, Sub Groups and Clarity on Voting Rights at Schools Forums Sara Williams/
Norwena Thomas
- 8 Distribution of Balance of the Education Action Zone (EAZ) fund – Verbal update and a report to follow in June 2014 Norwena Thomas/
Sara Williams
- 9 AOB

Future Forums:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>
Wednesday 18th June 2014	The Village School
Wednesday 17th September 2014	Queens Park Community School
Wednesday 22 October 2014 (Additional TBC)	(TBC)
Wednesday 10th December 2014	The Village School
Wednesday 14th January 2015	Queens Park Community School
Wednesday 25th February 2015	The Village School

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Brent Schools Forum

**Minutes of the 58th Schools Forum held on
Wednesday 15th January 2014 at The Village School**

Attended by Members of the Forum:

Governors	Mike Heiser - Chair (MH) Martin Beard (MB) Titilola McDowell (TMcD) Alan Carter (AC) Herman Martyn (HM) Cllr Lesley Jones (Cllr LJ) Janice Alexander (JA) Cllr Helga Gladbaum (Cllr HG)
Head Teachers	Sylvie Libson – Vice Chair (SL) Lesley Benson (LB) Matthew Lantos (ML) Rose Ashton (RA) Andy Prindiville (AP) Kay Johnson (KJ) Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman (YF) Gill Bal (GB)
PRU	Terry Hoad (TH)
PVI Sector	Paul Russell (PR)
Trade Unions	Lesley Gouldbourne (LG)
14-19 Partnership	Maggie Barth (MB)
Others	
Officers	Sara Williams (SW) Ravinder Jassar (RJ) Norwena Thomas (NT) Devbai Patel (DP) Carmen Coffey (CC) - up to item 4
Circulation to all present plus:	Cllr Michael Pavey Elizabeth Jones Umesh Raichada Terry Molloy Sabina Netty Sue Knowler Maxine Henderson

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	<p>MH opened the meeting at 6pm. He congratulated GB for receiving an OBE and so did everyone else.</p> <p>MH asked if everyone knew each other. Cllr HG said she didn't know who RJ was so he introduced himself.</p>	
1.0	Apologies	
1.1	<p>Cllr Michael Pavey (Cllr MP) Umesh Raichada (UR) Terry Molloy (TM) Sabina Netty (SN)</p>	
2.0.	Minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2013 and Matters Arising	
2.1	Accuracy	
2.1.1	<p>Item 6.21 which was a quote from TM should say 'no member should be released more than half the time of their work time' instead of 'no member should be released no more than half the time of their work time'.</p>	
2.1.2	<p>The above amendment was noted and the minutes were approved as accurate record.</p>	
2.2	Matters Arising – (From the Action Log)	
2.2.1	<p>Item 1 – A clarification was received and MH read out the response from the DfE on voting by non schools representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No voting on de-delegations • Only PVI representatives can vote on the consultation on the funding formula • All non-school members can vote on any other Schools Forum business <p>It was therefore noted that all non-school members can vote on any other Schools Forum business which excludes consultation, funding formula and de-delegations.</p>	
2.2.2	<p>LG was not convinced that this advice was correct as she felt the guidance clearly indicates that non-school members have the right to vote on all non de-delegation items. SW said that officers would send out a note attaching the response from DfE so that individual members can seek advice should they wish do</p>	DP/NT

so.

- 2.2.3 Item 2 – Report on adequacy of Growth Funding in 2013/14 to inform provision for 2014/15 – on agenda for this forum.
- 2.2.4 Item 3 - SEN Funding Report - A report to be brought to the February Schools Forum. CC
- 2.2.5 Item 5 – Review of the Early Years Intervention Team is to be brought to the Schools Forum. Sue Gates
- 2.2.6 Item 6 – Strategy for FT Nursery Places is on the agenda for this Forum.
- 2.2.7 Item 1 – FSM eligibility assessments – A report to be brought to the February Schools Forum. Paula Buckley
- 2.2.8 Item 2 – School Admissions – A report to be brought to the February Schools Forum. Paula Buckley
- 2.2.9 Budget Review of Alternative Education Service –
 - To present partnership model that oversees devolved funds
 - Develop further proposals to introduce a rewards and incentives funding frameworkSara Kulay
- 2.2.10 Schools Forum membership – DP said this can be brought to the next Schools Forum as we now have the most up to date census data and as Gladstone Park Primary School will be converting to academy on 1st April 2014. Cllr HG asked if she could join the Early Years Sub Group as she is involved with Early Years and Children’s Centres. SW said this could be resolved as part of the membership report. However we will be reviewing all the sub groups to find out if they need to continue and to determine if they still serve the purpose of what they were formed for. Cllr HG asked when will this be reviewed and SW said at the next forum. DP/NT

3.0 2014/15 Early Years – Full Time Places Assessment

- 3.1 SW presented this report which is being brought to the Forum with issues that have been outstanding for some time. Early Years Sub Group took place and the report explains the issues discussed at that meeting.
- 3.2 The first issue was the increase in the base rate to the early years single funding formula by 3% which is to be funded from the overfunding of 2013/14 full time places. The second issue is to fund a post in the Early Years Inclusion Team to support children with emerging SEN in schools nursery classes and PVI’s. This was proposed to be funded from the £500k allocated towards SEN to Early Years from 2013/14. The third issue is to retain the current FSM eligibility rudiments and process for funding full time places.



- 3.3 MH invited members to comment. LB asked what the impact would be when the free school meals are introduced. This needs to be considered as it is coming into effect in September 2014.
- 3.4 SW said that no information has been released by DfE on revenue funding but will check. MH asked for this to be put on the agenda as a future item. DP
- 3.5 The recommendation to note the following items were noted by the Schools Forum:
- i. Increasing the EYSFF Base Rate by 3% in 2014/15
 - ii. Additional Early Years Inclusion Team post
 - iii. Retaining the current FSM eligibility requirement for funding full time places.

4.0 Out of School Provision and Provision in Pupil Growth

- 4.1 CC presented this report. This report provides update on meeting the demand of the pupils with out of school places. It details the projects with all associated funding to set up temporary and permanent provisions that have been created for college places, EAL Projects, additional secondary Year 10 and 11 classes, new primary classes, expansions and annexes. She explained that there are two units at Claremont and Queens Park Schools for newly arrived pupils with EAL as well as courses at the College of North West London for pupils who arrive mid year and cannot secure places in schools. Additional places in lower year groups, i.e. Year 7 and 8, in secondary schools are available so there may be less demand in EAL units and the college. She said the need for these units have been longer than originally anticipated. A Headteacher Consultant was brought in for three months in 2005 and is still working in this area.
- 4.2 Paragraph 4 details the 2012/13 and 2013/14 schemes which show the growing demand. It is anticipated that 2014/15 demand would be similar to 2013/14. It was confirmed that the growth funding for basic needs expansions is estimated to be £2.443m and current Rising Rolls allocation of £1.130m making a total of £3.573m.
- 4,3 RA asked CC to explain what the Fair Access Policy was and how it is applied in Brent. CC responded that the DfE through the Admission Code, requires LA's to place children in schools promptly. Every LA is required to have a Fair Access Protocol (FAP). Children without a school place must be prioritised on waiting lists over those who have a school place and wish to transfer. This prioritisation has been implemented in Brent for some years. The admissions code and the FAP allow for circumstances when schools are required to admit children over their Planned

Admission Number (PAN). Due to pressure on primary places, and the number of children without a school place, this has only recently been implemented in Brent, and to date, in the limited circumstances where a sibling has a place in a school, and it is impossible for parents to be at two schools at the same time, or the distance between schools makes it unreasonable for parents to take up a place.

- 4.4 RA said that children are new to the country and suddenly they get a primary place over those on the waiting list. The LA does not check ID as when they are in the school they suddenly have siblings and suddenly jump the queue. CC said it's difficult to discuss individual cases but LA's are not allowed to check passports. The only check carried out is the proof of address to validate the residency in the borough. CC said if the schools were concerned about the legitimacy of an application, then to get in touch with her. RA argued that some parents know the loophole and jump the queue whilst others are still on the waiting list. She said 'it's not a Fair Access Policy then; it's just an Access Policy'
- 4.5 CC said that schools can request evidence of both the birth certificates and passports whereas Local Authorities cannot. RA said that some foreign documentation was hard to authenticate.
- 4.6 SL asked if the Fair Access Policy was just for those just arrived, CC replied that the FAP covers all children without a school place, and the categories are set out in the Protocol.
- 4.7 LG said if the class sizes increase it has a detrimental effect on children's education. She is aware that it's not Brent's fault but the LA needs to make a stand on class sizes. She is aware that both CC and SW are aware of this issue.
- 4.8 SL said the three schools that are receiving £25k, is it a recent policy as she doesn't recall receiving it? CC said it's not available for bulge but only for permanent classes which has been introduced recently. If the school expands by 1FE the school will receive £25k as one off payment. It's a reflection of additional management time. Those that have been through it will know how much management time is required and it was felt unreasonable not to pay schools something towards this. It can take up to 15 months to complete expansion projects. ML asked if it is backdated to which CC said if Schools Forum wants to approve it. MH asked at what stage they get devolved budget. SW said once the class become permanent pupils appear on census. LB asked if the College of North West London project is permanent. CC said until sufficient places are available. It's the same as Anansi which aren't planned for, permanent, but may last for 2-3 years.



4.9 MB asked if the Anansi project for 90 pupils would carry on until all those pupils absorb into Reception classes within other schools. CC replied that they may be kept there more than one year once building work is completed so Anansi may take on Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.

4.10 It was confirmed that the anticipated forecast for 2014/15 expansions budget would be similar to 2013/14 anticipated places budget. These are as listed on the table under paragraph 4.1 from Anansi Nursery to Vicars Green School projects. Further expenditure will depend on demand. KJ highlighted that 25 provisions have been involved and have expanded in the borough and said it was phenomenal.

4.11 MH thanked CC for the report and said that the Members will continue to monitor the situation.

5.0 Consultation on Schools Budget 2014/15

5.1 This report provides update on indicative 2014/15 Individual Schools, Early Years and High Needs funding following the announcement of the DSG on 19th December 2013. SW introduced the report and said that other officers will contribute to presenting the report.

5.2 The Individual Schools Budget is prepared using the DfE's model which needs to be submitted to DfE for approval by 21st January 2014. Also presented as part of the report are other delegated budgets to special schools, nursery units and schools, schools with Additional Resource Provision and SEN statemented.

5.3 An additional criterion is being applied to safeguard schools to avoid penalising them for having a high number of Statemented pupils. NT explained the criteria used for Targeted High Needs. This has been discussed with the SEN sub group and the criteria approved by them was that where a school has 4% or more of the number on roll of the Statemented pupils the school would received £5k per pupil for each in-borough statemented pupil the school has above the average of each phase. Only the two Malorees Schools qualified for this funding in the total sum of £70k. Cllr HG asked why Capital City was not on the list of schools and it was confirmed that this is because it is a non-recoupment academy in the same was as Ark and therefore they are not part of the Local Authority's schools calculation. They receive Early Yeas and SEN top-up funding from the Local Authorities. MH confirmed that those pupils are removed from the LA's budget calculations.

5.4 MH asked how is the CRC funding top-sliced. DP said this does not affect schools' ISB as CRC was always centrally funded.



- 5.5 LB asked for clarification on how the High Needs provisions for under 5's would be funded. These are the Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARP) units and Children with Disabilities (CwD). DP said that these would continue to be funded in the same way as in the current financial year. DP thought the CWD budget was funded from the High Needs Block but could not confirm. LB said she is not sure that it is. She was concerned that the Early Years block has been squeezed and felt that these units should be funded from the High Needs Block. She asked when this would be confirmed. DP said probably in time for next Schools Forum but it is a requirement to show each blocks funding as part of the Section 251 Return which has a deadline of last working day in March every year.
- 5.6 LB asked why there was no indicative budget for PVI nurseries. DP said that this was not made available last year and did not have the actual to date data to calculate the 2014-15 budgets. LB said they do termly returns on actual pupil number and saw no reason for not being able to produce indicative allocation to PVI's. DP agreed to produce indicative allocation to PVI's. DP
- 5.7 NT pointed out that that KS3 and KS4 Pupil Referral Units have merged and the indicative budget for that unit is calculated but an indicative calculation for Health Needs Education Service (former BETS) has not been included in Appendix C. It is under central costs.
- 5.8 DP pointed out an error in the report under paragraph 2.2 which should exclude 'non' and should read as 'Based on this, the final Schools ISB (including recoupment academies) for 2014-15 will be £190.7m, an increase of £1.9m from 2013/14.
- 5.9 DP said that the ratio has slightly dropped from the indicatives but without analysing further could not confirm where within the schools funding it is affected. This could be that in the provisional budget it was at the bottom level of 1:1.27 and it is now at a higher level of 1:1.26 but is not a significant movement. MB said if it drops below 1:1.25, this should be addressed at that point in the future.
- 5.10 AP asked how the SEN funding is recouped for in and out borough pupils. DP said that there is a Recoupment Officer in post that deals with all SEN recoupments. The schools do not have to deal with their own recoupments. It was agreed last year by the schools forum to fund this post from the DSG.
- 5.11 **Recommendations:**
11.1 a) A criteria for Targeted SEN Funding at £5k per pupil above the average as detailed in paragraph 5.3 as above was



approved.

- 11.1b) A Growth funding at £2.44 m was approved. (This is in addition to the rising rolls contingency of £1.130m which remains the same as last year.

5.12 **The following were noted:**

- 11.2a) The Individual Schools Budget as to be submitted to the DfE for approval
- 11.2b) The Special and PRU's budget
- 11.2c) SEN Statemented Funding and Targeted Funding
- 11.2d) The Early Years Indicative Budgets

6.0 Any Other Business

- 6.1 NONE. The Forum ended at 7.45pm.

Action Log

No	Action	Completion Date	Owner
1	Circulate a note with DfE's clarification on voting rights to non Schools Forum members.	February 2014	NT/DP
2	Update on Universal Free School Meals to Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils.	February 2014	DP/NT
3	Calculate indicative budgets for Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) 3 and 4 year old providers	February 2014	DP
4	SEN Funding Update	February 2014	Carmen Coffey
5	Review of Early Intervention Team – to be presented to EY Sub Group prior to being presented to Schools Forum	February 2014	Sue Gates
6	Find out if parents apply on-line for FSM eligibility assessment, how they are identified if they attend maintained school or academy.	February Schools Forum	Paula Buckley
7	Benchmarking of End to End process and cost per pupil in processing admissions application	February Schools Forum	Paula Buckley/ Margaret Read
8	Budget Review of Alternative Education Service – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To present partnership model that oversees devolved funds • Develop further proposals to introduce a rewards and incentives funding framework 	February 2014	Sara Kulay
9	Schools Forum Membership to be recalculated if any more schools convert to academy. Otherwise refresh for the start of the year using the latest (January) census	February 2014	NT/DP

2014/15 Action Points			
10	Consultation of Scheme for Delegation - Approval of required amendments to the scheme	June 2014	NT
11	Low Carbon Schools Programme Update Report	September 2014	Emily Ashton
12	Provide details of what service is covered by DSG allocation at GBOEC	September 2014	Angela Chiswell



Brent

**Schools Forum
26 February 2014**

**Report from the Director of
Children & Families**

For Consultation

Review of the Funding Formula for Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper is a proposal to alter the funding formula for ARPs based on discussions with head teachers who host these provisions and on financial evidence submitted by most host schools to illustrate difficulties in funding these provisions. The alterations proposed lead to a significant increase in the funding for ARPs.

2 Background and Context

- 2.1 Brent currently funds a total of eight ARPs in mainstream schools. These are specialist provisions across a range of special educational needs including autistic spectrum disorder, specific language impairment, hearing impairment and moderate learning difficulties. They provide a total capacity of 127.6FTE places for children with SEN. For further information please refer to the earlier schools forum December 2012 paper providing an overview of ARPs.
- 2.2 An additionally resourced provision is a teaching area within or attached to a mainstream school or nursery/children's centre and which is staffed by a team of specialist teachers and support staff. It affords a suitably adapted space for both teaching interventions and therapeutic provision so that the children on roll can access all or part of a mainstream curriculum alongside their non-disabled peers. Most children in ARPs have a statement of SEN or are undergoing statutory assessment. Those in nursery-aged ARPs must meet set criteria for admission and the vast majority go on to need statutory assessment of their needs which results in a statement.
- 2.3 The funding per pupil in ARPs ranges from £11,505 to £19,583 (with the exception of new and growing ARPs which can attract a transitional funding factor in order to meet the staffing costs while numbers on roll are low).
- 2.4 ARPs are inexpensive provisions when compared with the alternative. With the exception of the three nursery provisions (HI and ASD), pupils who attend ARPs have cognition in the normal range and do not require the type of highly modified curriculum on offer in our special schools. Yet they are unable to learn in a mainstream setting with support because of

their highly specialist access and learning requirements and difficulties coping in a mainstream context. Consequently their special needs can only be met in a specialist environment such as a school catering particularly for children with language impairments, hearing impairments and autism. Most specialist schools with these specialisms are independent and expensive and cost around £40,000 pa with the additional costs of transport etc.

2.5 Brent ARPs offer a good education in a highly specialist environment staffed by teachers and support staff who have the necessary knowledge and skills. Because ARPs are local provisions they save the council money in terms of transport costs and offer parents a school in the local area for their child with SEN. Where ARPs are large and can provide group teaching, this results in considerable economies of scale. Consequently ARPs are good value for money and an important facet of the range of provision for children with SEN in Brent. The local authority would also like to ensure that the success of Brent ARPs in terms of quality of provision and outcomes for children, is maintained and improved over time.

2.6 A new funding formula for ARPs was devised in 2009 and implemented in 2010. This was based on an equivalent funding methodology to special schools with additional elements*. There are difficulties inherent in the current formula.

a) Due to the highly specialist nature of ARPs, **teachers** and other staff are difficult to recruit. Most ARPs have only one or two teachers and the teacher in charge must have management skills and experience. They must hold (or be working towards) masters level qualifications in the specialist area and have a wealth of teaching knowledge and experience across the whole curriculum and the key stages in their school. These staff do not come cheap. Most Brent ARP teachers have reached the upper pay scale (UPS3) and because they teach children with SEN, attract the SEN1 allowance. Many who hold additional and sometimes mandatory qualifications (HI), attract the SEN2 allowance. Some can demand a recruitment allowance. The current formula allows a salary amount for teachers (inc PPA and oncosts) based on the computed average in special schools, where teachers can range from relatively inexpensive newly qualified teachers to highly experienced teachers. Consequently the formula allocation for teachers is insufficient when applied to ARPs and needs to reflect the actual high costs of these teachers. The proposal is to increase the teacher cost in ARPs from £59,513 to £64,512 which equates to a UPS3+SEN2 teacher's salary plus oncosts. Any savings generated by a less expensive second teacher would be expected to be reinvested into the ARP in some way.

b) Current **support staff** funding is based on the average special school TA salary which reflects a 52 week year rather than a 38 week or term time only contract used by mainstream schools. This affords an extra 25% salary per TA to ARPs which goes some way to compensate for

the fact that children in ARPs must reintegrate for all or part of the day into mainstream classes and this requires more staffing than if they were taught in a unit class most of the day, as is the case in special schools. Support staff must be able to communicate effectively with pupils in ARPs. Many require specialist qualifications and skills in order to do this. For HI children who communicate through sign language there needs to be a number of highly specialist TAs (Communication Support Workers) who hold qualifications of level 2/3 BSL or above. These staff can attract much higher salaries than those of other TAs and their job descriptions have been evaluated as such over the years.

