

## **GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA**

**Thursday, 2 November 2017 at 2.00 pm in the Cowen Room, Dryden Centre**

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From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

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Item	Business
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes</b> (Pages 3 - 6)  The Forum is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting held on 28 September 2017
<b>3</b>	<b>Use of DSG Reserves</b> (Pages 7 - 8)  Carole Smith, Corporate Resources
<b>4</b>	<b>School Funding Update</b> (Pages 9 - 12)  Carole Smith, Corporate Resources
<b>5</b>	<b>Disapplication of Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations</b> (Pages 13 - 16)  Carole Smith, Corporate Resources
<b>6</b>	<b>Early Years Inclusion Fund</b> (Pages 17 - 22)  Carole Smith, Corporate Resources and Jan Batchelor, Children and Family Support
<b>7</b>	<b>Introduction of Universal Credit and Free School Meals</b> (Pages 23 - 26)  Alan Foster, Corporate Resources
<b>8</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>  Thursday 7 December 2017 at 2.00pm

Contact: Rosalyn Patterson - email: [rosalynpatterson@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:rosalynpatterson@gateshead.gov.uk),  
Tel: 0191 433 2088, Date: Thursday, 26 October 2017

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## GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 28 September 2017

#### **PRESENT:**

Ken Childs (Chair)	Special Schools Governors
Sarah Diggle	Primary Governors
Steve Haigh	Secondary Academy Headteachers
Mustafaa Malik	Primary Headteachers
Ethel Mills	PVI Sector Representative
Andrew Ramanandi	Primary Headteachers
Chris Richardson	Secondary Headteachers
Allan Symons	Primary Governors
Steve Williamson	Pupil Referral Unit Representative
Clive Wisby	Primary Headteachers
Matthew Younger	Primary Headteachers
Denise Kilner	Nursery Sector Representative

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Carole Smith	Corporate Resources
Rosalyn Patterson	Corporate Services and Governance

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Christine Ingle, Michelle Richards, Peter Lague, Elaine Pickering and Councillor Chris McHugh.

#### **2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **3 CONTINGENCY FUND APPLICATIONS**

The Forum received a report to inform of the decision to provide contingency funding to Eslington Primary School.

It was reported that an application for contingency funding was received for emergency costs arising from incidents outside the control of the governing body. The school expanded and took over a new site at Rose Street in 2015, the building had not been used as a school for a number of years and when the building started being used as a school again a range of issues came to light. The school had worked with Repairs and Maintenance at the Council to reduce the cost of the work required to £18,381. As the school had no control over the site previously and was not in a position to fund the repairs, it was agreed to award £18,381 to address the specific revenue repairs and maintenance issues.

The point was made that it could reasonably be expected that a lot of the issues should have been identified by Council service prior to the school moving onto the site. It was agreed that the concerns of the Forum, around the lack of identification of snagging issues, would be shared with relevant services within the Council.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the funding provided to Eslington Primary School.

*\*Ken Childs declared a personal interest as a Governor of Eslington Primary School.*

#### **4 SCHOOL FUNDING UPDATE**

The Forum received a report on the outcome of the Mainstream School and High Needs Block stage 2 consultations for the new National Funding Formulas (NFF). It was reported that on 14 September 2017 the DfE issues a number of documents on the NFF, however this does still not provide the whole detail.

It was noted that national minimum funding levels have been set for both primary and secondary pupils, however no primary schools in Gateshead are under the minimum level of £3,300 and only two secondary schools are under the £4,600 threshold.

The NFF AWP values for KS3 and KS4 have increased and there has been a steep decrease in FSM funding per pupil. Pupil Premium for LAC will be increased by £400, however there is no LAC factor in the new NFF.

It was reported that the Schools Block allocations will increase by 2.41%, Central Schools Block decreased by £20,000 and High Needs Block will increase by 0.49%. It was acknowledged that these figures are indicative and will be updated in December.

The Forum was provided with the formula factors that the DfE propose, some of which are not per pupil allocation. It was noted that the PFI factor has increased by RPIX (£90,000).

There has been no clarification regarding the announcement of 0.5% increase for all schools on a per pupil basis, however not all schools can receive an increase due to MFG, therefore further guidance and an updated APT are currently being awaited.

More information is expected to be received imminently, therefore it was agreed that the sub group would meet prior to half term.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the contents of the report and that work will be undertaken by the MSFS on Gateshead's transition to the NFF.

