

COVID-19 Report

Schools' Forum Date	12 th November 2020
Type of Decision	For information and discussion
Background Documents	Not applicable
Authors	Philip Haslett, Head of Education Strategy and Development
Purpose of Report	To provide an update on funding and support available to the school system during the COVID-19 Pandemic
Key Recommendations	Forum members are asked to consider the current impact of the COVID crisis on school, the support that has been provided locally and nationally and whether there is further action we should be taking.
Resource Implications	Use of general COVID funding provide to the local authority - £500k

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Schools Forum on impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the support that is available to the education system. It is also intended to promote discussion and feedback from the forum on the current financial pressures in the system.

2. Exceptional costs

2.1. In the summer 2020, the government committed to support schools with the exceptional costs associated to the first phase of the pandemic. Submissions were made to the DfE by the end of July 2020 against three criteria:

- **increased premises related costs** (including utilities and resources needed to keep the school open, such as hygiene services) associated with keeping schools open during the Easter and/or summer half term holidays, for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, over and above the costs that schools would have faced in other circumstances
- **support for free school meals for eligible children who are not attending school**, where those costs are not covered by the [national voucher scheme](#) - this covers:
 - costs to schools arising before the introduction of the national voucher scheme
 - costs where schools are providing free meals to children for whom the national voucher scheme is inappropriate (for example, because there are no participating supermarkets locally or schools are providing meals directly) - schools can only claim through this fund for free school meals provided over Easter and summer half term holidays where it was required because local supermarkets were not yet part of the national scheme
- **additional cleaning** – required due to confirmed or suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, in line with [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#), over and above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements

2.2. We reported the initial outcomes from these claims for maintained school at the September schools forum, £441,059 split by sector:

Sector	Amount successfully claimed	%
Primary	£281,145	63.7%
Secondary	£111,922	25.4%
Special	£19,619	4.4%
Alternative Provision	£28,373	6.4%
Total	£441,059	100.0%

- 2.3. These were the initial outcomes, as it was only for those schools that had submitted claims that fell within the constraints of the guidance. The Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is still reviewing claims that fell outside the guidance. These are being done individually, which of course takes time, so we are expecting the results imminently.
- 2.4. To date the ESFA and DFE have made it clear that they do not expect there to be a further round of funding to support exceptional costs. However, this decision has caused concern for school leaders, local authorities, unions and education funding groups (F40 etc). As such we have asked schools to continue to monitor and share the details of their ongoing COVID exceptional costs.
- 2.5. To date we have received 50 responses from schools the details of which are laid out in the table below.

	Cleaning	Premises related costs	Free School Meals	Supply	Other	Total
Primary	42,059	31,801	170	49,815	22,747	146,592
Secondary	34,610	124,095	11,873	45,797	11,786	228,160
Special	2,095	432	0	7,800	41	10,367
AP	0	0	0	0	0	0
	78,763	156,328	12,043	103,411	34,573	385,119
	20%	41%	3%	27%	9%	

- 2.6. This is a small sample that covers costs during term 1, but helps to provide a picture of the pressures that schools budgets are currently facing. We would expect these pressures to rise during term 2 as the tightened national restrictions start.
- 2.7. We are aiming to build a complete picture and would ask Schools Forum members to encourage their colleagues to submit details to our finance team. This evidence of increased costs will be an essential component for us to engage with the DfE and ESFA regarding a further round of exceptional cost funding.

3. COVID 19 Catch Up Premium

- 3.1. We reported on the National COVID catch-up premium at the September Schools Forum meeting, but have included the details again below, as a reminder for schools, as to what is currently available.
- 3.2. The government has announced a £1 billion COVID catch-up package which is on top of the £14.4 billion 3 year settlement. The funding is in 2 parts:

1) A one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium ([Link](#))

This is to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time.

Schools' allocations from the £650m will be paid across 3 terms in the next academic based on:

- £80 for each mainstream school pupil in reception through to year 11.
- £240 for each place in a special, alternative provision or hospital school.

This means a typical primary school of 200 pupils will receive £16,000 while a typical secondary school of 1,000 pupils will receive £80,000 to tackle the impact of lost teaching time on pupils as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Schools have the flexibility to spend their funding in the best way for their cohort and circumstances, but are recommended to do this in line with the guidance (link) available from the Education Endowment Foundation.

2) A £350m tutoring fund

From the second half of the 2020/21 autumn term this will provide support to disadvantaged pupils aged 5-16 in two ways:

- Access to heavily subsidised tuition from organisations on a list of approved partners.
- Support to the most disadvantaged schools to employ in-house academic mentors to provide intensive support to pupils.

A reception year early language programme will also be available that will make training and resources available at no-cost to schools where additional targeted support for oral language would be particularly beneficial.

£96M of the tutoring fund will be used to support colleges, sixth forms and all 16-19 providers, to provide small group tutoring activity for disadvantaged 16-19 students whose studies have been disrupted.

4. Local activity and support

- 4.1. Alongside the national support we have ring-fenced local COVID funding to support the implementation of a number of local programmes to support children and young people, families and schools through the COVID pandemic. There are two programmes running through the education team.
- 4.2. The first piece of work, 'Transition Chat', was initiated in the summer and is delivered by Young Gloucestershire. It is focussed on supporting year 11 students that are at risk of becoming Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET). More details about the programme can be found [here](#).
- 4.3. The programme was available to up to 100 year 11 students that were at risk of becoming NEET. Take up has been very good and is shown below.

21/10/2020			
List of YP originally expected	100		
Referrals Declined	17	Broken down By:	YP declined 6
Total referrals expected to receive	83		School no longer 11
Received Referrals to date	78	Broken down By:	
Percentage Received	94%	Mainstream	41
		SEND	10
		Alt	18
		Hospital Ed	9

- 4.4. Engagement has also been positive, with 73% of the students referred on to the programme engaging well and having clear plans in place. There are 13 students, who through a range of challenging personal circumstances, we are continuing to work to find solutions for.
- 4.5. COVID is going to continue to impact, possibly even more so, on this current Year 11. So we will run a similar programme for this academic year and could potentially start much earlier improving the chance of success.
- 4.6. The second area of focus has been on how we provide support children and young people that, on return to school, are struggling to access education and are at risk of exclusion. There is concern amongst professionals, locally and nationally, that the extended period of time out of school and the trauma associated with the pandemic, will have had a significant impact and increase the number of children vulnerable to exclusion.
- 4.7. The response to this is the Team Around the Locality Cluster (TALC). This is a multi-agency model that builds on the successful Team Around the School. The aim of the TALC is to ensure that there is an effective multiagency forum for schools to refer children and young people that they are concerned about and to get a solution in place. More details about the programme can be found [here](#).
- 4.8. There have been 8 referrals so far and the first multi-agency groups met very recently (start of term 2) a verbal update will be provided at the Schools Forum meeting on the support and funding that has been agreed.

Forum members are asked to consider the current impact of the COVID crisis on school, the support that has been provided locally and nationally and whether there is further action we should be taking.

5. The F40

- 5.1. The F40 remain actively engaged with the DfE and central government around the funding pressures on the school system. Attached with the papers is the latest letter to the DfE focussed on COVID related funding pressures. This has been followed up by a meeting the DfE funding team to discuss the issues in detail.