Support staff who work with early years children may also need to hold a nursery nurse qualification and additional qualifications and skills in using PECs/BSL.

The proposal is to include an element to recognise these additional highly specialist staff within the formula, at an annual salary of £29,577, for HI provisions and early years ASD provisions. This will apply to 25% of TA funding in these provisions.

- c) Where ARPs have to provide their own **speech and language therapy** (SALT), there is an element in the formula to fund this. Most schools use this money to employ their own therapists. The current formula assumes a unit cost of £46,035 for a SALT but the NHS stipulates that only a band 7 therapist has the required level of knowledge and experience to meet the needs of children in an ARP. The salary range for a band 7 SALT in Outer London is £45,285 - £59,702 inc. oncosts. The proposal is to increase the SALT unit cost of £46,035 to £49,902 (.084%)
- d) Head teachers often supplement the cost of running the ARP from their own mainstream school budget because there is no element for the **recruitment, training and cover** when staff are absent. Whilst there is an option to buy insurance to cover absent teachers this is not feasible for support staff however the latter are an essential aspect of the provision in a statement of SEN. In addition children on roll usually need someone from the ARP to be available at lunchtimes to facilitate communication and enhance social learning. An additional element of £179 per pupil is proposed to provide some support with these aspects of ARP management.
- e) Finally, it has been agreed that where a child has **significant and marked additional needs** above and beyond that which would be expected to be met by the ARP, then the school can request additional funding via the Complex Panel at SENAS. Examples include a young person with HI plus schizophrenia and a child with a specific language impairment plus spina bifida.

**NB. Feedback from Kay Johnson, in the SEN sub-group, is noted. The formula is not meant to be prescriptive but instead to promote the best possible outcomes for each learner.*

The current unit cost for a teacher even in a special school, is very difficult to manage financially. At The Village, the decision was taken to not allocate SEN2 to any teacher. Similarly the current formula unit cost for TAs has led to the move from 52 week contracts to 38 week contracts. Within the formula, the ratio of teachers and TAs allocated to groups of students is not always sufficient to meet their needs.

3 Financial Implications

These changes to the funding formula for ARPs result in an increase of:

- Teachers' salary from £59,513 to £64,512, an increase of 8.4%.
- Speech and Language Therapists salary from £46,035 to £49,902 an increase of 8.4%.
- Teaching Assistants salary from £25,619 to £25,875, an increase of 1%.
- Creating a Highly Specialist TA's/NNEB at an annual salary of £29,577.
- Additional lump sum allocation towards Cover/Recruitment/Training at £179 per pupil.

4 Recommendations

The schools forum is recommended to agree:

- a) An increase in ARP unit cost teacher funding to £64,512 to more accurately reflect the true cost of specialist teachers in ARPs.
- b) A new element of TA funding for highly specialist TAs and support staff which attract a higher level of salary when compared to standard TAs. This element is a unit funding of £29,577 which would be allocated as 25% of the overall TA allocation and only applicable to HI provisions and early years provisions.
- c) An increase in unit cost funding for speech and language therapists to more accurately reflect the true cost of these staff to £49,902
- d) A new element to acknowledge the essential cover, recruitment and training needs of ARPs, at a unit amount per child of £179.

Appendices:

- A. ARP Units' Funding Calculations under the Old Funding Formula
- B. ARP Units' Funding Calculations under the New Funding Formula

Contact Officers:

Carmen Coffey

Head of Pupil and Parents Service

Emma Dudley

Strategic Lead Sensory and Comm. Service

Sara Williams - Interim Director of Children and Families

ARP FUNDING UNDER THE OLD FORMULA - 2014/15 PROVISIONAL BUDGET

	Fawood ASD	Kingsbury Green HI	Kingsbury High HI	Oakington Manor S&L	Oakington Manor ASD	Preston Manor S&L	Preston Manor ASD	Granville Plus ASD	Alperton MLD
Number of Planned Places 2014/15	10	18	7	30	5	12	6.75	6.6	20.0

Formula Staffing									
Teachers*	1.43	2.57	1.00	3.00	0.71	1.71	1.00	0.94	2.86
S&L Therapists	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.50	0.25	0.60	0.34	0.00	0.00
TAs	2.68	4.82	1.88	3.00	1.07	1.71	2.41	1.77	7.14
Highly Specialist TA's/NNEB	0.89	1.61	0.63					0.59	
Total Staffing	5.00	9.00	3.50	7.50	2.04	4.03	3.75	3.30	10.00

Funding:									
Staffing									
Teachers	£92,159	£165,887	£64,512	£193,535	£46,080	£110,591	£64,512	£60,825	£184,319
S&L Therapists	£0	£0	£0	£74,853	£12,475	£29,941	£16,842	£0	£0
TAs	£69,309	£124,755	£48,516	£77,626	£27,723	£44,357	£62,378	£45,744	£184,823
Highly Specialist TA's/NNEB (25% of TA)	£26,408	£47,534	£18,486					£17,429	
Sub Total Staffing	£187,876	£338,177	£131,513	£346,013	£86,279	£184,890	£143,731	£123,998	£369,141
Management Time	£5,115	£9,207.00	£3,581	£15,345	£2,558	£6,138	£3,453	£3,376	£10,230
Cover/Recruitment/Training	£1,790	£3,222	£1,253	£5,370	£895	£2,148	£1,208	£1,181	£3,580
Materials/Equipment	£1,786.75	£9,648.45	£3,752	£5,360	£893	£2,144	£1,206	£1,179	£3,574
Autistic Therapies	£5,105				£2,553		£3,446	£3,369	£10,210
Transitional Integration Allocation									
Ongoing premises costs								£4,826	
Total Budget 2014/15	£ 201,673	£ 360,254	£ 140,099	£ 372,088	£ 93,177	£ 195,320	£ 153,044	£ 137,930	£ 396,735

Total Budget 2013/14 £188,521 £280,484 £113,494 £284,616 £0 £176,689 £162,914 £133,250 £220,817

Variance £13,152 £79,770 £26,605 £87,472 £93,177 £18,631 -£9,870 £4,680 £175,918

Cost Per Pupil Funded Place 2014/15 £20,167 £20,014 £20,014 £12,403 £18,635 £16,277 £22,673 £20,898 £19,837

Cost Per Pupil Funded Place 2013 £18,852 £18,699 £18,699 £11,505 £15,154 £24,135 £19,583 £18,852

Variance £1,315 £1,315 £1,315 £898 £18,635 £1,123 -£1,462 £1,315 £985

Without protection £1,113

Inflation:
Staff Costs 0.00%
Other 0.00%

S&L Prim	S&L Sec	ASD Prim	HI Prim	HI Sec	ASD Prim	ASD Sec	MLD Sec	CWD Nurs	Costs
0.10	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	£64,512
0.05	0.05	0.05				0.05			£49,902
0.10	0.14	0.21	0.3571	0.35714	0.357143	0.36	0.3571	0.428571	£25,875
Band 2	Band 3	Band 3.5	Band 4.5	Band 4.5	Band 4.5	Band 4.5	Band 4.5	Band 4.5	Band 5

Average Staff Costs

Teachers includes 10% PPA
TA average cost in Special schools

£ 1,911,618

£ 59,002

£512 Amount Per Pupil

£ 20,648

£179 Amount Per Pupil

£ 29,544

£179 Amount Per Weighted Pupil

£ 24,683

£511 Amount Per Pupil

£ 0

£ 4,826

£ 2,050,320

£ 1,560,785

£ 25,439

ARP FUNDING 2014-15 (INDICATIVE)
Under New National Funding Formula

	FAWOOD ASD	KINGSBURY GREEN HI	KINGSBURY HIGH HI	OAKINGTON MANOR S&L	OAKINGTON MANOR ASD	PRESTON MANOR S&L	PRESTON MANOR ASD	GRANVILLE PLUS ASD	ALPERTON MLD	TOTAL
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Top-Up Funding Per Place	£10,167.27	£10,014.12	£10,014.12	£2,402.95	£8,635.39	£6,276.66	£12,673.17	£10,898.48	£9,836.75	
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	FUNDING Based on Planned Places for 2014-15									
Total number of planned places 2014-15 Apr - Aug	10.0	15.0	6.0	30.0	5.0	12.0	6.0	6.6	20.0	111
Total number of planned places 2014-15 Sept - Mar	10.0	17.0	7.0	30.0	5.0	12.0	12.0	6.6	16.0	116
Estimated Pupil Numbers as at 31st December 2013	10.0	16.0	5.0	30.0	5.0	11.0	9.0	6.6	16.0	109
Base Funding @ £10,000	£100,000.00	£161,666.67	£65,833.33	£300,000.00	£50,000.00	£120,000.00	£95,000.00	£66,000.00	£176,666.67	£1,135,166.67
Top-Up Funding	£101,672.66	£160,225.86	£50,070.58	£72,088.36	£43,176.95	£69,043.29	£114,058.57	£71,929.96	£157,387.94	£839,654.17
Total Funding	£201,672.66	£321,892.53	£115,903.91	£372,088.36	£93,176.95	£189,043.29	£209,058.57	£137,929.96	£334,054.61	£1,974,820.83

2013-14 Budgets for Comparison										
Total Budget Allocation 2013-14	£188,521.00	£280,484.25	£113,494.75	£284,616.71	£0.00	£176,689.23	£216,416.52	£133,249.86	£220,816.80	£1,614,289
Total number of annualised places 2013-14	10	15	7	25	0	10	6.75	6.60	15	96

Notes:

1. All places are based on planned place numbers and will be adjusted based on the High Needs Return in December 2013
2. Top-Up funding will be based on actual pupil numbers as at 31st December 2013
3. Top-Up funding for changes in actual pupil numbers from 1st April 2014 will be paid termly in arrears
4. Academies Base Funding will be paid directly by EFA

 Brent	Schools Forum 26 February 2014 Report from the Director of Children & Families
For Information	
Free School Meals – Changes for September 2014	

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Free School Meals (FSM) Eligibility budget and facilities is currently managed centrally and under the new National Funding Formula is required to be delegated to schools. The de-delegation of the budget was agreed at the November Schools Forum meeting with a request that a report return indicating the charges that will be made to academies for the administration of FSM on their behalf for 2014-15.
- 1.2 From September 2014, all Key Stage 1 children in state-funded schools in England will be eligible for free school meals. This report outlines these changes and what work needs to be done to ensure the changes do not impact on schools potential pupil premium.

2.0 Potential Impact on School budgets

- 2.1 It is important that schools still encourage parents of eligible reception, year 1 and year 2 children to register their child for free school meals before the January census of schools and pupils. The amount the school receives in pupil premium allocation for 2015-16 onwards will be adversely impacted should parents not apply.
- 2.2 Brent will continue to undertake eligibility checking on behalf of schools and provide access to reports of children attending school who are eligible for free school meals. There will be a charge for this service to academies details of which are contained in Table 1 below.
- 2.3 The amount schools receive in pupil premium the financial year 2014-215 will be unaffected as the January 2014 census is used. However there is potential impact on the 2015-16 Pupil Premium but the DfE are working through possible solutions/advice for this.

- 2.4 Brent will assess eligibility for all children who continue in the school and were receiving free school meals at the end of the school year. Schools will be notified of this eligibility at the beginning of the school year. However this will not be possible for reception and year 7 and applications will be required for those children, along with any children who move in-year and the family has had a change in circumstances.
- 2.5 A review of the free school meals process will be undertaken to ensure it is fit for purpose under these new conditions and this will be completed and reported back to schools after the Easter holidays.
- 2.6 Currently, to be eligible for FSM parents must be in receipt of certain benefits which are:
- Income Support (IS) or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (IBJSA)
 - An income-related employment and support allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Child Tax Credit, (provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual income that does not exceed £16,190.00 (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) (TC 602 Final Award Notice - 2012/2013)
 - For those who receive Working Tax Credit (other than a four week run on period) their child is not eligible for a free school meal.
 - Guarantee element of State Pension Credit Children who receive IS or IBJSA in their own right

3.0 Support for schools

- 3.1 In order to ensure parents continue to apply for entitled free school meals, Brent will support with publicity that helps parents to understand that the pupil premium will be used to fund support and related activities for the child. Brent will also redesign the form to show that the application is not only for free school meals but enables additional funding to the school in the form of Pupil Premium.
- 3.2 There is a capital allocation on a borough-wide basis across community and voluntary aided schools to support the implementation of this new requirement, i.e. to support schools with kitchen and related improvements. However the funding available will clearly fall well short of the requirement. In order to enable fair allocation on transparent criteria, a quick audit of schools kitchens/dining facilities has been commissioned and is underway at the time of writing.
- 3.3 With regard to revenue funding, schools will have received a letter dated 23 January from the Secretary of State. This explains that the revenue allocation to schools will be based on a flat rate of £2.30 per meal taken based on the actual take-up by newly eligible infant pupils which will be measured in the Schools Census from next year. For the 2014-15 autumn and spring terms an estimated amount will be paid and an adjustment will be made later based on the actual take up. From 2015-16, the allocation will be based on a new flag in the Census. It is therefore in the best interest of the schools to encourage parents to take up the free school meals in time for the Census.

4.0 Academy Charges.

- 4.1 2,342 children who attend academy schools in Brent are in receipt of FSM Meals for the 2013 academic year. A total of 10,511 pupils are eligible for FSM in Brent schools.
- 4.2 The overall budget for the administration of FSM was £36,438 in 2013-14 and keeping it at the same rate as £1.06p per pupil, the 2014-15 budgets is £29,384.
- 4.3 Based on the costs per pupil and number of pupils entitled to FSM in each academy for 2013, the indicative charges for each academy for 2014-15 is outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: FSM entitlement 2013 and indicative charges 2014-15

Academy	Entitled	Rejected	Total	Total Pupil Number Oct 2013	Total Charge
Alperton	229	19	248	1113	£1,180
Ark	246	7	253	1050	£1,113
Ark Franklin	185	14	199	535	£567
Capital City	327	25	352	955	£1,012
Claremont High	195	11	206	1259	£1,335
Convent of J&M Language College	206	5	211	857	£908
Kingsbury High	302	28	330	1582	£1,677
Preston Manor	373	20	393	1551	£1,644
Queens Park	267	9	276	998	£1,058
Sudbury Primary	141	16	157	837	£887
Crest Boys	151	14	165	462	£490
Crest Girls	232	18	250	639	£677
Wembley High Technology College	237	12	249	1096	£1,162
Total	3091	198	2463	12934	£13,710

5.0 Recommendations and Consultation points

5.1 The Schools Forum is requested to:

(a) Note the changes to the FSM provision for Key Stage 1 children from September 2014.


(b) Note the charges outlined in paragraph 3.3 to academies for the 2014-15 year for the administration of FSM on their behalf by the local authority.

Contact Officers:

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Head of Pupil and Parents Service

Paula Buckley
Head of Service (Revenues and
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Interim Director of Children & Families

 Brent	<p style="text-align: center;">Schools Forum 26 February 2014</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Acting Director of Children & Families</p>
For Consultation	
Update on Restructure of the of Alternative Education, Attendance and Behaviour Services – New Service Design and Financial Implications	

CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING POINTS

On 19th June 2013 the Schools Forum considered a report on proposals to restructure Alternative Education, Attendance and Behaviour Services. This report now updates the Forum on the new service model and the related financial implications.

The Forum is asked to give views on options to attach funding to support more complex pupils placed in schools under the Fair Access Protocol and note the decision to introduce local arrangements for the claw back of AWPU funding for permanently excluded pupils from all schools. It also seeks views on the establishment of a Brent Schools Partnership to oversee a devolved budget to support cross-phase behaviour projects between secondary and primary schools and/or fund other behaviour projects developed by schools.

1. SUMMARY AND REPORT STRUCTURE

- 1.1. This report provides the Schools Forum with an overview of the new Inclusion and Alternative Education Service and related financial implications. The report also highlights a number of financial options which could give increased budget control to schools and /or create a stronger link between a decision to permanently exclude pupils and the related costs. The Schools Forum is asked whether it supports the introduction of the proposals outlined.
- 1.2. The report is structured as follows:
 - **Section 2** provides some background on the service review;
 - **Section 3** gives an overview of the new service model;
 - **Section 4** sets out the financial implications of the new model and potential future funding pressures; and

- **Section 5** sets out some new funding options for the service designed to offset the costs of supporting and /or reintegrating permanently excluded pupils and fund new schools led attendance and behaviour initiatives.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Over the past year the Children and Families Department has carried out a fundamental review of its alternative education, behaviour and attendance services. The review has sought to reshape the services to meet a complex range of policy, financial and operational challenges, including changes to the funding framework for alternative education, new service and demographic trends, and a need to develop a service model more closely focussed on prevention and support to children in school.
- 2.2. The new structure for the new Inclusion and Alternative Education Service is broadly designed to achieve:
- A more cost efficient and focused model of service delivery thereby reducing the planned place costs of Pupil Referral Units and freeing up resources to invest in preventative and exclusion services.
 - A greater focus on preventative work in primary schools and transition work between primary and secondary schools, with access to a wider range of support to address behavioural, social and mental health issues.
 - An extended remit for the Pupil Referral Unit which includes a strong core offer of commissioned services and dual registration.
 - Further reductions in the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 - Strong links between the newly amalgamated Inclusion and Alternative Education Service, the Special Educational Needs/Disability Service and Early Help Family Support Service through either hub and spoke arrangements or co-location of staff/services.
 - Much closer partnership working on behaviour and attendance between schools, supported by the development of a clear Behaviour and Attendance Strategy.
 - Improved specialist assessment and support for particular group of vulnerable pupils and those newly arrived in order to prevent an escalation of difficulties and to avoid high-cost Borough specialist placements.
 - A more co-ordinated approach to the commissioning and quality assurance of alternative providers from the private and voluntary sectors on behalf of schools and the Local Authority.
 - An increased focus on working with designated teachers, school governors and the Council's Corporate Parenting Group to raise the profile of looked after children education issues.
- 2.3. The vision for the new service is that it should be co-owned with the schools and schools have been involved in shaping the new service as far as possible. Schools' views on current behaviour, attendance and inclusion support and their support needs have influenced the service design, both through an independent review of behaviour management in twelve Brent secondary schools and six primary schools, and via feedback from schools' forums. Key issues for schools included: a need for more short-term preventative work in schools; improved support for primary pupils at

risk of exclusion; and clear leadership on behavioural issues to benefit all schools. More support for behaviour work in early years provision, and at transition between primary and secondary were also flagged as priorities.

