

Minutes of Schools Forum

24 April 2025

-: Present :-

Stewart Biddles, Tim Stephens, Steve Margetts, Alex Newton, Tamsin Summers, Sarah Tomkinson (Chairwoman) and Hannah Baker

(Also in attendance:)

1. Head teachers to meet to discuss future Forum Agendas

2. Apologies/Changes to membership

- **Attendees:**
- Alex Newton
- Jayne Jones
- Sarah Tomkinson
- Debbie Horn
- Stewart Biddles
- Steve Margetts
- Tim Stephens
- Tamsin Summers
- Sally Banfield
- Rob Parr
- Hannah Baker
- Siobhan Grady (NHS Devon ICB)
- Louise Willmott
- **Apologies:**
- Stuart Bellworthy
- Lawrence Frewin
- Clive Star
- Steve Hume
- James Down
- Daniel Hamer

3. Minutes of last meeting

Welcome and Introductions

- **Chair:** Sarah Tomkinson welcomed all attendees and introduced Debbie Horn as the new member representing maintained schools.
- **Introductions:** Each member introduced themselves, stating their role and representation.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

- **Review:** The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved without any amendments.

Actions from Previous Meeting

- **Terms of Reference:** Discussed and agreed upon.
- **Primary Academy Governor:** Debbie Horn appointed.
- **Early Years Figures:** Rob Parr to present figures at the next meeting.
- **High Needs Block Contribution:** Consensus to recommend to continue the £100,000 contribution from the High Needs Block to Early Years for complex cases. Hannah Baker to discuss with Nancy Meehan for final decision s this is an LA decision.

4. Trade Union Facilities Time- Sarah Tomkinson**Trade Union Facilities Time**

- **Discussion:** Schools agreed to release union reps as needed without a central facilities fund. Riviera Trust to cover release time for their employed rep.
- **Concerns:** Tim Stephens raised concerns about the sustainability if the current rep leaves Riviera Trust. Alex Newton and Steve Margetts echoed the sentiment of not returning to a central facilities budget.

5. Early Years Funding agreement response Rob Parr/Emma Kerridge 10.15**Early Years Funding Agreement Response**

- **Presentation:** Rob Parr and Emma Kerridge provided a response to Tim Stephens' proposal.
- **Discussion:** Tim Stephens emphasized the need for the £100,000 contribution from the High Needs Block to continue. Sally Banfield supported this, highlighting the importance of not double funding from the High Needs Block.
- **Decision:** Schools Forum recommends continuing the £100,000 contribution from the High Needs Block to Early Years. Hannah Baker to take this recommendation to Nancy Meehan.

6. SLCN data and Locality Model proposal: Hannah Baker/Siobhan Grady 10.35**Speech and Language Communication Needs (SLCN) Pilot****Locality model link - [Torbay Locality Model Pilot - Family Hub](#)**

- **Presentation:** Siobhan Grady presented data on SLCN needs in Torbay, highlighting the highest needs in the 5-9 age group.
- **Pilot Overview:** Hannah Baker outlined the SLCN pilot focusing on early identification and intervention, using the balanced system approach.
- **Discussion:** Concerns were raised about the inclusion of early years settings and the terminology of "locality model." Agreement to potentially rebrand the pilot to better reflect its focus on SLCN. The discussion also covered the need to ensure that early year's settings are included in the SLCN pilot.

7. Financial Reports- Rob Parr 10.45

Financial Reports

- **Presentation:** Rob Parr presented the financial report, highlighting overspend in EOTAS packages and the need for re-procurement of contracts. A significant overspend in Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) packages, amounting to over £1,000,000. He highlighted the need for re-procurement of some contracts to address this overspend. The overspend is a major concern and will continue until the new way of working is implemented in September.
- **See link for decision making permissions for Schools Forum**

[Stat guidance template](#)

- **Action:** Re-procurement of contracts to be completed by September to manage the overspend.
- **Safety Valve:** Hannah Baker provided an update, noting that the high level of requests for statutory assessments and new plans is impacting the figures. The Department for Education (DfE) has asked for a three-year projection due to concerns about not achieving a balanced position by 2026-27.

8. Safety Valve Update- Hannah Baker 10.55**Safety Valve Update**

- **Statistics:** Hannah Baker shared statistics on the high level of requests for statutory assessments and new plans.
- **Discussion:** Jake Grinsill inquired about the increase in plans and tribunals. Hannah Baker noted a levelling off in tribunals and highlighted the ongoing challenge with SLCN needs.

9. AOB**Actions:**

1. **Hannah Baker:** Discuss the continuation of the £100,000 High Needs Block contribution with Nancy Meehan.
2. **Rob Parr:** Present early years figures at the next meeting.
3. **Emma Kerridge:** Ensure early years settings are included in the SLCN pilot.
4. **Hannah Baker:** Consider rebranding the Locality pilot to better reflect its focus.