

## **School Forum 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

### **Optional de-delegation for maintained schools**

There are some services where the Schools Forum on behalf of maintained schools are able to decide that some funding should be taken out of their pre-16 formula budgets before they receive them and moved to central funding. These are:

- a. contingencies (including support for schools supporting schools networks, TGA and NNDR re evaluations);
- b. administration of free school meals (FSM) eligibility;
- c. insurance;
- d. staff costs – trade union facilities agreement;
- e. support for minority ethnic pupils or underachieving groups;

For each of these, it is be for the schools forum members in the relevant phase (primary or secondary) to decide whether that service should be retained centrally. The decision will apply to all maintained schools in that phase and will mean that the funding for these services was removed from the formula before school budgets were issued. There could be different decisions made for each phase. Academies can buy back into local authority services, as is the case for maintained schools where funding remains delegated. There is an issue here that if only some schools buy back a service the delivery of the service may not be viable and will not be available to any schools.

**A1. Contingencies – Schools Supporting Schools network- £165,000 , NNDR re-evaluations- £39,000 and TGA- £211**

### **National Non Domestic Rates(NNDR) contingency**

National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) contingency is for in year support to schools who have rate re evaluations and have to pay higher rates as a result. The higher amount is fed into the following years formula allocation this is just for the in year increases which can be substantial. Delegation will mean that schools who have in year re evaluations

will have to pay for these and any previous years back payments from within their formula allocation. These can be substantial.

### **Schools supporting schools network** .

Subscription to this service provides access to:

- all curriculum networks- literacy network, maths network, ICT network, SEN and Inclusion network, Curriculum Development network.
- school evaluation partner annual data/head teachers performance management visit.
- activities outlined for the school leadership Academy which supports newly qualified head teachers, aspirant leaders
- support for all primary and special school NQTs including additional support for those not making appropriate progress.

### **Torbay Governors Association**

This funding is to contribute towards the administration costs of TGA to aid the communication between TGA, schools and the LA.

## **A2. Administration of free school meals (FSM) eligibility- £9,000**

### **Introduction**

A parent or guardian can claim free school meals for their child if they meet specific criteria related to benefit entitlement and level of income. This is to ensure that children from low income families receive a nutritious meal each day to maximise their capacity for learning. For every child who receives free school meals the school can claim a pupil premium to pay for the additional support these children are likely to need. This is currently worth £630 per year for each pupil who has been entitled to free school meals at any time in the last 6 years and has risen to £900 in 2013/14. It is therefore in a school's interest to ensure that all pupils who are entitled to free school meals are identified. It is also worth noting that more than £4m is distributed through the Torbay Schools Funding Formula according to the numbers of pupils in a school eligible for free school meals.

### **Entitlement Process**

The Department for Education has a database, the Eligibility Checking Service, that organisations can use to check eligibility of individual parents and guardians. The

process involves inputting national insurance number, parent's date of birth and surname. The system then checks against listed benefit claimants and indicates whether there is a match with the data on the system.

### Options

Schools have the option of purchasing an eligibility checking service that will undertake the above process very cheaply. However, this is generally where the service stops.

Torbay Council's Free School Meals Service, however, will contact any parent who has applied for free school meals and who is not found on the system and will invite them to provide other proof of entitlement e.g. a letter from the relevant government department. This is important because there is often a considerable time lag between date of entitlement and listing on the database.

Often the parent has made a simple error, e.g. an incorrect digit in their national insurance number. The council checks these details with parents who believe that they should be entitled.

The council notifies schools of all pupils who are recorded as being entitled to free school meals and all pupils where a query is being followed up.

The council checks all claimants periodically to verify their continued entitlement and again, will pursue any claimant who is shown as no longer entitled. Schools are notified about these parents and encouraged to support them in providing new evidence if their claim should be ongoing.

When the last check was made against the database, of approximately 3,200 children there were 328 queries, i.e. where the database indicated no entitlement. When these were followed up individually 33 pupils were found to still be entitled to free school meals i.e. 10% of rejected claims.