- 2.4. A new, single Management Committee has been set up to oversee the KS 3 and KS 4 PRU and the Health Needs Education Service (see service details below), with delegated financial and HR arrangements in line with new DfE regulations. School representation on the Committee has been strengthened; it now includes ten community places designated for school representatives and includes several Head Teachers and a Deputy Head as current members. This will help to ensure that the reshaped provision will continue to meet schools' current and emerging needs effectively.

3. NEW SERVICE STRUCTURE

The Pre- Review Service Structure

- 3.1. Pre-review the in-scope services had a total of 97 posts, with a combined gross budget of £5.464 million in 2013/14 (£4.975 million net). 85 per cent of overall service expenditure is met by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). In-scope services included the following services: the three pupil referral units, consisting of Brent Education Tuition Service (BETs); Poplar Grove (Key Stage 4) and Stag Lane (Key Stage 3); the Day 6 (Kingsbury) Assessment Centre; the Alternative Education Central Management Team; the Education Welfare Service; the Behaviour Support Team; the Pre-Exclusion Team; and the Looked After Children Education Team.

The New Service Structure

- 3.2. The new structure for the new Inclusion and Alternative Education Service is set out in **Appendix One** with key feature set out below:
- 3.3. **An amalgamated Key Stage 3 / 4 PRU** – the Key stage 3 and 4 PRUs are being amalgamated under a single Head Teacher, with teaching staff expected to work across both settings. The model will ensure more effective use of staffing resources, with professional expertise and leadership shared across the service. There will be 36 places at the KS 4 PRU and 20 places at the KS 3 PRU, with numbers based on demand for places over the past three years. A key role for the PRU will be to strengthen the vocational offer for pupils and develop dual placements and short-term (six to ten week) programmes for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion which schools can refer pupils to. There are now 27 permanent posts in the PRU, including leadership, teaching and support roles. A number of teaching and leadership posts within the PRU are currently out to advert, with the aim of having all posts filled on a permanent basis by April/May 2014.
- 3.4. **A Health Needs Education Service** – this service, which is still registered as a PRU, has replaced the Brent Education Tuition Service and now has a specific focus on pupils absent from schools for more than 15 days due to physical or mental health

problems. Unlike BETs, the new service will focus on short-term placements, with pupils remaining on their school roll. The service will provide up to 20 places and be developed in partnership with a special school, ensuring that both pupils and teachers have better access to specialist resources. Placements at the service will be made in line with a new Health Needs Education Policy that has been circulated to all Brent schools. The service will have 10 permanent posts, including leadership, teaching and support staff.

- 3.5. **A new multi-agency Inclusion Support Team** – this new team will focus on providing specialist support to pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties within the KS 3 / KS 4 pupil referral unit, the health needs education service, and in Brent schools and early years settings. The team will include 11 directly employed staff, including behaviour support teachers/workers, parent support advisors, inclusion support officers and a SEBD caseworker (who will be responsible for developing more specialist provision for pupils with SEBD, including those at primary phase). The role of the two pre-exclusion officers has been incorporated into a new Inclusion Support Officer role, with the number of posts increased to four. This will ensure that the post holders can continue to give parents and schools advice and support on the exclusion process and increase their capacity to provide pre-exclusion and reintegration support.
- 3.6. Clinical input into the team has been commissioned separately, with the Anna Freud Centre recently awarded a one-year contract beginning in April 2014. This will provide a range of specialist support - from qualified educational psychotherapists, clinical psychologists and play therapists. These resources will be directed at both one-to-one support for vulnerable pupils and targeted whole school support for Brent schools, helping to further develop the wider teaching workforce in evidence-based high impact strategies and interventions for managing behaviour.
- 3.7. The Inclusion Support Team is integral to the preventative approach and will ensure that vulnerable children get the specialist support they need and increase the likelihood that they will stay in (or be reintegrated back into) mainstream provision. Although referral and working arrangements for the new team are still in development, it is likely that its support will focus on:
- Pupils who hold a statement of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
 - Pupils who are Looked After Children and are presenting with social, emotional or mental health difficulties.
 - Pupils at very serious risk of permanent exclusion who require a pastoral support plan.
 - Pupils who are reintegrating to school from specialist provision or who have recently arrived in Brent and there are serious concerns about behaviour.
 - Pupils with mental health issues that are having an impact on the life of the school.
- 3.8. **The Looked After Children (LAC) Education team** – the team has been reshaped to put an increased focus on reporting LAC education issues to the Corporate Parenting Group, providing training and guidance to designated teachers and social workers, and ensuring more effective data management and quality assurance of the

education planning process for looked after children. The overall Head of the new service will be formally recognised as the Head of the Virtual School, helping to promote effective challenge and leadership on LAC education issues. The reshaped team will have 5 posts, including leadership, advisory teacher and information management roles.

- 3.9. **The Education Welfare Team** – this team (9 posts) is largely funded through the general fund, will remain relatively unchanged. However, a new Education Welfare Officer (EWO) Exclusions post will be created to ensure more effective links between attendance and exclusion work. The new post will act as the designated EWO for the PRUs and other non school based provisions, advise schools on policy and practice relating to exclusions, and liaise with families of excluded pupils. A separate review of the service will take place in 2014/15 to identify further potential for efficiencies and new ways of working.
- 3.10. A small number of staff (3) will provide specialist support to the new service, including commissioning and quality assuring alternative education provision, developing traded services, and delivering improvement projects, such as the development of the virtual learning environment. The new service will also be responsible for the management of projects set up for those children who are ‘educated other than at school’ (EOTAS) and funded by the ‘out of schools’ budget. This will help to streamline management arrangements and ensure that there are clear pathways between the full range of Council ‘other than at school’ provision.
- 3.11. As a result of the review, the specialist provision for excluded KS 1 and KS 2 pupils within the BETs service will be replaced with a commissioned placements model from September 2014 allowing support to be more closely tailored to a child’s (usually complex) needs. The Kingsbury Assessment Centre closed in January 2014, with assessment of permanently excluded pupils planned to take place within the pupil’s home and PRU settings.
- 3.12. Over the next six months, the service will be developing a service offer to schools that sets out referral pathways and the full range of support available from the Inclusion Support Team and at the PRUs from September 2014 onwards. Schools will be consulted on a draft service offer in April/May 2014, with a new exclusions policy also due to be circulated to all Brent schools in April 2014.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODEL

- 4.1. The proposed budget for the service in 2014/15 is currently estimated at £4.787 million - a reduction of £188k on the in-year budget, with the difference used to offset the historic deficit on the school’s budget. Planned reviews of non-staffing costs across the service in the last quarter of 2013/15 are likely to lead to further savings.
- 4.2. Within the overall budget, expenditure on the three pupil referral units will fall from £3.488 million in 2013/14 to £2.375 million in 2014/15 (estimated) – a reduction of a third. This is largely due to the refocusing of the BETs service to the new HNES

model, with staffing numbers in the service falling from 28 FTE to 10 FTE. This reduction means that overall expenditure on pupil referral units will have fallen by 45 per cent from 2012/13 to 2014/15, taking into account the earlier closure of Church Lane PRU.

- 4.3. Forty-one voluntary redundancies were agreed as part of the restructuring process, leading to one-off redundancy and severance costs of £866,468 and related capital costs of £61,760. One compulsory redundancy has also been approved, with total redundancy and severance costs of approximately £30,000. All redundancy related costs have been met from within the 2013/14 service budgets included in the scope of the review, meaning that there will not be any longer-term costs for the Council to meet through either the DSG or General Fund.
- 4.4. The new service model contains 68 posts, compared to 97 posts in the old structure – a reduction of 29 posts, with overall staffing costs falling by £695k. This has allowed more planned investment in commissioned services and school focussed support, with £500,000 planned for redirection to meet identified needs in 2014/15 as follows:

Table One – Inclusion and Alternative Education Commissioned Services

Commissioned Services	Description	£ 000's
Clinical input to the inclusion support team	The Anna Freud Centre has been commissioned to provide a range of skills and expertise to at risk pupils in schools settings, including clinical psychology, educational psychotherapy and play therapy, and support schools to develop evidence based behaviour work.	135k
FAIR access payments to schools	To provide schools with additional support to meet costs associated with Fair Access Placements. E.g. teaching assistant time or other specialist support (see Section 5 below)	35k
Development of virtual learning platform	To allow children to be taught at home and where necessary, be provided with full time education in line with statutory requirements.	30k
KS 1 / KS 2 placements	The new service model does not have an in-house provision for excluded KS 1/2 pupils but has retained resources to purchase specialist support best suited to the needs of an individual child - current market rates at approximately £30-40k per placement	200k
Schools commissioning budget	To support the development of joint school or cross phases initiatives to promote positive behaviour (see Section 5 below)	100k
	TOTAL	500k

- 4.5. In the short-term the new service model may be affected by the rising rates of permanent exclusions and the related costs of ensuring provision for this group. Place numbers within the KS 4/KS 3 PRU were based on an analysis of three-year trends in roll numbers. This found that number on roll at the KS 3 PRU had rarely risen above 20 pupils while the highest number on roll at the KS4 PRU was 36. However there has recently been an emerging upward trend in permanent exclusions of pupils resident in Brent:

Table Two: Number of Brent resident pupils permanently excluded from school, by year

Academic Year	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Number of Brent resident pupils permanently excluded from school	72	60	49	30	42	31*

* The 2013/14 figure includes PEx referrals up to the end of January 2014.

- 4.6. The new service model promotes a preventative approach and is expected to have a positive impact on the rate of permanent exclusions in the longer-term. However, in the short-term, rising rates of permanent exclusions will increase the need for commissioned alternative placements. While there is budget provision held to cover the costs of some commissioned places, pressures on the DSG will arise if numbers of permanent exclusions at KS 3 and KS 4 continue to rise. In the worst case scenario, this may impact on the resources available for non-PRU based services funded by DSG.

5. NEW FUNDING OPTIONS

- 5.1. A number of authorities have introduced funding initiatives which are broadly designed to support schools in managing pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, increase schools' control of the alternative education budget, and/or create a clear links between decisions to permanently exclude pupils and the impact on the budget. With resources now freed up as a result of the restructure, the Schools Forum is asked to consider the introduction of the following options in 2014/15.

Option One – Support for Fair Access placements

- 5.2. The Council is proposing to set aside £35k within the Inclusion and Alternative Education budget to support schools accepting a pupil previously permanently excluded from school. Payments will range from £500 to £1500, depending on the pupil's additional support needs. The financial payment may also be supplemented by on-going support from the Inclusion Support Team. The objective of the payment will be to ensure effective reintegration in to the school setting, with the support required being determined by the Head of the PRU and Fair Access Panel. The Council will shortly be consulting with schools on revised Fair Access Protocol that will place greater emphasis on school representation on the Fair Access Panel.

Option Two – Financial claw back for permanently excluded pupils

- 5.3. Under the current financial regulations, the Council can claw back the AWPU funding for permanently excluded pupils from maintained schools, but has to invite Academies to participate in such arrangements. Once an invitation has been issued, Academies are required to comply with the request, in the same way as maintained schools do¹. Clawing back a sum from schools can serve to create a clearer link between the cost of alternative provision and its use by schools by ensuring that those schools that are permanently excluding higher number of pupils bear more of the costs. It can also create an incentive for schools to consider other alternatives to permanent exclusion, such as managed moves or dual registration with the PRU, both of which may lead to better pupil outcomes in the longer-term.
- 5.4. With the numbers of excluded pupils beginning to rise, the Council will require all schools to pay a sum equivalent to the in-year AWPU back to the Council when a pupil is permanently excluded from **any** Brent school. The payment will be pro-rated and will be used to offset the costs of any additional commissioned alternative places. If numbers of permanently excluded pupils can be supported through in house provision, the additional funds claw backed could be added to the devolved budget of £100k for school-led behaviour initiatives outlined below, ensuring that the money is targeted towards school initiatives to support pupils with behaviour and emotional needs.

Option Three – Devolved Schools Commissioning Budget

- 5.5. The Council is proposing to set aside £100k from the Inclusion and Alternative Education budget in 2014/15 to support school-led projects focussed on supporting pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties in school settings. This could include joint school or cross phase projects to support transition at Year 7, teacher coaching programmes, or the roll out of evidence based school projects and

¹ Model funding agreement for Academies include a standard clause which states that:

The Academy Trust shall, if invited to do so by an LA, enter into an agreement in respect of the Academy with that LA, which has the effect that where:

- a) *the Academy Trust admits a pupil to the Academy who has been permanently excluded from a maintained school, the Academy itself or another Academy with whom the LA has a similar agreement; or*
- b) *the Academy Trust permanently excludes a pupil from the Academy*

payment will flow between the Academy Trust and the LA in the same direction and for the same amount that it would, were the Academy a maintained school, under Regulations made under section 47 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 relating to the addition or deduction of a maintained school's budget following a permanent exclusion or the admission of a permanently excluded pupil. At the date of this Agreement, the applicable Regulation is Regulation 23 of the School Finance (England) Regulations 2011.

programmes, such as nurture group networks, Circle of Friends or the Incredible Years programme. Proposals could be match-funded by schools to increase reach across the borough's schools.

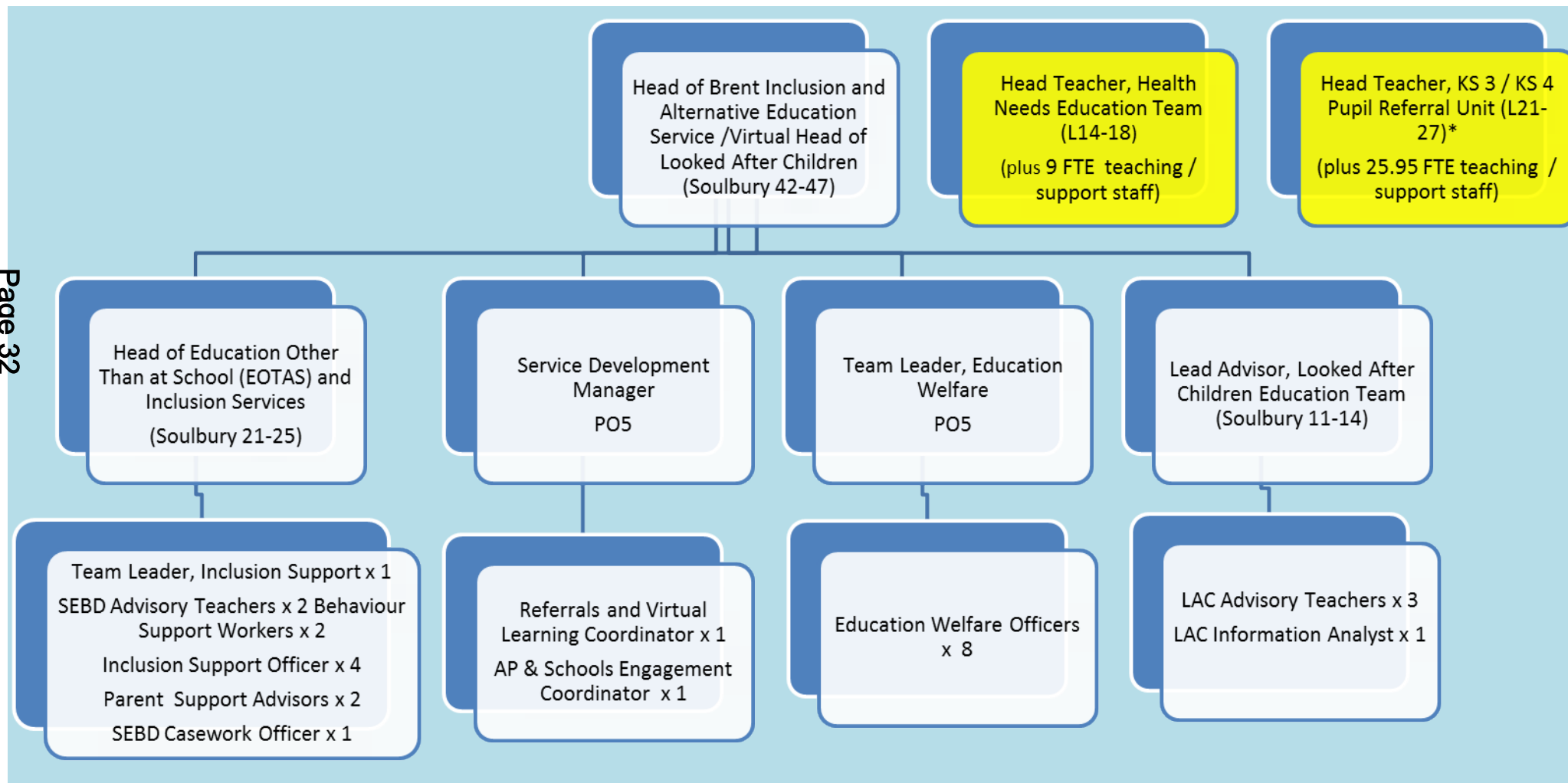
- 5.6. To ensure a strong school led focus, the development of arrangements for considering and agreeing proposals from schools could rest with a sub group of the Brent Schools Partnership, with the final allocation of resources signed off by the Partnership. Support in evaluating schools' proposals could be provided through the Inclusion Support Team/ Anna Freud Centre staff as requested. If this model is agreed by the Forum, the Interim Head of Inclusion and Alternative Education Service will develop some potential terms of reference for the sub group and bidding criteria to support the allocation and decision-making process.


CONTACT DETAILS

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APPENDIX ONE: BRENT INCLUSION AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SERVICE - JANUARY 2014

*The Head Teacher of KS 3-4 PRU and the Head Teacher of the Health Needs Education Service are accountable to the PRU Management Committee under new delegated arrangements for pupil referral units.



 Brent	<p style="text-align: center;">Schools Forum 26 February 2014</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Director of Children & Families</p>
For Information	
Review and Challenge of Central Budgets: The Early Intervention Team	

Consultation and Decision Making Points

The council has a duty to consult and seek views from the Schools Forum regarding the DSG funded element of the combined budgets covered in this report and this report represents part of the on-going process of consulting and agreeing DSG contributions with the Forum. The outcome of this review would be taken into account in setting the 2014/15 Schools Budget.