## 5

### EARLY YEARS INCLUSION FUND

The Forum received a report on the progress made by officers in the development of the criteria and application process for the Early Years Inclusion Fund which builds on previous reports to the Forum. Once agreed, all settings will be consulted.

The aim of the fund is to ensure three and four year old children accessing their funded entitlement with low or emerging levels of SEND receive timely, planned and monitored early interventions. Awarded amounts will be approximately £200 per child per year and will be used for things such as; purchasing resources, training, staff time, coordinate key worker duties and transition work.

The application process needs to provide details of the proposed purpose of the funding and how it will support inclusion and reduce barriers to taking up their free entitlement.

It was proposed that the value of the Inclusion Fund for 2017/18 is set at the estimated amount of £50,933 and that the Forum agreed to the intended use of the fund. The Forum was also asked to agree the application process, payment mechanism and that the Inclusion Fund is ring fenced and finite.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Schools Forum reviewed and agreed the proposed value, use, eligibility, application and payment processes as outlined in the report.
  - (ii) That the Forum reviewed the consultation document and reviewed the information contained within the document.
  - (iii) That the Forum agreed the attached consultation document.

## 6

### SCHOOL SURPLUS BALANCE PROCEDURE

A report was presented to the Forum which proposed the discontinuation of the Schools Surplus Balance Procedure.

It was noted that the surplus balances have reduced, with only five schools this year with a surplus balance, therefore the Forum was asked to consider whether the surplus balance mechanism is still worth having.

It was suggested that this should be suspended rather than discontinued so that a watching brief can be kept on the situation. It was agreed that the mechanism would be in place for the current financial year but next year, prior to asking schools for their licences, the balances would be brought back to the Forum to decide.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Schools Surplus Balance Procedure be maintained but suspended from April 2018.

- (ii) That the Forum noted that an annual report on the overall value and movement of maintained school balances be brought to Schools Forum for decision on whether to implement the Surplus Balance Procedure.

**7 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The date and time of the next meeting is Thursday 2 November 2017 at 2.00pm.

## **Item 3**

### **TITLE OF REPORT: Use of DSG Reserves**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Schools Forum of the use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Reserves to provide funding for security at the old Ravensworth School site whilst works are undertaken.

#### **Background**

2. Ravensworth Terrace Primary School moved into their new school at the beginning of the autumn term. In September 2017 Gateshead Cabinet approved an alternative use for the old Ravensworth Terrace primary school site for educational purposes. In order for the building to be handed over to the Behaviour Support Service (BSS) some works are required to be carried out.
3. During this transition phase it will not be possible to charge Ravensworth Terrace Primary School as they are not occupying the site, it is not possible to charge BSS as they have not yet taken on or moved into the site. Property Services cannot pick up the charges as the property cannot be declared surplus as it has an intended education use in the near future.
4. It is difficult to calculate the estimated costs of the security as this will depend on any incidents and the number of call outs if any. The Fire Brigade have been informed of the status of the building and are content with the arrangements being put in place. The security arrangements are anticipated to end at the start of the spring term and with all these caveats in mind an amount of £5,000 has been allocated from DSG reserves for the security of the site during this interim period.

#### **Process**

5. Information was received from colleagues in Council Housing, Design and Technical Services. Educationgateshead and finance colleagues were consulted on the proposal and the Director of Learning and Schools approved the allocation.

#### **Proposal**

6. It is proposed that Schools Forum notes the use of £5,000 of DSG reserves for interim security at the old Ravensworth Terrace site.

#### **Recommendations**

7. It is recommended that School Forum notes the funding provided for interim security at the old Ravensworth Terrace site.

**For the following reasons:**

- To provide funding for security to prevent vandalism and provide routine checks to the old Ravensworth Terrace site
  - To enable work to be carried out on the old Ravensworth Terrace site prior to the handover of the site to BSS.
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**CONTACT: Carole Smith ext. 2747**



## **Item 4**

### **TITLE OF REPORT: Schools Funding Update**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on School Funding developments and to ask Schools Forum to approve proposals made by the Mainstream Schools Funding Sub Group.