### Equality issues

It is important that children who are entitled to free school meals receive them; also that parents who are no longer entitled to claim are identified and asked to pay for school meals. The council undertakes to check eligibility during the second part of the summer term for existing pupils and in September for new pupils so that schools have accurate data for the October census date. Additional checks are undertaken during the winter months. The council checks eligibility for all children at the same time, including siblings attending different schools. This ensures consistency.

## Conclusion

A centralised free school meals service is good value and supports

- Children from low income families in receiving regular nutritious meals
- Parents in receiving the financial help to which they are entitled
- Schools in receiving appropriate funding for the entitled pupils who are more likely to need additional support

## **A 3. Insurance. £106,000**

### **School Insurance Service**

The Council's dedicated Insurance and Claims Handling Team is responsible for arranging and administering the Council's Corporate insurances as well as providing advice and guidance with all insurance/claims related matters, general risk management and dealing with all aspects of civil liability.

### **Structure and Functions of the Insurance and Claims Handling Team**

#### The Insurance team will:

- arrange placement of a comprehensive package of insurances
- information and clarification on existing policy cover.
- advice and guidance regarding insurance implications for events and activities, property issues, school trips and hiring of school facilities.
- advice on potential claims and management of claims along with associated correspondence.
- undertake mid term adjustments, additions and deletions in cover required to reflect risk exposure as well as arrangements and management of engineering inspection reports.
- Upon request, the team can assist in scrutinising legal documentation, such as contracts with third parties, to ensure that as far as possible any residual risk is transferred through appropriately worded indemnities.
- arrange statistical reporting and claims analysis

### The Civil Litigation Claims Handling will:

In the event a liability claim arises, a legally qualified member of the claims handling team will deal with all correspondence with Solicitors and third parties and undertake a detailed investigation into the causes of the incident. This may involve interviewing staff and inspecting the accident location by prior arrangement with the school.

The Insurance and Claims Handling teams are based at the Town Hall in Torquay. However, there may be occasions when attendance at schools is appropriate and these visits can be arranged by appointment.

### **Advantages of the Council's Corporate Insurance and Claims Handling Services**

There are many advantages of being part of the Council's corporate insurance and claims handling service, not least because of:-

- The economy of scale and managed risk profile ensures that Torbay Council are able to pass on to Schools the advantageous premium costs and insurance terms obtained.
- The provision of a comprehensive range of insurance policies with high levels of indemnity to ensure financial risk protection of key exposures which includes:- public and employer's liabilities (including Governors liability whilst acting on behalf of the LA), motor, officials' indemnity, fidelity guarantee, property (buildings and contents), school journey and personal accident insurance – all arranged through a competitive tender in accordance with industry best practice, EU Service Procurement Directives and Financial regulations.
- Financial security for schools with excess payments being centrally met by the Council.
- management of all corporate insurance claims related matters
- advice and guidance regarding insurance implications for events and activities, property issues, school trips and hiring of school facilities
- reinstatement valuations of LA properties
- Regulatory engineering inspections
- guidance and support on day to day management of risks and Insurance implications
- mid term adjustments, additions and deletions in cover required to reflect risk exposure
- Continuity of service.

- Proven track record for schools with existing local knowledge of specific insurance and claim requirements enabling closer communications.
- Support and access to the Council's corporate services.

Please note that when funding for insurance is delegated to any school, the school shall demonstrate at the time of application for delegated funds, to the satisfaction of the Section 151 Officer (Executive Head of Finance), that cover relevant to the Council's insurable interests, under a policy/policies to be arranged by the Governing Board, is as good as the relevant minimum cover arranged by Torbay Council and is sufficient to protect Torbay Council.

Failure to comply with the minimum levels of insurance cover may result in additional costs being recharged to Schools.

**A 5. Staff costs – supply cover (trade union) £10,000.**

The only budget funded from this area is the Teacher Unions Facilities funding which releases union representatives to negotiate with the Council to resolve disputes and produce draft school policies.

**A6. English as an Additional Language support service. Support for minority ethnic pupils or underachieving groups - £32,000**

**Gypsy Roma and traveler education. £9,000**