1 Summary and Report Structure

1.1 This report is one of a series of reports that allow the forum to review and challenge the spending on services provided by the council and funded through DSG. The report has been deferred on several occasions due to pressures on the Forum meeting agendas. Hence the report has been completely updated, and reviews the work of the School age Early Intervention Practitioners, as part of the working with families Brent wide initiative. This offers Schools in Brent additional support for the most vulnerable or under achieving Children, Young People and their families.

1.2 The report places the work of this team within the context of the fundamentally changed way Brent Council and its Partners identify and deliver services to the most vulnerable families in Brent. This will be of great benefit to schools, combining ease of access and a much wider range of support available to support children and their families. This shift toward the delivery of early help services is a key priority within the Plan for Children and Families in Brent 2012 – 15. Planning and implementation is now taking place through the Working with Families One Council project.

1.3 This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2: provides an introduction and background to the EIT service including the 2013/14 budget funded by DSG.
- Section 3 describes the EIT service, their activities, and outcomes achieved for children and families.
- Section 4 summarises the key objectives and components of the Working with Families Initiative.
- Section 5 considers the future shape of the Early Intervention Team and its relationship with the Working with Families initiative.

- Section 6 analyses the benefits to schools from the Working with Families initiative, including the role of the Early Intervention team.
- Section 7 details recommendations for the forum.
- Appendix A demonstrates the 4 levels of need and intervention in Brent; Appendix B provides the executive summaries from the independent audits undertaken by Cordis Bright in relation to the Ofsted inspection 2011, CAF service user feedback August 2012, and a review of CAF July 2013.
- Appendix C Brent Family Solutions Quarter 2 report

2 Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Early Intervention Team was initially established to respond to concerns raised by schools about individual vulnerable children and their families. Following budget reductions which became effective in April 2011, the complement of the team was reduced from 14 team members to 8 team members covering all schools across the 5 localities. The current team complement, funded through DSG, is:
- 6.5 Early Intervention Practitioners (EIP's)
 - A Team Leader
 - A Data and Panel Officer

- 2.2 The current 2013/14 EIT budget and sources of funding is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: EIT Funding and spending 2013/14

Funding £000		Spending £000	
DSG	400	Staff and related costs	400
		Non staff costs	
Troubled Families	870	Staff and related costs	870
General Fund	630	Staff and related costs	630
		Non staff costs	
Total	£1,900,000	Total	£1,900,000

The main roles of the Early Intervention Team were as follows:

- Undertaking a CAF for vulnerable children and their families on behalf of Schools (**it is now a requirement that School's complete the CAF**).
- Acting as Lead Professional in devising, organising and reviewing action plans for children and their families.
- Identifying services to meet family needs including commissioning of some services.

- Some direct service delivery, e.g. leading parenting courses; co-leading benefits workshops; direct support to children.
- Working with families transferred from children's social care who no longer need a statutory service but need some continued support; or who are diverted from social care as they do not meet the threshold for service.

2.3 **Changing Context:** In addition to the Working with Families initiative, the team has needed to take account of the following developments:

- The Plan for Children and Young People in Brent 2012-15: As one of its 3 key priorities, the plan states that Brent Children's Partnership is committed to delivering integrated services that focus on families and are designed to identify need early, and provide targeted support and protection.
- Although EIT staff resources were reduced from April 2011, the volume of cases has not diminished, requiring an average caseload per EIP of 16 cases, which range in complexity. In view of the reductions made to the commissioning budget, which had been used to purchase support services for children and their families, EIPs have also needed to increase their input into direct delivery of services. Some practitioners are currently involved in delivering services, including parenting programmes such as Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities; and benefits advice workshops within school settings, jointly with the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB). The work of the EIT has been affected by the high level of demand for children's social care services, and the redirecting of cases that do not meet the Social Care threshold to the EIT.
- In response to the findings of an Ofsted inspection in October 2011, an independent audit was undertaken by Cordis Bright, published February 2012. A CAF: Service User audit was then undertaken by Cordis Bright, published August 2012. A final audit was then undertaken by Cordis Bright to look at improvements to the CAF pathway, published July 2013. The executive summaries of the independent audits can be viewed at Appendix B

2.4 Since 2011, the service has already made large DSG savings (including staff reductions) and continuing all the funding streams set out in paragraph 2.2 is critical to supporting vulnerable children and schools, and the Working with Families initiative.

2.5 The Plan for Children and Young People in Brent 2012-15: as one of its 3 key priorities, the plan states that Brent Children's Partnership is committed to delivering integrated services that focus on families, and are designed to identify need early and provide targeted support and protection.

2.6 Brent Working with Families Initiative: This overarching project aims to refocus the work of the services across Brent to ensure outcomes are improved for vulnerable children and families, covering all levels of need. It incorporates Brent's response to the Government's Troubled Families initiative. The Early Intervention Team will need to ensure that it is well placed to respond to the needs of School-aged children, and their families within this overarching approach.

3. Early Intervention Team Activities (to December 2013)

- 3.1 Management information on the numbers, sources and outcomes of requests for support for children and families is provided in the service quarterly reports, Appendix C.
- 3.2 The service has been working to improve the quality of the work it undertakes, and to demonstrate Outcomes achieved, responding positively to the critique within the Ofsted inspection report, and the independent audits. Improvements include using the family-friendly Outcome Star tool to measure the progress a family is making; and obtaining independent feedback (CAF exit interviews) from families about the help they have received and the difference it has made, Appendix C.
- 3.3 The CAF format has been simplified, and is now more clearly set out as a Family CAF, addressing the needs of all members of the family. It also encourages clear objectives to be set with family members as part of a family plan, and progress to be measured as part of the CAF review. The Family CAF was launched in September 2012, and will be used across the partnership.
- 3.4 The LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) agreed in December 2012 that all referrals for families needing additional support will be made via a CAF, except in a situation requiring an urgent child protection response.
- 3.5 Families have access to a range of services which can be agreed by a multi-agency Panel. The purpose of the panel is to:
- support Lead Professionals and Key Workers to provide preventative early help to children and families;
 - commit resources on behalf of their agency where appropriate;
 - be able to contribute to CAF action plans, within the resources available to the group;
 - Champion the use of the CAF within their own agencies;
 - To raise awareness of services and agencies in the locality.

The Panel can agree a range of support services for families, and the types of services available, including the numbers of referrals made to each of the service providers is detailed in the service quarterly reports, Appendix C.

3.6 The EIT team are also working alongside a range of aligned service providers, in multi-agency integrated teams, and as such have access to DV practitioners, Clinical Psychologists, Drug and Alcohol (DAAT) workers, a Job Centre Plus Advisor, and an Intensive Connections PA.

3.7 Social Care and Early Intervention Interface: the work of the EIT has been affected by the high level of demand, and the re-directing of cases that do not meet the Social Care threshold, to the EIT. The number of 'step-downs' received from Social Care is detailed in the service quarterly reports, Appendix C.

- 3.8 The complex needs of the families, requiring a multi-agency response, coordinated by the EIP, can be exemplified through the use of case studies. Samples of these are detailed in the service quarterly reports, Appendix C, and more are available upon request.

4. The Working with Families Initiative

- 4.1 A description of the Working with Families initiative is provided at this point as it incorporates an umbrella service which includes the Early Intervention team, building on aspects of the service provision of the EIT. The Working with Families initiative is an ambitious project which aims to bring together a comprehensive and coordinated range of early help services across the borough to support children and their families, which can be easily accessed by schools and families alike. The vision of the Working with Families initiative is to fundamentally improve the way that Brent Council and its partners identify and deliver services to the borough's most vulnerable families. It will maximise a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency approach to family help and make the concept of a 'team around the family' a reality for those with greatest need.
- 4.2 It will incorporate Brent's response to the government's Troubled Families scheme, which targets work with families with entrenched difficulties, including unemployment, poor school attendance or exclusion, criminal or anti-social behaviour, and other locally-selected criteria. This is a 3-year programme targeting 810 families, working on a payment-by-results basis.
- 4.3 However, the Working with Families initiative will have a much broader approach than the focus on Troubled Families. The service design, which has been influenced by regular consultation with Brent services and partner agencies, has now been agreed by the multi-agency Strategic Board. It involves three components
- 4.4 **A Multi-Agency Brent Family Front Door (BFFD)**, incorporating a MASH (a multi-agency safeguarding hub): This multi-service team will act as a single point of contact for professionals and members of the public who have concerns about a child or young person and their family that require a co-ordinated response. It will simplify pathways into services. It will take a multi-agency/disciplinary view across the whole family to build a fuller picture of family circumstance and levels of need. This will result in better information and quicker decision making about the level of support required and improve the safeguarding of children in Brent.
- 4.5 The MASH is an agreed information-gathering process within a secure environment about all family members where there are concerns about a child's welfare, in order to better analyse and assess risk on a multi-professional basis. Relevant information can then be passed to the most appropriate service for necessary action. A MASH is being established in all London council areas.
- 4.6 **The Brent Family Solutions Support Service** provides a team of keyworkers with a range of different experience who will work with the whole family. Keyworkers will also coordinate input from other professionals known to the family, or with a specialist role as part of a multi-disciplinary 'team around the family' approach. Early Help workers will build relationships in an assertive and persistent key worker style, engaging the child/ren and all family members, and delivering evidence-based solutions to family needs.
- 4.7 Some of the families they engage with will be identified through the Troubled Families initiative. Additionally, they will reduce the workload pressures on social work services by offering alternative ways to support families. There is a targeted approach to

reducing the number of children and young people across all age groups in Brent coming in to the care system, where it is safe to do so.

4.8 **The Aligned Services** approach is the third component, which takes a whole systems approach to supporting the successful delivery of the Brent Family Solutions Service and the BFFD. It recognises that a range of specialist support will be needed to ensure that vulnerable families get the right help, at the right time, from a range of agencies. It strengthens the focus on prevention through re-commissioning or redesigning services; and improves coordination of activity through the co-location of specialist staff within the Brent Family Solutions Service, or more clearly defined hub and spoke arrangements. For example, specialist workers in domestic violence and in substance misuse are currently providing support to the team.

5. The Future Shape of the Early Intervention Team and its relationship with the Working with Families initiative

5.1 Brent Children's Partnership priority of early intervention for families in need of support, encouraged by government policy, provides an opportunity to maximise the benefits provided by the Early Intervention Team in meeting the needs of school-aged children and their families.

5.2 While the Working with Families initiative was under discussion in mid-2012, the Early Years and Integrated Service led the way in reshaping its services to provide targeted support for vulnerable families. A restructure of the service took place in summer 2012, which contributed to the development of the new Early Help and Family Support Service, which is now well established. The EIT will participate in the work of these teams, focusing on families with school-aged children. The EIT will be able to target its work more effectively, as it will no longer be the only team expected to respond to work that does not meet social care criteria.

5.3 While schools will also participate in the early intervention model, the EYIS restructure provide additional support for schools. The posts of a CAF Training Officer, a CAF coordinator, and a BFS Co-ordinator, are funded through the General Fund, and partners will work together to ensure appropriate and broad packages of support are provided to families who need them.

5.4 Current developments including the role of the EIT can be illustrated with reference to the Brent Continuum of Need and Intervention. The continuum of need has been revised and identifies four levels of need instead of the previous three. This will put Brent back in step with other London councils, and will also facilitate a targeted response to families with different levels of need. Discussion between the partners has shown that the partners welcome this development and this was ratified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in October 2012. It is included here to aid understanding and to show how Early Intervention workers will be deployed. The full structure is set out in Appendix A and the stages are summarised below:

- Level 1: Children and their families with universal needs: Universal services will identify families requiring additional support. Schools will be asked to identify families requiring additional support, completing CAFs as appropriate.
- Levels 2a and 2b: Children and their families with some additional needs:
 - A team of two EIPs will work closely with schools across Brent, supporting them to carry out an assessment role and completing CAFs as appropriate. A team leader will lead one of the five locality Early Help teams and also provide some direct work

- A locality based pool of five EIPs will offer the services of a lead professional and provide early intervention and support to children and families. They will work closely with Early Help workers and others to meet a continuum of need, linking closely with families and with universal settings. This will enable the team to be more effective in improving outcomes for families.
- Early Years Early Intervention workers will also work with families with young children to identify needs early and ensure appropriate support is provided. This will have the impact of assisting children to be ready for school when they start.
- Level 3: Children and families with complex and/or multiple needs:
 - Appropriate support will be delivered by the EIPs, delivering and coordinating services identified through a Family CAF.
 - They will work alongside Early Help workers, who will be providing support to families with the most complex needs, including families identified through the government's Troubled Families initiative. This initiative provides a flexible intensive support service to families who have complex support needs such as anti-social or criminal behaviour, school exclusion or poor attendance; mental health problems, substance misuse, domestic violence issues or family breakdown. Government statistics indicate the Brent currently has approximately 800 troubled families' resident in the borough.
- Level 4: Vulnerable children and families with acute or highly complex needs: Children will need statutory intervention, and will be families with children whose needs are highly complex, or who are at risk of significant harm or on the edge of care.

6. Benefits to schools of the Working with Families Initiative, incorporating the Early Intervention Team

6.1 The Council has been less successful than other authorities so far in bringing schools into a joined-up approach to meeting the needs of families with complex needs, while schools are often at the front line of understanding and dealing with families' problems and provide many services to address these problems. Now that the Working with Families project is further along and is in the delivery stage, a small consultative group with Head-teacher representation across the different phases has been established to review referral mechanisms, the potential for alignment of services delivered/commissioned by schools with the Early Help and Family Support Service, the potential for data sharing and other opportunities. This Sub-Group could also more specifically review the role that the EIT plays, and how this can best work in future.

6.2 The consultative group could also have the role of reviewing in detail the deployment of the DSG contribution over a prolonged period of a year and provide essential feedback and reports to the Schools Forum.

6.3 The Working with Families initiative will broaden the support available for families and this broader support will in turn benefit schools. Keyworkers will put together a package of support to respond to the individual needs of the family and to help them to build resilience.

6.4 Services will be easier to access. As agreed by Brent LSCB in December 2012, referrals to the BFFD will be made via a CAF, except in a situation requiring an urgent child protection response. When schools have concerns about a child or family, there will no longer be the need to consider whether social care thresholds have been reached, as the Multi-Agency Front Door will direct referrals to the

relevant social care or BFS teams, or signpost families to other services, according to the level of risk and need.

6.5 The new arrangements will also enable EIPs to better balance the need for direct interventions and the coordinating, lead professional role; alongside the requirement to conduct some assessments through the CAF, and support schools to also carry out assessments through the CAF.

6.6 There will be opportunities to develop services further and to further improve partnership working between the Early Help teams and schools. For example, BFS practitioners work in locality clusters, and could network with Parent Support Advisers and other school staff providing support to families, to assist both support packages for individual families, and to provide more general staff support and development.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Forum is asked:

- (i) For it's views regarding the usage of DSG funded budget covered in this report
- (ii) To approve the continued use of a group of Head-teachers to help shape the role of the EIT and provide the necessary detailed information to allow the Forum to make decisions regarding the DSG contribution.

Contact Officer

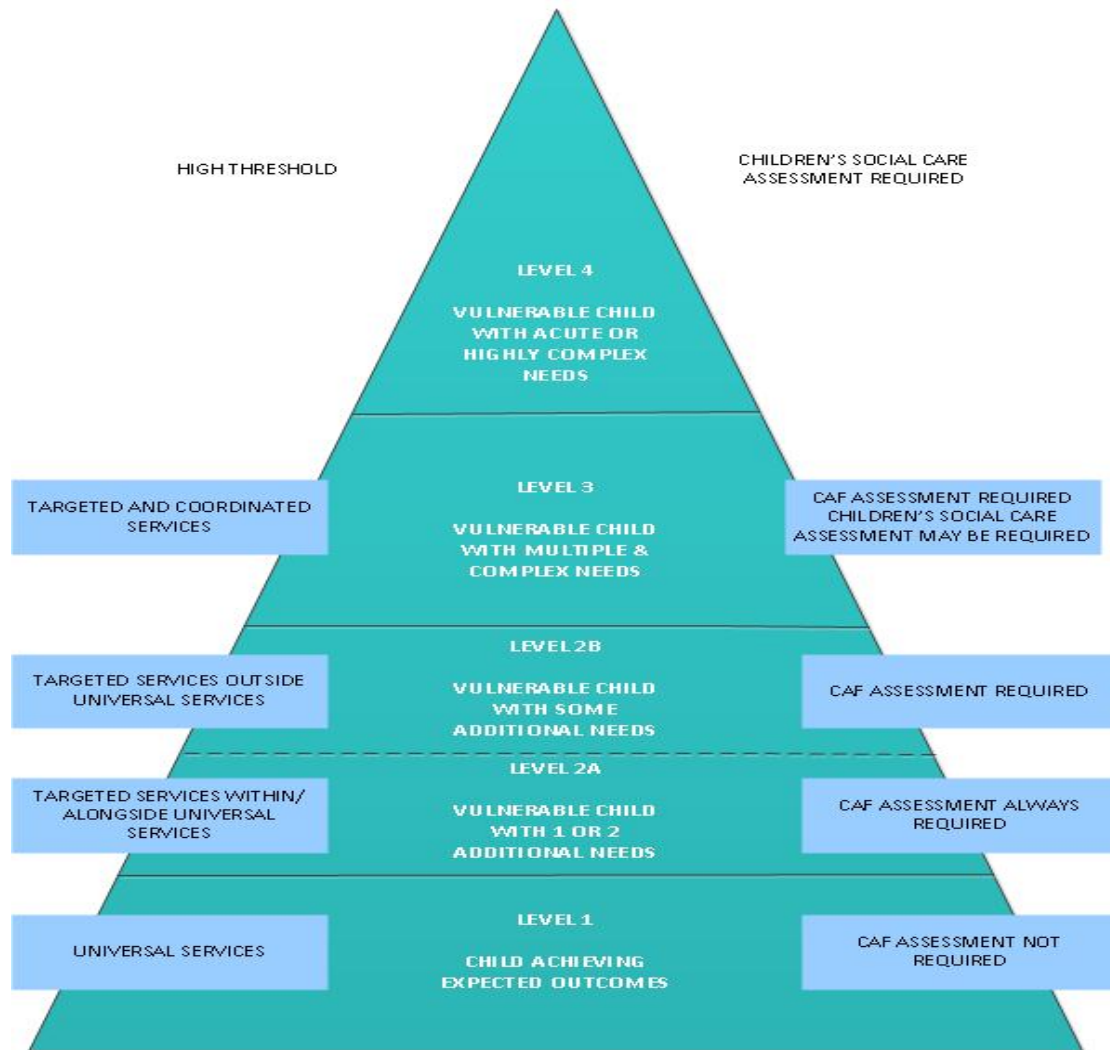
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Appendix A

BRENT CONTINUUM OF NEED AND INTERVENTION



Appendix B Cordis Bright executive summaries key recommendations

Review of the Brent CAF (published February 2012)

1.1 Key recommendations

1. It is welcome that there is an appetite for re-establishing CAF panels or similar multiagency oversight functions to address multiagency coordination needs for families that are most likely to benefit from early intervention and where a practitioner is not able to secure the multiagency participation necessary to meet the needs of a family. These should ideally be located in and support the localities model of working in Brent and include representatives from local statutory and voluntary sector agencies that are able to make resource decisions on the part of their agency. This is crucial in an environment of limited resources.
2. With the new CAF coordinator, undertake a renewed focus on encouraging awareness and understanding of the CAF process amongst multiagency practitioners and build the skills and confidence of multiagency practitioners to work as part of the CAF pathway. This should be undertaken as a matter of priority. This will support improving the number and quality of pre-CAFs and CAFs undertaken.
3. The CAF coordinator should identify and support CAF champions within all statutory and voluntary sector agencies that can act as a core group to promote awareness of the CAF and provide information, advice and guidance to staff within individual agencies.
4. EYIS needs to facilitate with partners the development and implementation of strategies that encourage much greater identification of the needs of families. This could include a pre-CAF that has a whole family focus and a pre-CAF process that encourages practitioners to proactively apply intelligence based approaches to understanding which families are more likely to be at risk of greater disadvantage. The *Think Family* pilot of vulnerable family indicators in Brent points to key risk indicators that could be applied. This would require amending the current pre-CAF checklist and developing practitioner skills in applying risk based approaches to identification and engagement.
5. The very good joint-work that EYIS and health services undertake particularly through children's centres needs to be built on so that health visitors, midwives and school nurses undertaking universal contacts identify families that might benefit from CAF. The family health assessment could be enhanced with additional questions from the CAF so as to mitigate this barrier to health practitioner participation.
6. The revised Framework for Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children has requirements for performance reports about CAF activity over the last 12 months, details of children and young people in respect of whom a common assessment (e.g. CAF) has been completed, or who are otherwise the subject of a multi-agency targeted intervention and copies of any quality

assurance activity, multi-agency and single agency case audits over the last six months and action plans in relation to early help, identification and protection of children.

