

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

AGENDA ITEM

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Revised Format of Budget Share Notifications

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To advise the Forum of:
- a proposed change in the layout / presentation of the budget share notification documents for schools' block funding.
 - a change in the process for notifying early years funding which will now only be made available online via the Early Years portal

2. Summary

- 2.1 The paper outlines proposed changes to the budget share notifications, comprising
- A change in presentation for schools' block budget share documents for maintained primary and secondary schools
 - A move to online notification for early years funding.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Forum is asked to note and comment on the changes.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Authority distributes maintained school budget share notifications by statutory deadlines of the end of February for schools' block funding and the end of March for early years funding. These notifications are in a pdf format created from spreadsheets and have not been reviewed for several years.
- 4.2 The current process of creating the documentation is old in format and difficult to alter to accommodate changes required.

5. Schools block budget share notifications

- 5.1 The DfE now produces a proforma for schools' block budget share notifications. This is aligned with the format the Authority is required to use to submit information to the DfE. The basic DfE format does not include all the additional information currently included in Hertfordshire's budget share document but this can be added.

Therefore, the new format would include the same information that is provided on the existing budget share document but in a different layout and presentation.

- 5.2 It is intended to adopt a new format for schools' block budget share notifications, based on the DfE format. An example of the revised schools block budget share is attached in Appendix A1 and of an existing budget share document in Appendix A2.

6. Early years budget share notification

- 6.1 Early Years budget shares have used a similar template. However, as early years payments are amended during the year (based on funding return submissions) it is proposed to use as the budget share notification the "finance section" (launched in April 2018) of the early years' portal, which will reflect these amendments. This can be printed out at any time from the portal.
- 6.2 The portal accurately reflects and details all payments due to providers based on their funding return submissions and it is updated immediately after each submission, allowing providers to see the impact of their return and if necessary, query if they were expecting a different figure, so this can be rectified before adjustments are processed. As a result, this a "real time" responsive system for Early Years providers.
- 6.3 This has enabled approximately 1,600 providers to understand their payment schedule better and reduced uncertainty around why adjustments have been made. An example of the finance section is shown in Appendix B (minor tweaks to format are currently being made).

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Forum is asked to note the recommendation in section 3.