#### **Background**

2. The Mainstream Schools Funding Sub Group met for the first time 19 October. The group was provided with an update on school funding developments which builds on the September Report to Schools Forum.
3. The main developments from the September meeting are:-
  - The DfE have published a number of documents including
    - The High Needs Block Operational Guidance
    - Updated Schools Operational Guidance
    - National Funding Formula (NFF) Technical Notes for the High Needs Block (HNB), Schools Block (SB) and Central Schools Block (CSB)
    - High Needs place change notification 2018 to 2019: Technical note and workbook
  - Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who are educated in Additionally Resources Mainstream Schools (ARMS) will now receive mainstream funding as allocated by the formula together with a £6,000 place allocation from the HNB. Empty places will continue to be funded at £10,000 per place.
  - The DfE have contacted all school finance leads following feedback from regional meetings and DfE training sessions to say that all Local Authorities (LA's) can apply to disapply the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations to allow a positive minimum funding grantee (MFG) of up to 0.5%. The disapplication is the subject of a later report on this agenda.
  - Due to the announced changes in funding (minimum funding level for primary schools) and the probability that many LA's will wish to set a positive MFG value the DfE issued a new modelling tool on the 20 October to allow these additional features to be used.
  - The HNB Operational Guidance sets out the new funding arrangements for children in maintained and academy special schools. The LA will receive £4,000 for each child based on the October schools census. The DfE will also implement a process for moving funding between LA's on the basis of net importers or exporters of pupils to or from a different home LA.

4. The group was provided with the factor comparisons in appendix 1, and the different factors and the NFF were discussed.
5. The group proposed the following principles and funding aims, and that further modelling is undertaken when the DfE release the next modelling Authority Proforma Tool (APT) that allows for a positive MFG factor and a minimum primary funding level.

## **Principles**

- An affordable equitable and transparent mainstream school funding formula
- A formula that will focus only on mainstream school age range – not taking other age ranges into account (e.g. post 16 or 2, 3 & 4 year olds)
- A formula that where possible prepares schools for the National Funding Formula (NFF) and moves Gateshead's formula in the direction of travel towards the NFF

## **Funding Aims**

- Phase the changes required over the next 2 funding periods
- 1:129 primary secondary ratios
- 3% funding gains cap
- Positive MFG if possible
- Minimise the value of MFG

## **Timeline**

6. The following timeline is required to meet the DfE timescales on the submission of the APT in January 2018:
  - Subgroup work and initial proposals to Schools Forum 2 November
  - Subgroup meeting week commencing 6 or 13 November
  - Final proposals for Schools Forum 7 December
  - Consultation with all schools 8 to 15 December
  - Consultation outcome and Formula Schools Forum special meeting 19 December
  - Schools Forum approval 11 January
  - Portfolio approval 15 January
  - Submission to DfE 19 Jan 2018

## **Proposal**

7. It is proposed that Schools Forum notes the information in the report and approves the proposed principles and funding aims.

## **Recommendations**

8. It is recommended that School Forum approves the principles and funding aims proposed.

**For the following reasons:**

- To enable further financial modelling to be undertaken to using the principles and funding aims to enable Gateshead's mainstream funding formula to transition to the NFF
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**CONTACT: Carole Smith ext. 2747**

## Appendix 1

1) Basic Entitlement Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)						Difference	Difference
	Description	Amount per pupil Gateshead		Amount per pupil NFF		AWPU	
	Primary (Years R-6)	2,905.00		2,746.99		-158.01	
	Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)	3,750.00		3,862.65		112.65	
	Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)	4,360.00		4,385.81		25.81	
	Description	Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil
2) Deprivation	Current FSM	0.00	0.00	440.00	440.00	440.00	440.00
	FSM6 % Primary	850.00		540.00		-310.00	
	FSM6 % Secondary		1,400.00		785.00	0.00	-615.00
	IDACI Band F	0.00	0.00	200.00	290.00	200.00	290.00
	IDACI Band E	0.00	0.00	240.00	390.00	240.00	390.00
	IDACI Band D	347.75	416.24	360.00	515.00	12.25	98.76
	IDACI Band C	401.25	480.28	390.00	560.00	-11.25	79.72
	IDACI Band B	481.50	576.33	420.00	600.00	-61.50	23.67
	IDACI Band A	802.50	960.55	575.00	810.00	-227.50	-150.55
3) Looked After Children (LAC)		Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil
4) English as an Additional Language (EAL)	LAC X March 16	1,500.00		0.00		-1,500.00	-1,500.00
	EAL 3 Primary	260.00		515.00		255.00	
5) Mobility	EAL 3 Secondary		260.00		1,385.00		1,125.00
	Pupils starting school outside of normal entry dates	2,000.00	2,000.00	Cash Lump Sum £193,00 Historic Funding		0.00	0.00
6) Prior attainment		Weighting	Amount per pupil	Weighting	Amount per pupil	Weighting	Amount per pupil
	Low Attainment % new EFSP	0.70		1.00		0.30	
	Low Attainment % old FSP 73		320.00		1,050.00		730.00
	Secondary low attainment (year 7)	0.48		0.48		0.00	
	Secondary low attainment (years 8 to 11)		550.00		1,385.00		835.00
Other Factors							
Factor		Lump Sum per Primary School (£)	Lump Sum per Secondary School (£)	Lump Sum per Primary School (£)	Lump Sum per Secondary School (£)	Lump Sum per Primary School (£)	Lump Sum per Secondary School (£)
7) Lump Sum		115,000.00	140,000.00	110,000.00	110,000.00	-5,000.00	-30,000.00