In order to ensure EYIS is consistent with this requirement, it is essential that practitioners use the same CAF tools (e.g. pre-CAF checklist, CAF assessment etc) and the details are recorded centrally. This can be supported through refresher training for multiagency practitioners.

The challenge about multiagency practitioners not all having access to Framework 1 is being addressed presently through planned work to enable access to online assessment forms and processes. This is an important priority and will address this barrier to centralised recording and reporting of CAF data.

1.2 Assessments and action planning- key recommendations

7. The new CAF coordinator provides an opportunity for EYIS to build the skills and confidence of multiagency practitioners to work as part of the CAF pathway. Another key workforce development component should include improving the quality of assessment and action planning processes amongst practitioners and for managers as they support their staff.
8. EYIS may find value in specifically auditing open CAF cases to determine the quality of assessment and action planning processes. This can support improvements to quality in the current engagement with families and aligns with the revised Framework for Inspection requirements.
9. The CAF coordinator also has a very useful quality assurance role in supporting quality CAF assessments and action plans. The CAF coordinator potentially with a small working group could provide this function. This includes reviewing plans and assessments prior to determining whether they require Panel discussion and to offer advice and consultation to practitioners, for example.
10. CAF assessments would benefit from more prioritisation of issues in a more comprehensive way. EYIS could consider implementing 'assessment card' approaches used in other local authorities that assist practitioners working with families to determine the level of family strength or risk in different domains. This could be supported through workforce development initiatives.
11. The establishment of CAF champions offers an opportunity to develop a core workforce group within local agencies that can support quality assessment and action planning processes. These champions could be tasked with a guidance and advice role about the effectiveness of the assessment and action plan in identifying and addressing whole family needs within their agencies. The CAF coordinator can support the effectiveness of this function.

1.3 Integrated working - key recommendations

12. To ensure that EYIS can support good quality reporting in relation to Inspection requirements, there is benefit to developing performance reports about which interventions are used the most with children, which interventions are associated with positive outcomes for children and families and/or particular cohorts of families and which cohorts of families are more or less likely to require longer term support. This will provide an evidence based approach to service planning and demonstrate which families and which interventions are current CAF processes supporting most effectively and where improvements are most needed.

This is likely to involve EYIS working with Policy and Performance Children and Families to configure appropriate reporting.

13. As identified, the new CAF coordinator provides an opportunity for EYIS to build the skills and confidence of multiagency practitioners to work as part of the CAF pathway.

Another key workforce development component should include improving the quality of engagement and action plan review processes with families. This includes addressing the strongly activity focused approach to addressing specific needs with a more demonstrable focus on having engaged the family in a discussion and review about progress on outcomes.

14. The planned implementation of the Outcomes Star to support outcomes focused engagement with families will benefit from being extended to as many multiagency practitioners and managers as practicable. To maximise the success of the implementation, designated leads within agencies should be identified to support the embedding and prioritisation of Outcomes Star as a mechanism for tracking progress on outcomes within their agency. The report also sets out other potential strategies (p.55) that can be adopted to support embedding.

15. Concerns about the extent of integrated working amongst service providers require address. Team Around the Child meetings need not always occur physically, but it is important to ensure that multidisciplinary practitioners understand each other's contribution to service packages, their perspectives about how a child and/or family are progressing and that multidisciplinary contributions are effectively coordinated.

The reestablishment of CAF panels will provide a useful brokerage role in addressing the needs of families that cannot be met through the work of a lead professional working with local agencies. In turn, this encourages more integrated working.

16. The CAF coordinator has a key role in promoting more integrated working approaches as part of CAF. Introducing review and case audit mechanisms to determine the quality and impact of ongoing engagement with families, as

well as the extent to which there is effective partnership working.

17. It is essential to locate the CAF process within a pathway that includes step up and step down processes with more specialist services. Planned work to do so, supported by the CAF coordinator, should be a key priority in ensuring better outcomes for more vulnerable families and demonstrating that the CAF process contributes to delivering these outcomes.

1.4 Impacts for families- key recommendations

1. It is a priority to address the evidencing of impact. This is at the level of individual families and in aggregated performance reports.
2. Efforts to implement and embed the Outcomes Star are to be encouraged. In addition to the training and practice review support being planned, EYIS should develop a strategy for embedding the Outcomes Star as a means of evidencing impact for all families where there are CAF action plans in place. The report sets out a range of potential strategies that could be adopted.
3. EYIS would benefit from establishing key performance priorities in relation to CAF and ensuring that review work with families identifies outcomes in relation to these measures. This could be integrated into Outcomes Star domains. These measures can demonstrate the CAF contribution to key Brent strategic priorities and measures related to broader payment by result initiatives. Agreeing with key partners- potentially through a strategic CAF Board- key performance measures is a key priority.
4. Demonstrating the sustainability of positive change with families is essential to sustaining investment in early intervention services.

A semi-structured telephone interview conducted with families at regular intervals post-engagement (say 3 months, 6 months and 12 months) is a potentially simple and cost effective mechanism for evaluating the sustainability of change with individual families. Supported with a good interview template that encourages data collection about key outcome areas and priorities, there is also scope to produce simple aggregated performance reports about sustainable change.

CAF Service User Feedback Report (published August 2012)

Executive summary

"I'm ill... [my son] was having issues in getting to school. If I'd had a bad night he wouldn't go to school the next day - he'd say he was ill. [The lead practitioner] spoke to [my son] at school and she also asked me why it was happening. I explained about the illness, and [the lead practitioner] thought it might be worry about me which led him to stay at home. She went to his school and spoke to him. She helped him go to school by talking to him and that improved his attendance." (Brent mum, July 2012)

In February 2012 the Early Years and Integrated Services (EYIS), Children and Families, Brent Council commissioned Cordis Bright to review and recommend improvements to Brent's Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes. In line with requirements in the Ofsted inspection framework for safeguarding and looked after children, the review identified the systematic evidencing of impact for families as a priority for Brent. Since then, EYIS has committed to examining the impacts and experiences of families accessing CAF related supported on an ongoing basis- with expectations of this occurring at least once every quarter. EYIS has also implemented the use of the Outcomes Star in evidencing the progress that families make in their direct work with practitioners.

This research conducted across July- August 2012 involves structured telephone interviews by Cordis Bright with sixteen families that have been supported through CAF. Overall the families' experiences of the CAF process are extremely positive, with the majority of families stating that it has made a significant impact in addressing their needs. The interviews highlight very supportive and trusting relationships for families developed with their lead practitioner. All families emphasised the consistent, effective support and advice provided by their lead practitioner which enabled a valuable relationship characterised by a high degree of trust and confidence.

- *"If I have any problem I go to [the lead practitioner] and she helps me too much."*
- *"It's nice to know that I've got some support."*
- *"She has helped reduce stress. She is like 'honey'."*

Interviews point to key areas of success in:

- Positively impacting parental well-being, as well as enabling access to support for positive health and wellbeing, adult learning and achievement, economic well being and positive parenting and participation in community activities
- Positively impacting children's health and wellbeing, learning and achievement and participation in community activities.
- All families felt that lead practitioners understood their families' needs
- Addressing a wide variety of needs across families and a capacity to offer a flexible, tailored service that is responsive to individual family needs.
-

The interviews highlight information, signposting and referral to services as key elements of service provision. Overall families find these aspects of support very beneficial in tackling specific needs, such as parenting advice, addressing their child's weight problems and access to education, counselling and leisure related services. For issues such as housing and access to mental health service services, these remain areas that take longer to address.

In terms of identification, the research reflects findings from Cordis Bright's February research, with the majority of families identified as benefiting from CAF support through schools, followed by nurseries and children's centres. Three of the sixteen families were identified and referred to staff in children's centres or the EYIS early intervention team through health services, and there was no identification of families through community or voluntary organisations.

Review of the CAF (published July 2013)

The Early Years and Family Support Service (EYFSS), Children and Families, Brent Council has commissioned Cordis Bright to undertake a follow-up evaluation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes¹. The focus of the evaluation relates to:

- The changes to the CAF documentation and its impact on assessment, service planning and review work with families
- The extent to which the Family Star demonstrates positive impacts for families from engaging with the CAF pathway
- Multiagency manager and practitioner experience of changes in the CAF pathway, particularly in relation to the impact on their confidence and skills in engaging effectively with the CAF pathway
- The family experience of the CAF pathway

1.5 Context

In 2012, Cordis Bright undertook a detailed review of the CAF processes within Brent. There is a specific focus on identifying areas to build quality in CAF assessment and planning processes with families; ensuring families' needs are identified and addressed appropriately at the earliest point; greater integration of services for families; and evidencing impact for families from engaging with CAF.

Since the 2012 review, a number of key actions have occurred and include:

- The introduction of team around the family (TAF) arrangements to ensure families have access to multidisciplinary support that addresses family needs in a coordinated way. This includes multiagency panels to support key workers in helping move families forward where they are stuck, where there are gaps in service provision etc.
- Revisions to the CAF documentation (in particular the CAF assessment form and associated action plan) to become substantially more family focussed
- Implementation of the Family Star as a tool for demonstrating the progress that families make through engagement with the CAF pathway
- Improved quality assurance arrangements
- Delivery of training and development opportunities for multiagency practitioners and managers

1.6 Managers and practitioners perspectives about how the CAF pathway has changed- key findings

1. All those who contributed their views reported that there have been key improvements in the process.
 - Changes to the CAF documentation is (in particular the CAF assessment) rated a significant positive development and key in making the CAF process more accessible.
 - The role of the CAF Co-ordinator and Early Help (Family Solutions) team are rated positively as a central point of co-ordination, a source of prompt advice and guidance and key in supporting good quality.
 - An enhanced family focus through the revised CAF process, with the revised CAF assessment documentation and introduction of Family Star. There is however

¹ Initial evaluation took place in March 2012.

concern about the duplication and potential for confusion in the use of two scoring systems (CAF domains and Family Star).

- Partnership working has improved, although schools identified value in having closer relationships with early help staff.
 - CAF panels are seen as being key in brokering solutions to CAF work that is stuck in moving families forward; ensuring early intervention with families at greater risk of escalating problems; and encouraging partnership working. However, these require more consistent attendance by senior staff within partner organisations.
2. Training and guidance has been significant in improving the skills and confidence of practitioners of both the CAF and TAF. There were, however, a number of barriers identified with the logistics and timing of the delivery of training as it can be restrictive for some staff groups (notably education/ school staff).
 3. There are some signs that health staff are becoming more involved in the CAF process, but there continues to be no evidence of the voluntary/ community sector initiating CAFs. There is also very limited take-up by staff outside of the EYFSS in acting as lead professional in CAF work with families.

1.7 Assessment and action planning – key findings

4. Overall, the quality of assessments and action plans has improved (in comparison to the 2012 review) with more evidence of family engagement (although predominantly the mothers' views) and more analysis of the needs of families in relation to key domains.
5. Assessments take a more strengths based approach and there are good examples of assessments incorporating both observations of family functioning as well as discussions with families.
6. Whilst the CAF assessment documentation has been revised to become more family focussed and reflect all individuals (children/ young people and parents) within the family (something that is seen as positive by practitioners) there is a need to:
 - Consider how analysis/ an understanding of the family as a unit is captured
 - Ensure the views of children/ young people are routinely taken into account within assessments and whilst in some cases this is not appropriate due to the child's age, where this is the case this should be noted
 - Set out what would happen if changes identified are not put in place
 - Ensure next steps are set out as a result of assessment (although action plans are completed in the main).
7. Quality, however, is not consistent and there remain omissions within assessments, action plans and action plan reviews of both basic information and key elements of action plans. Feedback from multidisciplinary practitioners, however, is that documentation is now easier to use, more simplistic and quicker to complete.
8. There is evidence contained within all assessments of the practitioners' and parents' scoring against domains. However, the scores can vary from the two perspectives yet the assessment does not capture details of any discussions as to why scores may vary. On average, parents score themselves higher.

9. There is evidence of a SMART approach in action planning (facilitated by the layout within the assessment documentation) with some good examples of outcome focussed action planning.
10. ECAF action plan reviews are very sparse in their detail with large omissions of information and in particular do not relate back to the CAF assessment making it difficult to ascertain progress and distance travelled.
11. It is welcome that quality auditing has been introduced by the EYFSS to support quality assessments, action plans and review work with families, although this is not yet consistently applied or been extended to multiagency partners.

1.8 Measuring distance travelled through application of the Family Star- key findings

12. The Family Star provides a basis for measuring the distance travelled by families through engagement with the CAF pathway. There is strong evidence of a joint approach being employed in the completion of Family Stars with discussions about scores (and the rationale/evidence) taking place between parent/s and practitioners.
 - Where there are differences in practitioner and parent/s scores a discussion occurs- although in all cases where there is evidence of the scoring being discussed, it is the practitioners' score that is captured. It is not clear why this is the case.
 - The voice of the parents is clear (it is not solely the practitioner's judgement) but in some domains, there is scope to explore both the child's and the parent/s strengths and needs e.g. supporting learning and meeting emotional needs.
13. There is evidence of a strengths based approach being employed with a lot of positive encouragement and praise captured and SMART solutions being identified within action plans. There is, however, a leaning toward actions being referrals to services rather than affecting changes in behaviour, skills and experiences of the families.
14. Where reviews of Family Stars have taken place, there is evidence of action plans being put into place and improvements being made as a response (both in terms of the scoring but also the experiences captured and reflected within the star notes).
15. What is not clear, however, is how well embedded the Family Star is in practice as a tool for demonstrating progress with families. There are far fewer Family Stars completed than there are CAFs and there is limited use of the Family Star as a tool for reviewing progress.
16. Given the mismatch between the number of CAFs initiated and the number of Family Stars completed it is not clear that the role of designated leads/ mentors is embedded in partner agencies. It is also not the case that agencies outside of the Early Years and Family Support Service are applying the Family Star in their work alongside families as part of the CAF pathway.

1.9 Family experience – key findings

17. Families involved in the CAF pathway are largely positive:
 - Almost all families being clear about the main purpose of CAF and associated processes.

- Most families (90%) report that the CAF pathway has benefited them with the benefits varied according to the circumstances in which families have become involved in the CAF pathway and ranging from accessing services to improvements in behaviour.
 - Families report that their CAF included the needs of the whole family and that the actions expected of them were made clear.
 - Families' value having a supportive and strong relationship with their key worker/ lead practitioner.
18. Just over half of families were provided with a copy of their assessment and about half are confident that the assessment took account of the needs of the whole family.
19. Education, followed by health, appears to be the primary source for identifying families who would benefit from CAF.
20. Almost no families felt they could suggest improvements to the CAF process and experience. One suggestion for improvement that was that more reviews occur to monitor progress.

1.10 Key recommendations

1. Increasing family engagement with the CAF pathway so as to avoid problem escalation for families with greater levels of need requires multiagency senior commitment to the CAF to translate into:
 - Consistent and regular attendances at CAF panel meetings
 - Multiagency practitioners acting as the lead professional
 - CAF champions within agencies acting as sources of advice and guidance for practitioners about effective identification and outcomes based engagement of families that will benefit from early help
 - Implementation of CAF quality assurance processes within their own agencies.
2. To assist multiagency partners improve their engagement with the CAF pathway ensuring that:
 - When the IT interface enables multiagency practitioners to input directly into Framework I, that practitioners have access to training and support to assist them.
 - Comprehensive information and advice about the support available for children, young people and families in Brent is easily accessible and kept up to date. This may be a role for the Children and Families Information Service.
 - Training programmes about the CAF and the TAF are flexibly delivered to cater for staff that cannot attend during regular work hours and incorporate information about the roles and responsibilities of the Family Solutions work.
 - Family Star guidance, advice and support is made available to multiagency practitioners.
3. Identify appropriate training for staff to equip them with the skills for engaging children and young people in the CAF assessment, planning and review process.
4. Review the format of the ECAF action plan as there is currently no record of scoring against domains and so difficult to ascertain distance travelled (as no review of CAF assessment).

5. Identify the most appropriate scoring system to be used in the CAF process (given the potential for duplication and confusion in using the CAF scoring system and the Family Star scoring (for both practitioners and families)). While the scoring systems are aligned, at present only the Family Star is capable of being applied at review points so it makes most sense to use this.
6. In relation to the Family Star:
 - Parent and practitioners scores to be captured on the same Family Star in order to clearly see the differences and ensure the process is an equally engaging experience
 - Integrate Family Star into all key worker engagement with families as part of agreeing a CAF action plan and undertaking follow up reviews.
 - Encourage managers to review Family Star evidence as part of supervision with practitioners
 - Use the online tool for recording Family Stars to permit regular Outcomes Star performance reporting.
7. Quality assurance arrangements to be strengthened to ensure a specific focus is placed on monitoring that families are provided with a copy of their assessment.
8. Informal telephone interviews at regular intervals need to be encouraged in between formal plan reviews so that families have opportunities to share views on an on-going basis.

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**EARLY YEARS &
FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE
QUARTERLY REPORTS**

Brent Family Solutions

July – Sept 2013

(Quarter 2)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the second quarterly report of the newly formed Brent Family Solutions team, combining practitioners from the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) team, and the previously named Early Help team. This reflects the close relationship between the two teams; as Family Solutions practitioners use the CAF to assess the strengths and needs of families, agree outcomes for the families, plan interventions, and track and monitor progress.

This report provides an overview of the progress of the work across both teams and demonstrates a multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for all of Brent's children, young people, and families. A summary of what has gone well this past quarter, and key areas for improvement are detailed below.

What's gone well:

1. The service is now fully staffed, and systems and processes are being embedded across the teams.
2. The Outcome Star on-line licence has been activated, allowing management oversight over how the Star is being used to measure Outcomes for families.
3. Positive outcomes are being achieved for many families as evidenced by the sample case studies.

What needs to be improved:

1. The consistent use of Outcome Star to measure outcomes for families.
2. The quality of the CAF's need to be improved particularly relating to assessment and action planning.
3. Practitioners need to embed the "short, fat" (brief and intense) support approach to their interventions.

FAMILY SOLUTIONS

The Family Solutions team works with children from 0-18 (up to 19 for young people with disabilities) with years. The teams are based within children's centres, and other community buildings across the 5 localities. The team has been formed by bringing together the Early Intervention Practitioners (for school aged children and under 5's), and by recruiting Key Workers to work with children and young people across the age ranges,

with Troubled and Complex families. A Team Leader manages each team, whilst also managing a case load, and a copy of the service structure, with Staff contact details, is included in Appendix 1.

The practitioners receive all referrals through “Framework-i”, a Social Care database. Referrals can be made in a number of ways including “step downs” from Social Care, or from other sources including Health, or Education. Referrals are triaged by either the CAF or Family Solutions Co-ordinators, before being tasked to a practitioner. Practitioners then assess the families’ needs by undertaking a CAF assessment, plan interventions according to agreed outcomes for the families, and then tracking progress against an agreed SMART action plan which is detailed in the CAF. Progress towards agreed outcomes for families is measured using the Family Outcome Star, further details of the Star are included in the report.

Multi-agency “Team Around the Family” (TAF) meetings are being used following a CAF assessment and when appropriate to plan interventions (SMART action plan), to decide the role of each agency, and agree a “lead professional”. TAF meetings are in general convened when many agencies are required to support a family and to ensure services are co-ordinated and delivered in an effective multi-agency way. A TAF is then reconvened to review the progress against the SMART action plan, and decide on additional interventions if necessary. Family Solution practitioners attend Social Care Child in Need review meetings prior to a case being stepped down, to introduce the new worker to the family, and ensure a seamless handover.

Page 57 Early Intervention Practitioners work with families at level 2 and level 3 (Brent Levels of Need) and hold case loads of 15-20. Key Workers work with level 3 families, and highly complex families (including Troubled Families), with a case load of approximately 12. This varies according to the complexity of each family and their needs.

The Team also includes a full-time Early Support worker that supports families that have a child (0-5 years old) with a disability. The Early Support worker acts as a Key Worker for the family, coordinating the multi-agency professionals that provide services to the families.

To support the work of the practitioners, Family Solutions Panels have been established in Brent North (Kingsbury and Wembley localities) and Brent South (Harlesden, Willesden and Kilburn localities). The panels are made up of representatives from a range of partner agencies including Health, Education, Social Care, and the Community and Voluntary sector, which bring a range of expertise and resources. Practitioners present cases at panel to enable a multi-agency discussion to take place, and for panel to agree a support package for the family, i.e. offer guidance and advice on the case, agree a Lead Professional if necessary, discuss possible next steps with the Practitioner, and/or allocate a resource such as mentoring support. Each panel meets monthly, and Terms of Reference for the panel have been agreed by the multi-agency partners, and are detailed in Appendix 2.

CASE STUDIES

The case studies detailed in Appendix 3 are examples of how the Family Solutions Team, have supported some of Brent's families to achieve positive outcomes this past Quarter. Case studies have been included for each of the localities, and additional case studies from the Service are available upon request.

FAMILY SOLUTIONS CASE ALLOCATIONS

As of 30 September the total number of case allocations was 702. This is a slight reduction on Q1. There appears to be a significant increase in the numbers of families worked with by Family Support Assistants. Key Workers average case load increased by 3, which was as a result of more Troubled Families who had not previously been worked with being allocated to them.

The breakdown by practitioner is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Case allocations by role

	Family Support Assistant (Children's Centre)	Family Support Worker (Children's Centre)	Early Intervention (pre-school)	Early Intervention (school aged)	Key Workers (all age inc. Troubled Families)	Early Support	Others *	Total
Q1 total	43	115	125	150	248	31	9	721
Average per team member	7	16	25	23	15	n/a	n/a	
Q2 total	65	104	113	114	260	38	8	702
Average per team member	11.8	15	22.6	22.8	18	12.6	n/a	

Table 1 indicates that families are accessing services very early through the children's centres and receiving support when they require it. This should prevent escalation of concerns that become more complex and entrenched for families. The teams are also working with substantial numbers of

school aged children. At this point 200 of the above case allocations include direct work with Troubled Families. The other allocations include step downs from Social Care, and referrals from the Brent Family Front Door and self-referrals.

Table 2 Case allocations by locality

	Harlesden	Kilburn	Kingsbury	Wembley	Willesden	Central team (1.5 Early Intervention Practitioners)	Total
Q1	92	76	98	122	98	36	522
Q2	102	90	102	86	107	40	527

It is recognised by Senior Management that case loads at all levels are far too high. The impact is that more intensive work cannot take place, with outcomes and case closures slower than expected. We have introduced the following strategies to manage this:-

- 1) Practitioners have been urged by management to close cases when work is complete or the family do not engage (when safe to do so).
- 2) Adopt “short, fat” (brief and intensive) interventions for all families at all levels of need.
- 3) Refuse cases which do not meet the teams threshold, ie. Where the intervention is purely education focussed or a single agency response is required.
- 4) At the end of August the team reached capacity and is no longer taking referrals.
- 5) Recruit additional team members to focus on working with Troubled Families.

As can be seen from the figures above Wembley team has been proactive in closing cases which has alleviated some pressure from the team. This will enable more intensive work with Troubled Families cohort 1 in order to close these and focus on cohort 2. The Kilburn team had manageable case loads and has been supporting other teams by taking on their cases. They have continued to receive referrals both from the Family Front Door and also step downs at Senior Management discretion. Both Harlesden and Willesden teams received many step down and Family Front Door referrals during July and August, which lead to the teams reaching capacity. This informed the decision to halt all referrals to the team. The

Kingsbury team remained steady but at capacity. It is anticipated that by implementing the above strategy that we will accept referrals in Early November, when case loads should be at a more manageable level.

STEP-DOWNS FROM SOCIAL CARE

With reference to table 3, for the period July to September 55% (31) Step-downs were processed with a main outcome being a CAF assessment. Over the three month period there has been a steady flow of step downs to the Family Solutions team. There has been a significant increase in the number of step-downs not meeting Early Help criteria, accounting for 30% (17) over Q2. Generally CAF's are completed when the step down follows on from a police report (form 78), which has not met the Social Care threshold, and thus no assessment is in place. CAF / TAF reviews are required following cases that have been worked with by Social Care, following either an initial or a core assessment.

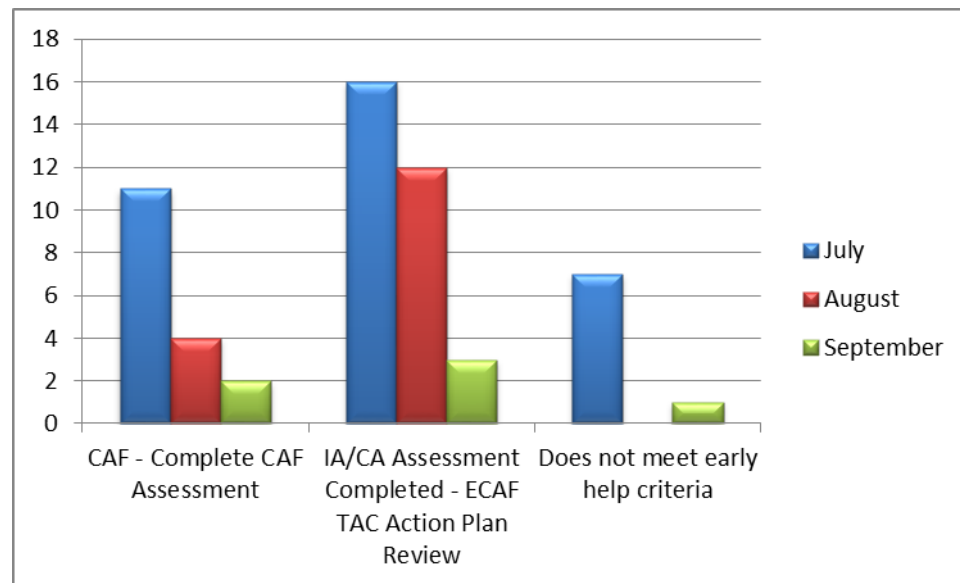
Table 3 Steps down from Social Care

Outcomes	July		August		September		TOTAL for Q2	
	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS
CAF standard form	11	32%	4	25%	2	33%	17	30%
ECAF TAC Review	16	47%	12	75%	3	50%	31	55%
Does not meet EH criteria	7	21%	0	0%	1	17%	8	14%
	34		16		6		56	

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In addition to step-downs from Social Care.

Figure 1: Outcomes from Step-Downs



WORKING WITH FAMILIES

Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) progress report Quarter 2

The statement below was submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government to indicate the borough’s progress. We were able to evidence that all families identified in cohort 1 have had engagement with services in Brent, to start to turn their lives around. The figure of 503 indicates the number of families that we believe we have evidence of contact with and have started to work with; this could mean family is working with social care, Family Solutions, Youth Offending, the Education Welfare service. A claim will be submitted for this quarter stating how many families we believe have made progress to enable the Council to make a financial claim under the national “Troubled Families Payment by Results” initiative. We expect to submit a claim for 85 families with a further 85 in October.

Table 4 Troubled Families Breakdown

As of 30th September 2013, how many families	
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had you identified (since the start of the programme) who met the criteria for the Troubled Families Programme as set out in the Financial Framework?	503
As of 30th September 2013, how many of those identified troubled families had you started to work with?	360
How many results for families turned around, do you estimate you will be claiming at the next opportunity in January 2014	30
How many progress to work outcomes, do you estimate you will be claiming at the next opportunity – in January 2014	103

TROUBLED FAMILIES SCRECARD SEPTEMBER 2013

<i>Troubled Families Scorecard</i>						Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13
Numbers of families identified for cohort 1						303	303	303	303	303	303
Numbers of families identified for cohort 2						405	405	405	405	405	405
Numbers of families identified for cohort 3						105	105	105	105	105	105
Target number of families to be engaged between Apr 2012-Apr2013						101	101	303	303	303	303
Target number of families to be engaged between Apr 2013-Apr 2014						TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	30	400
Target number of families to be engaged between Apr 2014-Apr 2015						TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
Number of families contacted (<i>Cohort 1 and 2</i>)						101	167	303	303	333	336
Number of cases allocated (overall)						101	118	303	303	303	336
Estimated number of families where successful engagement has been achieved (a CAF/contract is in place)						75	75	72	75	75	75
Number of Families with Claim Submitted (<i>Overall</i>)						N/A	N/A	N/A	72	N/A	93
Number of Families Claimed (<i>Employment</i>)						N/A	N/A	N/A	26	N/A	55
Number of Families Claimed (<i>Progress Towards Work</i>)						N/A	N/A	N/A	39	N/A	15
Number of Families Claimed (<i>Crime and Education</i>)						N/A	N/A	N/A	7	N/A	23
Estimated number of Families to be claimed for in January 2014						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	115	200
<i>Breakdown of allocation via service (Social Care Frameworki):</i>						Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13
0-13 Children with Disabilities Team						1	1	5	4	7	4
Crisis Intervention and Support Team (FAST/FAIR)						5	5	4	3	1	2
Early Years and Family Support (eCAF)						44	73	132	169	192	200
Locality - Harlesden						7	10	40	9	5	6
Locality - Kilburn						3	4	5	4	2	7
Locality - Kingsbury						6	9	11	14	19	19
Locality - Wembley						4	5	6	5	4	5
Locality - Willesden						5	5	5	6	5	17
SPR - ASC Transition						3	3	3	2	3	14
Care Planning Team A						3	2	6	6	9	7

Care Planning Team B	4	2	3	3	3	8
Young People in Care Team C	8	7	10	10	14	14
Young People in Care Team D	8	10	11	13	11	15
To be allocated	202	167	62	55	58	0
<i>Breakdown of Service Engagement</i>	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13
Addaction	3	3	3	3	3	3
Adult Social Care	2	2	2	2	3	4
Brent Housing Partnerships	36	36	36	36	36	36
Connexions	31	31	31	31	31	31
Early Years and Family Support (eCAF)	44	66	121	168	168	187
Housing Needs Service	39	39	39	39	39	39
Social Care (LAC)	58	58	60	60	60	60
Social Care (Other - CIN)	40	40	40	40	40	40
Youth Offending	85	38	62	57	82	84
Crisis Intervention and Support Team (FAST/FAIR)	3	5	5	5	1	2
Education Welfare	14	14	71	65	65	65
Pre-Exclusions team	85	85	85	85	85	85
<i>Breakdown of Service Engagement</i>	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13
Families engaging with one service					161	164
Families engaging with two services					61	54
Families engaging with three services					16	23
Family engaging with four services					0	11

The Scorecard Analysis (Table 5) demonstrates the multi-agency nature of the project, with several agencies both within the Council and external agencies taking on the lead role with families, such as Addaction, Youth Offending Service (YOS) and many Social Care teams. The team with the greatest number of active engagement is the Family Solutions team. All practitioners have some “troubled families” within their caseload, irrespective of their role; key workers work with the most complex families intensively. As the work progresses it has become evident that some families are less complex than others and well motivated to engage with services to make changes; whilst others, fail to recognise the seriousness of their situation and the impact of this on the long term outcomes of their children. The Family Solutions team is having some success in engaging with families who have a protracted history of working with Social Care, but who demonstrate an unfortunate distrust of professionals. The Family Solutions team is starting to identify families for cohort 2 in their every day work. The benefit of this is that the families are already engaged with the service which increases the chance of “turning the family” round in a more timely fashion.

The YOS has been very effective in both identifying young people who meet the criteria and also working with many young people to reduce offending. The Education Welfare Service is also gaining results which are reflected in the current claim. The Policy & Performance team worked very closely with EWS to gain information on the school absence and exclusions. Some of this data has been used for the current claim and some of it will be used for the January claim. There was a very pleasing increase in the numbers of families returning to work, which returns £800 per family. With the JP+ Advisor working very closely with local Job Centres, employers and families not in work, this number is set to increase in the coming months.

CAF

CAFs completed by locality by month

The Wembley and Harlesden locality account for the highest number of CAF assessments completed over the three month period with 24% (35). The Kilburn locality accounts for the least number of CAF assessments completed at 13% (19) of the total for Quarter 2.

Table 6: Number of completed CAF assessments by locality by month

Locality	July		August		September		Total no. of CAFS	
	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS
Harlesden	6	13%	18	32%	10	24%	34	24%
Kilburn	4	9%	5	9%	10	24%	19	13%

Kingsbury	9	20%	15	26%	5	12%	29	20%
Wembley	13	28%	8	14%	14	34%	35	24%
Willesden	14	30%	11	19%	2	5%	27	19%
TOTAL	46		57		41		144	

CAFs completed by agency

Table 7 below lists the numbers of CAFs completed by agency over the quarter. The highest number of CAFs completed has been generated by the Family Solutions Team accounting for 27% (39) of the total.

Note we are reconciling the number of CAF’s CC’s produce against our reporting system to confirm the integrity of the reporting system.

Table 7: CAFs completed by agency

Agency	July		August		September		TOTAL	
	No. CAFs	% CAFs	No. CAFs	% CAFs	No. CAFs	% CAFs	No. CAFs	% CAFs
Children's Centre	4	9%	1	2%	3	7%	8	6%
Education - Primary School	3	7%	4	7%	2	5%	9	6%
Education - Secondary School	3	7%	3	5%	4	10%	10	7%
Friend or Family Member	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Health	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
Health - CAMHS	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Health - Hospital	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%
Health - Other	2	4%	0	0%	2	5%	4	3%
Health - PCT	4	9%	0	0%	2	5%	6	4%
Housing	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
NEG2	2	4%	16	28%	13	32%	31	22%
Nurseries	1	2%	2	4%	0	0%	3	2%

Family Solutions Team	15	33%	16	28%	8	20%	39	27%
Police	2	4%	2	4%	0	0%	4	3%
Social Care	6	13%	11	19%	6	15%	23	16%
TOTAL	46		57		41		144	

CAFs completed by age

Table 8: CAFs completed by age

Age group	July		August		September		TOTAL	
	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS
0-4	25	54%	40	70%	24	59%	89	62%
5-10	12	26%	8	14%	8	20%	28	19%
11-16	9	20%	8	14%	8	20%	25	17%
17-19	0	0%	1	2%	1	2%	2	2%
TOTAL	46		57		41		144	

CAFs completed by gender

Table 9: CAFs completed by gender

Gender	July		August		September		TOTAL	
	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS
Female	18	39%	29	51%	17	41%	64	44%
Male	28	61%	28	49%	24	59%	80	56%
TOTAL	46		57		41		144	

CAFs completed by ethnicity

Table 10 data on ethnicity indicates children and young people from a Black, and Black British ethnic background account for the highest number of CAF assessments completed with 44% (64) of the total. Young people from 'Mixed/Multiple' account for the least number of completed CAF assessments with 4% (6) of the total for Q2.