## **Item 5**

### **TITLE OF REPORT: Disapplication of schools and Early Years Finance Regulations**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to request that Schools Forum approves the application to the Secretary of State for Education to disapply the Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations to enable a positive minimum funding guarantee (MFG) to be set of up to a value of 0.5% for mainstream schools.

#### **Background**

2. On 14 September the Education Secretary announced the following:-

“Alongside the formula published for schools today, the government also confirmed reforms to funding for children and young people with high needs. Every local authority will see a minimum increase of 0.5% per head in 2018-19, and 1% per head in 2019-20. And underfunded local authorities will receive up to 3% per head gains a year for the next two years. Overall, local authorities will gain 4.6% on average on their high needs budgets.”

3. However under the current mainstream school funding operational guidance for 2018/19 the MFG for mainstream schools has a value range of -1.5% to 0%, and without disapplying the regulations it would be impossible to replicate the funding allocations published by the Department for Education (DfE) alongside the announcement, or provide additional funding for schools receiving MFG.
4. The DfE have issued additional guidance following feedback from LAs stating that if LAs want to set a positive MFG (of up to 0.5%) they must have had a disapplication request approved by the Secretary of State to disapply the regulations relating to MFG. The DfE issued a new Authority Proforma Tool (APT) to enable LA's to undertake modelling with a positive MFG of up to 0.5%.
5. Gateshead intends to apply to the Secretary of State to disapply the regulations to allow mainstream schools MFG to be set with an MFG range of between -1.5% and 0.5%.
6. The application form that the DfE have supplied for the disapplication of regulations (Appendix 1), asks if Schools Forum approval has been granted and if all schools have been consulted.
7. Consultation on the proposed changes to the mainstream school formula, and the intention to disapply the regulations will take place in due course together with information on how many schools the disapplication will apply to.

## **Proposal**

8. It is proposed that Schools Forum approves an application to the Secretary of State to disapply the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations to extend the MFG range from -1.5% to 0% to -1.5% to 0.5%.

## **Recommendations**

9. It is recommended that School Forum approves the application to the Secretary of State to disapply the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations to widen the MFG range from -1.5% to 0% to -1.5% to 0.5%.

## **For the following reasons:**

- To enable Gateshead mainstream schools funding formula to have greater flexibility
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**CONTACT: Carole Smith ext. 2747**

**School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations  
Local Authority Application to Disapply Regulations Form**

- 1 Please complete this form to formally apply to the Secretary of State for Education to disapply the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. Please complete all relevant fields and return the completed form via an attachment on the [ESFA contact form](#).

When submitting this form via the ESFA contact form please ensure that you select **LA Funding Formula – Disapplication / exceptional factor request** from the drop-down list in the **2. Enquiry Details** screen

- 2 You may wish to include brief supporting attachments with your request such as forum minutes (if links not available) or spreadsheet calculations. Attachments should only be included as supplementary evidence and referenced in the 'details of the request' box.

- 3 In the 'details of request' box, you should include, where appropriate:

- What is the impact on the schools concerned?
- Do the schools benefit from the proposal?
- Will maintained schools and academies be affected in the same way?