Table 10: CAFs completed by ethnicity

Ethnicity	July		August		September		TOTAL	
	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS	No. of CAFS	% of CAFS
Asian or Asian British	8	17%	13	23%	5	12%	26	18%
Black or Black British	23	50%	24	42%	17	41%	64	44%
Mixed / Multiple	1	2%	1	2%	4	10%	6	4%
Not Stated / Undeclared	3	7%	3	5%	1	2%	7	5%
Other Ethnic Groups	2	4%	5	9%	2	5%	9	6%
White	9	20%	11	19%	12	29%	32	22%
TOTAL	46		57		41		144	

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FAMILY SOLUTION PANELS

Table 11: Numbers of cases presented to Brent North and South panels

Month	Total
July	30
August	32
September	9
Quarter total	71

Following agreement by the panel the resources below were allocated to support members of the families that were presented.

Table 12: Allocation of resources

Commissioned Service	July	August	September	Total
Empowering Families	6	4	0	10
Potential Mentoring	2	4	0	6
SPLASH football / mentoring	5	10	0	15
Father Figure	4	1	2	7
Girls Mentoring / Sexual Health adviser	0	1	0	1
DOR Therapy (counselling)	4	4	2	10
BANG	1	3	1	5
Job Centre Plus Adviser	0	6	0	6
Assistant Clinical Psychologist				
Drug & Alcohol Team (DAAT)				
Domestic Violence Practitioner				
REED				
Parenting Programme (parents that completed an accredited programme)				

All services are required to provide a short report on the outcomes that have been achieved for the recipient of the intervention. However, this has been happening on an add-hoc basis and work continues to ensure a consistent approach across all localities and the practice is embedded by all Practitioners of the Service. Many parents are referred onto accredited parenting programmes that are available through Children's Centres for examples Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC), Incredible Years, or Solihull.

In addition all services have recently undergone a review by the Family Solutions Team to look at which services are valued by Practitioners, Children, Young People and Families, which have been effective in their interventions and support of clients, and to identify any performance issues.

CAF Quality Assurance measures

Quality assurance systems are in place, and managers have been asked to use a CAF auditing tool, to randomly audit completed CAF's, and provide constructive feedback to Practitioners to improve the quality and consistency of CAF's.

A total of thirty-six completed CAF audits were analysed. The audits were completed by managers working in Children's Centres and the Family Solutions Teams.

The table below sets out the summary grades given for each of the areas within the CAF audits analysed (not all audits had scores assigned to all areas). The cumulative results of the audits demonstrate that the assessments are generally of a good standard with the majority of areas audited resulting in a 'yes'.

The key areas of strength demonstrated are:

- Information about services already involved with the family are fully recorded;
- The CAF assessment identifies both strengths and needs;
- The CAF assessment is completed in a practitioner manner (non-judgemental; non-discriminatory; evidence-based);
- The overall level of need (Threshold) has been identified accurately.

The key areas for development identified are:

- The CAF assessment to include the views of the children/young people (or at least specify N/A if the child is not of an appropriate age);
- The CAF assessment to include an analysis of what is likely to happen if there is no change;
- The summary of needs is to reflect the key need areas identified within the assessment.

Table 13: Summary review of CAF audits

	Yes %	No %	Partly %
Information gathering			
Has information about the assessor, reason for assessment, family details and services involved been fully recorded?	94	0	6
Has information about each child been fully recorded?	87	0	13
Has information about the parents/carers been fully recorded?	86	3	11
	Yes %	No %	Partly %

Has information about the family and environmental factors been fully recorded?	83	6	11
Quality of CAF assessment (to include the assessment of each child, parents and carers, and family and environmental domains)			
Does the assessment cover all key areas appropriately?	86	0	14
Does it identify both Positive Features and needs?	92	3	5
Is it clear and understandable for the family and for practitioners who may become involved?	92	8	
Does it include the views of the children?	53	33	14
Does it include the views of all parents/carers?	64	21	15
Is it completed in a practitioner manner? (non-judgemental; non-discriminatory; evidence-based)	92		8
Do the completed 'Level of concern from 1-10' indicators accurately reflect the Positive Features and Needs recorded?	70	15	15
Quality of analysis			
Does the Summary reflect the key areas identified in the assessment?	68	5	27
Does it demonstrate that family members have been involved in establishing priorities?	73	5	22
Does it record what is likely to happen if there is no change?	29	47	24
Has the overall level of need (Brent's 4 levels of Need) been identified accurately?	86	3	11

Table 14 below sets out the findings from the CAF audits that were analysed, and highlights the positive features within the assessments, and the areas for development.

Table 14: CAF audit areas for development

	Positive features	Areas for development
Information gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear information from child and parent perspective. Comprehensive detail with regards to the reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all needs/concerns (parent and young person) captured in detail. Evidence (e.g. observations) not captured to support

	<p>for assessment, family details and services involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good insight into family dynamics. • Full family history and context to current situation. • Strengths and needs identified. • Details of family’s support systems. 	<p>concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not capturing strengths/ weaknesses with regards to financial, employment and housing (all areas of the assessment criteria). • Fathers details missing. • Not all existing services captured (health visitor being the most common). • Environmental factors not captured. • Reason for CAF lacking. • Source of referral lacking. • Sibling details missing. • Information about family and environmental factors missing/ could be more detailed (e.g. type of domestic violence).
<p>Quality of CAF assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good balance of strengths and needs. • Clear and well presented (plain language). • Clear roles services and actions in most of the plans. • Input from other practitioners evident. • In most cases realistic scoring with regards to levels reflecting areas of concern/ need. • Clear analysis of individual family member needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner’s observations could be captured to give weight to the assessment. • Explanations lacking where there is a difference in Outcome scoring between the parent and practitioner. • Older children not spoken to as no concerns from mum (child could still have a view/contribution to make). • Auditor questioning whether scores are accurate. • Child’s views not captured at the end of the CAF. • Does not include details of support received. • Family functioning and history not included. • Some actions not supported by evidence/ reasons within the assessment and vice-versa, details of assessment not reflected in the action plan. • A bit more detail in some sections would be useful to rule out the need for other practitioners having to try and find out more information. • Jargon sometimes used. • Parents views not always captured.

<p>Quality of analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan includes priorities parent and child have identified and wish to address. • Summary (when completed) reflects key areas in the assessment. • Level of need identified. • Level of need in most cases is accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could include more regarding relevant concerns. • Does not include impact if changes don't happen. • Benefits (outcomes) of accessing services could be captured better. • Summary did not reflect the main reason for CAF involvement. • No/not enough actions for parents within the action plan.
<p>Review audit (please note this is only one review)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity with regards to who may become involved • Neutral language used • Evidence of positive outcomes through multi agency work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender of the child still not mentioned • Environmental factors not described • New action plan lacking

Quality issues are being addressed using a number of different methods:

- Feedback on the audits is given to practitioners during supervision with case supervisors, case supervisors then monitor future CAF's to ensure issues have been addressed;
- The summary results from the audits are emailed to practitioners to raise awareness;
- Family Solution Development days are used to address issues relating to the quality of CAF's;
- The CAF / BFS Coordinators raise quality issues via the Children's Centre Network Managers meetings and BFS Senior Leadership Team;
- A 'CAF network' meeting is to be established in the spring term, which will facilitate discussions on the quality of CAF's and other related items;
- Feedback has been given to practitioners on the quality of their CAF's on entry into the FWi system, particularly new members of staff;
- A mentoring scheme has been piloted, with an experienced Family Support Worker (FSW) mentoring a new FSW, which has had a positive outcome.
- The audits have raised Staff Development needs (report writing, use of grammar, SMART action planning, etc) and these are being addressed via CPD.

Families experience of the CAF process

To measure the quality of the CAF from the families perspective, a number of families are contacted each month following case closure, to rate the quality of their experience against a range of criteria. An analysis of the 21 completed service user feedback forms, are shown in the table below:

Table 15: Service user ratings of quality of CAF experience

	Not at	Unsure	A little	Mostly	Completely
Effective in meeting my needs	2		1	5	13
Included needs of whole family	5	2	1	1	12
Made clear why did a CAF assessment	4	1		2	14
I felt the assessment was accurate	2	1		1	17
I was provided a copy of the assessment	3	7		1	10
Made clear what was involved in process	2	2		2	15
Actions expected of me and my family clear	2		2	2	15
Treated with respect throughout the process	2	1		2	16
Found the process supportive	2		1	1	17
Made clear that it was voluntary	4	1		1	15
Felt included in the process at all points	2			3	16
Made clear that all information was confidential	3			1	17
Staff member was easy to talk to and respectful	2			1	18
Flexibility in process to meet my needs (e.g have meetings at suitable venues, times etc)	2		1	2	16
Other agencies involved in working with my family because of the CAF	4	2		3	12
On-going reviews held regularly (at least every 3 months and identified needs change)	9	2	1	1	8

Table 15 validates that on the whole the experience of families of the CAF has been positive with 85% of the families interviewed expressing that the CAF process had benefited their family, 5% expressed it had benefitted them a little, and 10% of families expressed that the CAF process had not benefitted them at all.

Families identify diverse impacts from engagement. These include improved school behaviour and attendance, communication, take-up of services and reduced isolation. Some comments from parents are sampled below:

“In regards to my daughter being in school, her attendance was not up to scratch, and the worker helped her attendance get better.”

“Talking to my son and getting him to school early and finding out if there is a problem at home – which there isn’t. The problem is now resolved and he starts getting to school earlier and he is walking to school. Instead of waiting around for a bus which used to make him late.”

“The support was good. Before I never went out, but now I go out, and my children are happy when I take them out. My children are happier specially going to the Children’s Centre. I was helped a lot.”

“She helped for my baby he was premature and we needed help with damp in the room.”

“She fill application, and education for Samsam and helping with the nursery, she play with children and bring toys for my children, also helped with benefits. Very good. I got very good help.”

“Yes, they gave me options for the summer activities, took me to Brent Mind, and provided right information.”

“Fantastic, I have not been smoking Cannabis or drinking for the last 9 months. My family life is much improved and I am coping better.”

Measuring impact for families through application of the Family Star

The Outcomes Star™ is a unique suite of tools for supporting and measuring change when working with families. Brent Family Solutions team introduced the Family Star, that measures progress towards outcomes in effective parenting that enables children to thrive, for all families where a CAF is in place.

The Outcomes Star™ both measures and supports progress for families towards self-reliance, or other goals. The Stars are designed to be completed collaboratively as an integral part of Key Working. An Outcomes Star™ reading is taken by the worker and family at or near the beginning of their time with the service. Using the ‘ladders’ and scale descriptors, they identify together where on their ladder of change the service user is for

each outcome area. Each step on the ladder is associated with a numerical score so at the end of the process the scores can be plotted onto the service user's Star. The process is then repeated at regular intervals (every three, six or 12 months depending on the service/ project) to track progress. The data can be used to track the progress of an individual service user, to measure the outcomes achieved by a whole project and to benchmark with a national average for similar projects and client groups.

The Family Star covers eight areas (domains) of parenting that are seen as essential to enabling children to thrive:

1. Promoting good health
2. meeting emotional needs
3. keeping your child safe
4. building community
5. supporting learning
6. setting boundaries
7. encouraging work aspirations
8. providing home and money

The scales associated with the journey of change for parents and families underpinning the Family Star is from 'stuck' (score 1-2) through to 'effective parenting' (score 9-10).

A key feature of the Family Star process is that it is designed as an engagement tool in that it involves both the practitioner and the family in its completion. There were 25 completed Family Stars from July to the end of September.

Locality	Numbers
Kingsbury	12
Wembley	3
Harlesden	0
Fawood / Curzon / Challenge	0
Willesden	1
Kilburn	9
Total	25

Managers through case supervision are working with practitioners to increase the use and consistency of Outcome Star, with the aim that every client will have a Star completed. This will provide data to answer the questions below for future quarterly reports.

What does this data show about the service user needs when they join the service?

Does the data show that people are entering the service with an appropriate level of need?

What does the data show about the progress service users make while they are in the project?

Where are the greatest improvements made for families, and where are there any areas of concern?

What changes would we make in light of this data?

Training (CAF/TAF)

An extensive training programme is in place, to train multi-agency practitioners how to use the CAF and TAF. TAF training develops practitioners understanding of the Lead Professional role, and how to convene and Chair a TAF meeting. CAF training takes place weekly and TAF training fortnightly, to support the roll-out of the revised CAF form and process which was re-launched in October 2012.

Table 16: Numbers of Practitioners trained in CAF/TAF by Agency

Agency	CAF	TAF
Private, Voluntary, Independent (PVI) nurseries	40	3
Schools	2	2
NHS	3	3
Child-minders	2	5
Children's Centres	4	0
Brent Officers	13	4
Other agencies	12	7
TOTAL	76	24

A summary of the training evaluations from participants is detailed in Figures 2, 3 and 4 below:

Figure 2 Training feedback analysis

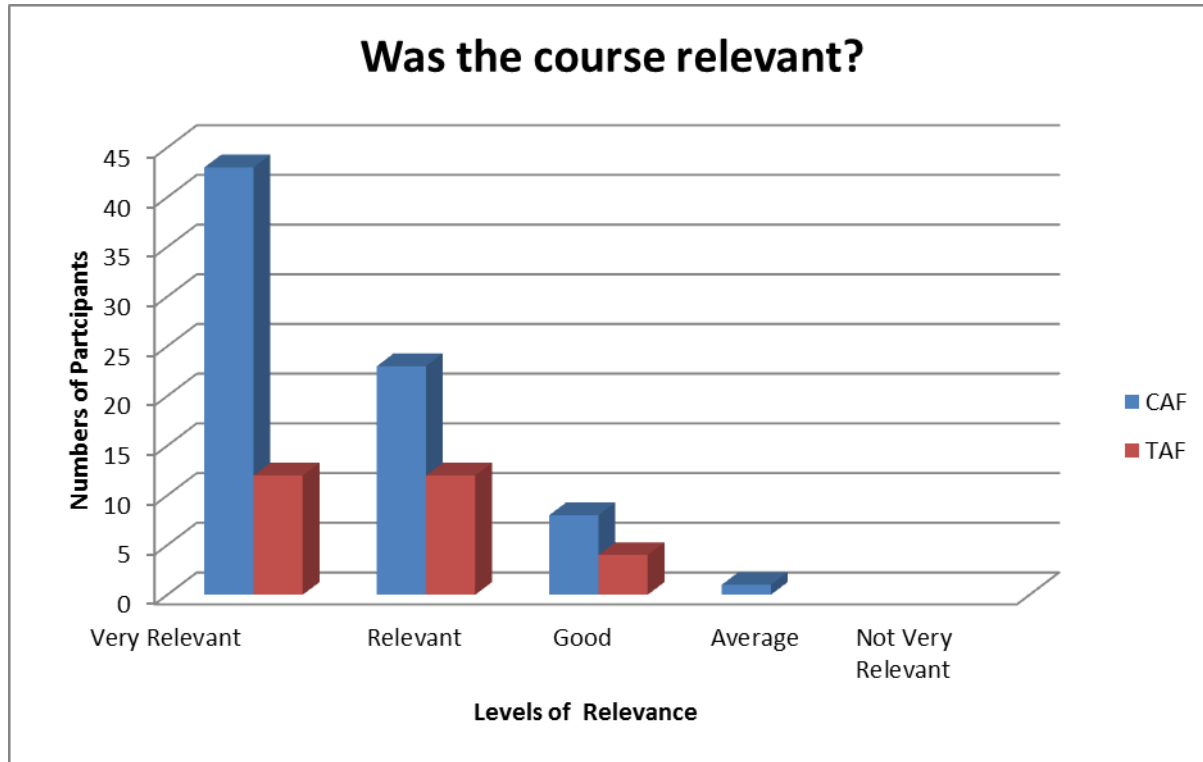


Figure 3 Training feedback analysis

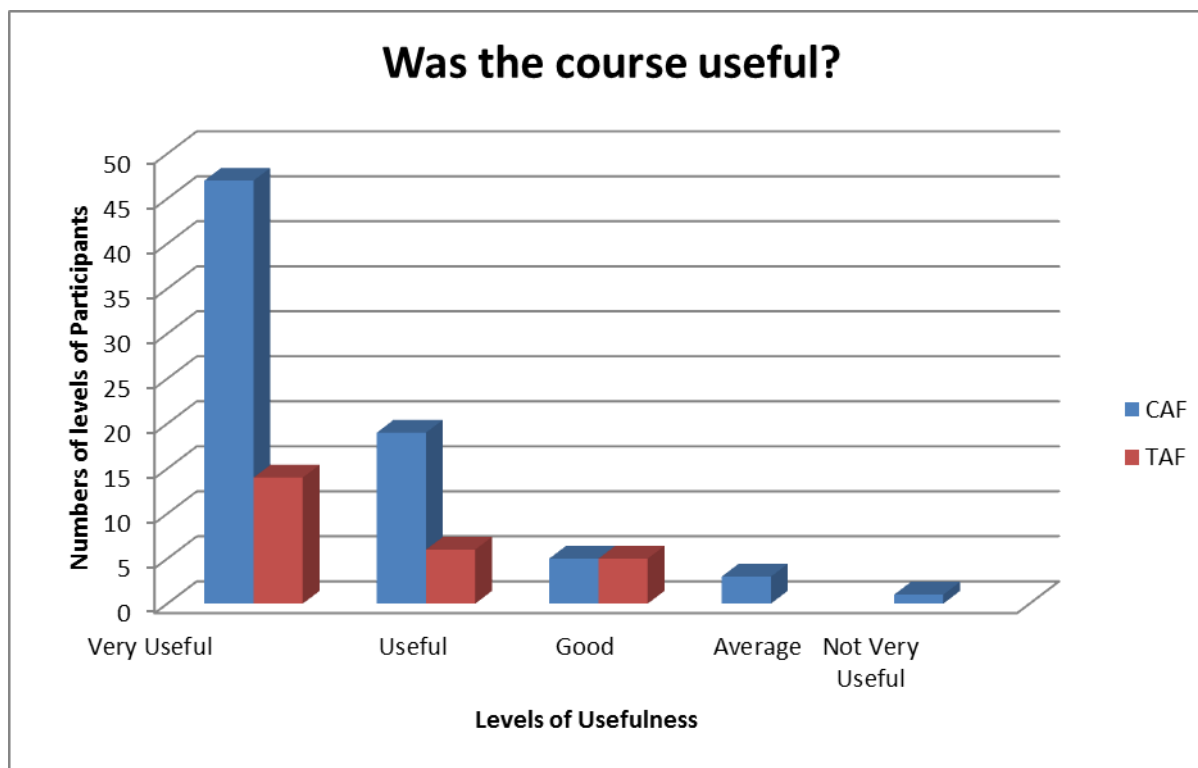
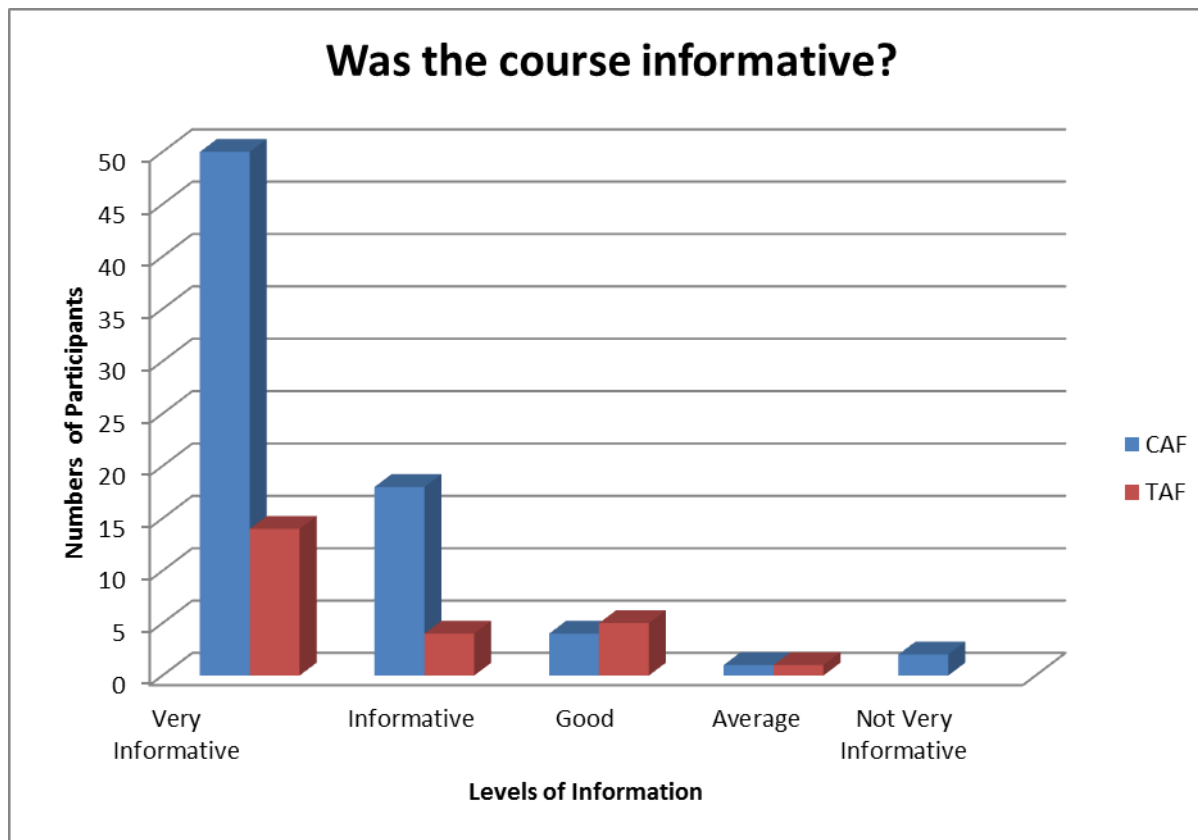


Figure 4 Training feedback analysis





Family Solutions Practitioners also had access to a range of other training opportunities to support them in their roles during this quarter, these included:

- Framework-I;
- Mellow Parenting;
- Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities;
- Solihull;
- Outcome Star;

- Brief Solution Focused Therapy;
- Relate Counselling;
- Understanding Children's Emotional Development;
- Systemic family therapy;
- Freedom Programme;
- Busy feet and brush your teeth;
- Makaton Foundation Programme;
- Assessment of Disorganised Attachment and Maltreatment (ADAM) project programmes;
- Brent Family Solutions Staff Development days – take place approximately every 2-3 weeks, speakers present on a range of issues, and workshops are delivered to support staff development.
- Social Care Learning and Development Opportunities
- Corporate Learning and Development Opportunities

Appendices

Appendix	Document
1 BFS Service Structure Chart	 CAF EH Structure Chart Sept 2013 with
2 BFS Panel Terms of Reference	 Early Help Panel Terms of Reference.c
3. Case Studies by locality	ST/NC to select and add



**Schools Forum
26 February 2014**

**Report from
the Director of Children & Families**

For Information and Consultation

Schools Forum Membership & Voting rights

1. Membership

- 1.1. The Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012 provides the framework for appointment of members but allows a degree of discretion in order to meet local needs. Local Authorities are able to decide on the size and composition of their forum and the forum members' terms of office.
- 1.2. In October 2013 the EFA released an operational and good practice guide on Schools Forums. The recommendation is that Schools Forums must contain representatives from primary and secondary schools, unless no primary or secondary schools are maintained by the local authority. In addition, where there are maintained special schools, nursery schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), at least one member from each sector must be represented.
- 1.3. The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 states that the forum must comprise:
 - 1.3.1. Elected school members;
 - 1.3.2. Elected Academies members;
 - 1.3.3. Appointed non-schools members.
 Schools and Academies members combined should be at least two thirds of the forum's membership. (Schools members are defined as primary, secondary, special, nursery and PRUs.)
- 1.4. In addition, the local authority has discretion to divide these groups into any of the following sub-groups:
 - 1.4.1. Head Teachers;
 - 1.4.2. Governors;
 - 1.4.3. Head Teachers and Governors;
 - 1.4.4. Representatives of the particular school category.

1.5. Brent's current membership make up is shown below.

	Head Teacher	Governor	Other	Total	%
Primary (Maintained)	5	5		10	36%
Secondary (Maintained)	1	1		2	7%
Academy (All)	3	3		6	21%
Nursery	1	1		2	7%
Special	1	1		2	7%
Early Years PVI			2	2	7%
PRU			1	1	4%
14-19 Partnership			1	1	4%
Trade Union			1	1	4%
Primary School Advisor			1	1	4%
Total	11	11	6	28	100%

1.6. The distribution between Primary, Secondary and Academy representatives was last calculated based on October 2012 pupil numbers. It was agreed that in the future the total primary and secondary schools representation (maintained and academy) would not exceed eighteen, but that the distribution would be reviewed in line with changes in the maintained schools population resulting from academy conversions.

1.7. The current membership list is attached as Appendix A. It was reported at the 18th September 2013 Forum that membership will be revisited annually in June to take account of any academy conversions.

1.8. The table below shows the pupil numbers in Brent as recorded on the October 2013 school census, and takes account of one expected primary school conversion in early 2014/15, as well as non-recoupment academies.

	Oct 2013 Pupil Nos	Proportion	Expected Representation	Current Representation	Proportion	Variance
Maintained Primary	24,359	54.8%	10	10	55.6%	0
Maintained Secondary	4,682	10.5%	2	2	11.1%	0
Academy Primary	2,133	4.8%	1	0	0.0%	-1
Academy Secondary	13,309	29.9%	5	6	33.3%	1
	44,483	100.0%	18	18	100.0%	0

1.9. The table assumes that primary and secondary schools (maintained and academy) membership remains at eighteen, and shows that the current distribution is fully representative of the sectors. However currently academy membership is not split between primary and secondary phases. It is therefore proposed that the Schools Forum membership should be amended to reflect this split. It is also recommended that the academy representation should include at least one non-recoupment academy representative. This change would not instigate a change to the current members, as there is currently one non-recoupment academy representative on the forum, and also two Heads of an all-through academy and one of them can represent the primary academy phase.

1.10. There is also one potential special school conversion for 2014/15. With the current representation for Special schools being one head teacher and one governor, it is recommended to change this split to reflect the academy conversion. This would then be

amended to one maintained special representative and one special academy representative.

2. Sub-Groups

2.1. It was agreed at the last Schools Forum that a review of all the sub-groups would take place to decide whether they should continue and to determine whether they are currently serving the purpose for which they were formed. As part of this review all members of the sub-groups were asked to provide feedback.

2.2. Early Years Sub-Group

2.2.1. The Early Years Sub-Group was formed in 2008 with the aim of developing the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). The sub-group now oversees all matters associated with the early years funding for schools and the PVI sector.

2.2.2. The general consensus of the sub-group representatives is that this sub-group serves a valuable purpose and is the only avenue for exchanging ideas, policies and practice between the schools and the PVI's.

2.2.3. Since the sub-groups formation, the following anomalies have been identified and reviewed as part of the sub-group:

- Full-time/Part-time provision;
- PVI entitlement;
- Grading of nurseries and PVI's;
- Staff competencies in PVI's and ratios of pupils;
- Changes to NEG in relation to PVI's being included;
- Changes to NEG and the funding of nursery classes;
- Special educational needs in the private and public sectors;
- Increase in nursery places;
- Parity for all nursery funding;
- Deciding on formulas that were equitable;
- Comparisons with other Local Authorities;
- Two year old projects;
- Structure of personnel of EYSFF in Brent.

2.2.4. This sub-group currently has two representatives – one each for nursery and primary schools. Under the sub-groups constitution all representatives serve for two years. This was last reviewed in September 2012.

2.2.5. It is recommended that this sub-group continues in its current form. The range and depth of issues dealt with at the sub-group is ongoing and would not be effective if dealt with at full Schools Forum meetings. Both officers and representatives find this sub-group useful to review anomalies, exchange good practice and effect change in relation to the early years funding.

2.3. SEN Sub-Group

2.3.1. The SEN sub-group was originally set up in 2011 to deal with the SEN overspend, and the introduction of the new national funding formula, as well as a range of funding issues regarding how pupils with additional needs and statements were funded and to make sure that the funding formula is linked to overall SEN policy, both locally and nationally.

2.3.2. This sub-group has been a useful forum for addressing a complex range of issues and the general consensus, again, is that this sub-group should continue.

2.3.3. The issues that are currently dealt with by the sub-group includes:

- Reviews of the funding formula and banding system for special schools, in consultation with special schools;
- Bandings of statemented pupils;
- Reviews of the formula for funding Additional Resource Provisions;
- Monitoring provision of SEN pupils by Brent schools
- Transitional protection for schools with high numbers of pupils with statements
- Post 16 FE eligibility policy and implementation
- Monitoring SEN spend and placements

2.3.4. The current representation on the sub-group includes one of each of the following: nursery head, primary representative, special head, secondary/academy head, academy governor, trade union representative

2.3.5. This sub-group is recommended to continue. With changes in SEN funding and policy ongoing, and the nature of complexity over these issues, this sub-group is vital in terms of reviewing, monitoring and agreeing changes. The discussions involved in these issues would not be effective in a full School Forum meeting, and both officers and representatives would like this sub-group to continue its current form.

2.4. Schools Sub-Group

2.4.1. The schools sub-group was created in 2013 to address Brent's very low primary:secondary ratio being 1:1.09. This arose as part of the funding reforms, and was the lowest in the country. As a result the MFG was the highest in the country and this needed to be addressed.

2.4.2. This sub-group was fundamental in addressing the ratio imbalance and has raised the ratio to 1:1.26 (closer to the 2013/14 national average of 1:1.27). As such the sub-group has met its objectives. However, it was agreed at the last Schools Forum that if the ratio was found to fall in future years to below 1:1.25 or to rise by a similar percentage, that this should again be reviewed and addressed by the sub-group.

2.4.3. The sub-group is currently made up of two representatives from each of the primary and secondary sectors, split between one Head Teacher and one Governor each.

2.4.4. It is recommended that this sub-group temporarily continues until the 2015/16 budget is set. Meetings will be diarised, but if there are no issues arising or significant agenda items they will be cancelled.

3. **Voting Rights**

3.1. The Schools Forum may determine its own voting procedures, except:

- The funding formula is limited to schools members, academies members and PVI representatives;
- De-delegations are limited to the specific primary and secondary phases of maintained schools members.

3.2. The good practice guide is clear on what members can vote on. An extract of this is attached as a separate Appendix B, along with the voting rights of each member of the Brent's Schools Forum in Appendix C.

3.3. In summary

- Schools members can vote on all Schools Forum business including consultation on the funding formula. However only primary representatives can vote on primary school de-delegation, and only secondary representatives can vote on secondary school de-

delegation. Schools members, as defined previously, are primary, secondary, special, nursery and PRU representatives.

- Academy members can vote on all Schools Forum business (including consultation on the funding formula) except de-delegation, as de-delegation is not an option for academies.
- Non-school members cannot vote on de-delegation. Only PVI representatives can vote on consultation on the funding formula. All non-school members can then vote on anything else.

4. Recommendations & Consultation Points

4.1. The Schools Forum is requested to approve the following:

a. Membership:

- Maintain the current membership numbers;
- Change the Academy membership to include one non-recoupment academy representative and one primary academy representative;
- Change the special schools representation to split between maintained special and academy specials.

b. Sub-Groups

- Continue the Early Years sub-group in its current form;
- Continue the SEN sub-group in its current form;
- Temporarily continue the Schools sub-group for another six months, after which it will be disbanded.

4.2. The Schools Forum is requested to note the voting rights of members.

Appendices

- A. Brent Schools Forum Membership List
- B. Voting Rights extract
- C. Voting Rights of each member of the Brent Schools Forum

Background Papers

1. Schools Forums: operational and good practice guide, October 2013

Contact Officers

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Devbai Patel, Schools Budget Manager

Sara Williams, Interim Director of Children & Families

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SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP LIST - FEBRUARY 2014

NAME	REPRESENTING	EMAIL ADDRESS
Martin Beard	Academy Governor	mbeard@cokecce.com
Mike Heiser – Chair	Academy Governor	mike.heiser@lga.gov.uk & mike.heiser@googlemail.com
Titilola McDowell	Academy Governor	mtitilola@aol.com
Gill Bal	Academy Head	cseaman@whtc.co.uk
Terry Molloy	Academy Head	admin@claremont-high.org.uk
Matthew Lantos	Academy Head	matthewlantos@pmanor.brent.sch.uk
Vacant	Nursery School Governor	
Lesley Benson	Nursery School Head	lesleyjmbenson@btinternet.com
Alan Carter	Primary School Governor	alan_j_carter@btconnect.com
Herman Martyn	Primary School Governor	herman@martyfamily.co.uk
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Cllr Lesley Jones	Primary School Governor	cllr.lesley.jones@brent.gov.uk
Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman	Primary School Head	head@torahtemimah.brent.sch.uk
Sylvie Libson (Vice-Chair)	Primary School Head	sylviel@oakmanor.brent.sch.uk
Sabina Nettey	Primary School Head	snettey@princessfrederica.brent.sch.uk
Rose Ashton	Primary School Head	roseashton@chalkhill.brent.sch.uk
Vacant	Primary School Head	
Vacant	Secondary School Governor	
Andy Prindiville	Secondary School Head	aprindiville@stgregorys.harrow.sch.uk
Janice Alexander	Special School Governor	janice.alexander@manor.brent.sch.uk
Kay Johnson	Special School Head	kjohnson@tvs.brent.sch.uk
Paul Russell	Early Years PVI	paul@happy-hands.biz
Maxine Henderson	Early Years PVI	mhenderson@happychild.co.uk
Terry Hoad	PRU	terry.hoad@spc.ox.ac.uk
Maggie Barth	14-19 Partnership	maggie.barth@cnwl.ac.uk
Lesley Gouldbourne	Trade Unions	Lesley18G@gmail.com
Sue Knowler	Primary School Advisor	sue@knowler.net

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Voting Rights of Each Schools Forum Member

Category		Schools Members	Academies Members	Non-School Members
Voting	De-Delegation	Only primary representatives can vote on primary school de-delegation	No voting on de-delegation	No voting on de-delegation
		Only secondary representatives can vote on secondary school de-delegation		
	Funding Formula	All schools members can vote on any other Schools Forum business, including the consultation on the funding formula	All academies members can vote on any other Schools Forum business, including the consultation on the funding formula	Only PVI representatives can vote on the consultation on the funding formula.
				All non-school members can vote on any other Schools Forum business

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MEMBERSHIP & VOTING RIGHTS

A - Funding Formula

B - Early Years Single Funding Formula

C - De-Delegations, Primary Maintained

D - De-Delegations, Secondary Maintained

E - Other Schools Forum Business

NAME	REPRESENTING	VOTING RIGHTS				
		A	B	C	D	E
SCHOOL MEMBERS						
Nursery						
<i>Vacant</i>	Governor					
Lesley Benson	Head					
Primary						
Alan Carter	Governor					
Herman Martyn	Governor					
Cllr Helga Gladbaum	Governor					
Umesh Raichada	Governor					
Cllr Lesley Jones	Governor					
Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman	Head					
Sylvie Libson (Vice-Chair)	Head					
Sabina Nettey	Head					
Rose Ashton	Head					
<i>Vacant</i>	Head					
Secondary						
<i>Vacant</i>	Governor					
Andy Prindiville	Head					
Special						
Janice Alexander	Governor					
Kay Johnson	Head					
PRU						
Terry Hoad						

MEMBERSHIP & VOTING RIGHTS

A - Funding Formula

B - Early Years Single Funding Formula

C - De-Delegations, Primary Maintained

D - De-Delegations, Secondary Maintained

E - Other Schools Forum Business

NAME	REPRESENTING	VOTING RIGHTS				
		A	B	C	D	E
ACADEMY MEMBERS						
Academy						
Martin Beard	Governor					
Mike Heiser – Chair	Governor					
Titilola McDowell	Governor					
Gill Bal	Head					
Terry Molloy	Head					
Matthew Lantos	Head					
NON-SCHOOL MEMBERS						
Early Years PVI						
Paul Russell						
Maxine Henderson						
14-19 Partnership						
Maggie Barth						
Trade Union						
Lesley Gouldbourne						
Primary School Advisor						
Sue Knowler						



Education
Funding
Agency

Schools Forums: operational and good practice guide

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

October 2013

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Executive summary

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

TABLE 1: SCHOOLS FORUM STRUCTURE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Introduction

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

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

Section 1 – Schools Forum Regulations: Constitution and Procedural Issues

Regulations

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

Schools Forum powers

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

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

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

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

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

Membership

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

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

Term of office

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

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

Schools members

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

Election and nomination of schools members

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

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

Election and nomination of academies members

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

Non-schools members

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

Other membership issues

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

The role of executive elected members

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

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

Recording the composition of Schools Forums

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

Observers

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

Participation of local authority officers at meetings

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

Procedures

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

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

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

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

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

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

Public access

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

Working groups

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

Urgent business

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

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

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

Resources of the Schools Forum

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

Section 2 – Effective Schools Forums

Introduction

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

Induction of new members

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

Training

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

Agenda setting

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

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

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

Preparation for a Schools Forum meeting

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

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

Chairing the Schools Forum

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

Clerking the Schools Forum

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

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

2.26. Beyond this a good clerk can:

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

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

Good practice for Schools Forum meetings

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

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

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

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

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

Meeting notes and recording of decisions

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

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

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

Communication

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

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

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

News updates

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



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