- 4 In the 'Assessment of the equalities implication' box, please:

- Identify and assess the [equality] impact of the disapplication request, having due regard to the needs set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

Local Authority number	390
Local Authority	Gateshead
Funding year request relates to	2018/19
Type of request	Other
Which requirement in the Regulations does this request relate to?	Regulation 29
Number of schools affected	Not yet known
Have the schools affected by this request been consulted?	No
What are the views of the schools affected by this request?	
Does schools forum agree with this request?	
If yes, please provide link(s) to the minutes showing schools forum agreement	

Details of request (2,500 characters maximum)	Please note that if attached files are more than 2.5mb in size then please email them separately to <a href="mailto:academy.questions@education.gov.uk">academy.questions@education.gov.uk</a>

Assessment of the equalities implication	Please note that if attached files are more than 2.5mb in size then please email them separately to <a href="mailto:academy.questions@education.gov.uk">academy.questions@education.gov.uk</a>

Name of requestor	
Job Title	
Email address	
Date	

*For Official use only*

Request number	
ID	
Decision outcome	
Details of the Decision (including any conditions)	

Name	
Date	
Type of Notification	
If this notification type is listed as 'intention to approve' the Department will notify you when the regulations are laid.	

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**Item 6****TITLE OF REPORT: Early Years Inclusion Fund Consultation Outcome**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To present to Schools Forum the results of the consultation on the Early Years Inclusion Fund for 2017/18, and to approve the rollout of the process for settings to apply for funding.

**Consultation**

2. The Consultation on the Early Years Inclusion Fund was sent to all providers on 28 September 2017 with a closing date set at 11 October 2017.
3. 27 consultation responses were received, with an average “Yes” response of 91%, an average “Don’t know” response of 4.4% and an average “No” response of 3.7%.
4. A summary of the responses is attached at appendix 1 and appendix 2 shows the comments made.

**Proposal**

5. That Schools Forum notes the responses and comments made on the Early Years Inclusion Fund Consultation and that Schools Forum approves the rollout of the Inclusion Fund, funding arrangements agree in September 2017 Schools Forum.

**Recommendations**

6. That Schools Forum
  - Notes the content of the report
  - Accepts the proposals for the Early Years Inclusion Fund

For the following reasons:

- To enable settings to apply for additional funding for 3 & 4 year old children with low level or emerging Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

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**CONTACT: Carole Smith Ext 2747**

## Appendix 1 - Responses

Responses to questions	Yes	No	Don't Know	Other
Q1 Do you accept the total level of Inclusion Fund for 2017/18 Financial Year?	22	2	2	1
Q2 Do you accept the Inclusion Fund application limit of £200 or in exceptional circumstances £500?	23	2	2	
Q3 Do you accept the proposed uses of the Inclusion Fund?	26	0	1	1
Q4 Do you accept the eligibility criteria for the Inclusion Fund?	25	1	1	1
Q5 Do you accept the payment mechanism?	26	0	0	1

## Appendix 2 – Comments

Any other comments

Do you accept the total level of Inclusion Fund for 2017/18 Financial Year?

Yes only because we cannot afford a reduction in the base rate it is very limited but better than nothing

It is a very limited amount of money and £200 won't have much impact per child – even training courses can be very expensive.

As with all areas of funding these days there is just not enough money to support SEN children in the way they need. This also impacts on the other children in the setting. However we realise this is beyond the remit of the LA and needs government action!!

Thank you for letting us know about this fund.

Pity it's not more but I wouldn't want to reduce the base rate.

Though to clarify, are you saying that if a child takes their universal hours at one setting and extended hours at another, then both settings are eligible to apply?

Though could be helpful to also have an exceptional circumstances ability to allow separate immediate payment.

If you want to trial any paperwork or procedures we would you be happy to or be on a working party to develop the forms needed.

It would be useful to know how settings will be reminded to apply for the inclusion fund – would they receive an email reminder?

This will without doubt have a positive impact on early intervention for children with SEN – Well done to everyone involved

Think this is really positive and will hopefully help with early intervention.

This seems like a lot of money but how many providers is this to cover?

£200 is not likely to provide any long term 1:1 support or provision for a child. On costs need to be considered for staff employment. Also how would exceptional be proven?

Q3 comment - The uses are flexible and realistic.

Can DLA only be applied for if a child has a diagnosis of ASD etc.?

Some of our parents are not English and would struggle to apply for DLA which would delay the inclusion Fund payment and delay timely support for needy children.

Many children begin their time in early years settings without support

They are expected to sink or swim. This has a significant impact upon the wellbeing of the child, parents and staff.

If children are identified by Health Visitors before starting early years provision they should be able to attend with support from the start.

Having three children in Early Years with ASD and ASD type needs currently it is very difficult to provide for their needs and safety in a nursery environment with the legal ratio of staff.

These children are unaware of danger and self-control and pose risk to themselves and others without close monitoring and support.

If a key worker is having to monitor or shadow a child then the other 12 they are responsible for do not get fair access to support.

These children would be put on the EHCP process but in the 20+ weeks it takes from initial monitoring to finally receiving the funding the child is having to be supported within the means of the early years setting on a daily basis.

The majority of children begin our setting as 2 year olds and turn 3 throughout the year. We have children attend in receipt of the 2 year funding. We have found that a higher proportion of funded 2 year old children have significant delays in the prime areas of learning as a result of underlying developmental delay, compared with non funded two year olds; thus, these children are some of the most vulnerable in a setting.

In 2016/2017 we had 8 children attend our setting with SEN, the majority attending for 5 sessions per week and 5 of who were 2 years old in receipt of funding. Seven of these children entered our setting with no identified additional needs. Their needs were quickly identified by our excellent experienced staff team and the children were quickly referred and subsequently supported by the EYAIT. Each of these children required either one to one or one to two support for the majority of their care with us. This meant that all of our sessions were staffed by a minimum of 7 members of staff for a maximum of 20 children per setting.

We support all of the SEN requirements outlined in this document and fully agree these children should be and deserve to be in high quality settings with high quality staffing to support their developmental delays. We are fully inclusive without discrimination and feel in order for these children to reach their full potential, to keep them and the children and staff in the setting safe and too allow them unrestricted access to their stimulating learning environment they need a higher staff ratio to meet all of their needs and allow them to grow independently and confidently. Every child matters and every child is unique. Restricting the Inclusion fund to funded 3 and 4 year olds does not help settings to provide the care and support that the 2 and rising 3 year old children very much deserve.

As a result of last year's high ratio of children with additional needs we have used up all of our contingency funding, we now have no money left in the bank and are living month to month. My excellent dedicated staff team have put monthly wages on hold and also worked sessions for free to care for our children due to our financial situation, surely that isn't expected, or right?? We received one DAF fund amount at the end of the summer term and other than that received absolutely no financial support at all.

If the inclusion fund been is extended to include funded two year olds it would allow settings who are struggling to support these vulnerable children to be better able to provide the staff and resources needed to meet their needs.

For the really high needs children we have taken in this year, this is just nowhere near enough. Q3 comment - However, £200 will not go far at all with regard to staff support, which is where our need is

Q4 comment - We are having to do so much paperwork to apply for EHCPs for these children, who have arrived with nothing previously started, more paperwork seems ridiculous and uncalled for in situations like ours. These children have real complex needs and came into us requiring full time 1:1 support.

For children where 1:1 support is required from the outset (Portage demand it before the child arrives), more funding should be given. I need to pay for 3 members of staff to support these children for 15 hours. £200 is a drop in the ocean! I won't get a penny until the EHCPs come through but they won't get picked up from the census until October 2018. It's very worrying and impacting hugely on budget and on staffing around the whole school.

Q1 - Yes as our understand is if the inclusion fund was large it would have to be subsidize using the universal funding for 3 year olds.

Q2 - Yes this direct payment would allow our setting to run extra inclusive interventions and attend specific courses.

Q3 - Yes, however I think there needs to be more clarity over who would receive the inclusion fund if both universal and extended provides applied.

This is an exciting opportunity for our school to have extra financial help in the current climate. Children starting our nursery tend to be significantly below age related expectations, however are not SEN. A lot of targeted support is needed which is costly to school.

Maybe if there's any money left in the pot at the end of the year it should be up for bids from all settings for SEN resources, training or creative ideas?

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## **Universal Credit full service roll out in Gateshead**

Universal Credit is a national benefit which will replace Income Support, Income related Jobseekers Allowance, Income related Employment and Support Allowance, Housing benefit, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. People in Gateshead may currently claim Universal Credit, but generally only if they are a single person.

From 11 October 2017, the roll out of Universal Credit in Gateshead will be expanded to include **anyone** making a new claim to any of the benefits referred to above. This includes families with children and lone parents.

Universal Credit is worked out by awarding a personal amount based on age and household make up, and then adding tops ups for disability, housing costs and children. It reduces in line with the amount of money earned when someone starts work.

Anyone applying will need to sign a claimant commitment. For those not working, or only working part time, they may be expected to spend up to 35 hours a week doing “work requirements” i.e. looking for work/training. If a person does not fulfil these commitments they will be subject to a sanction.

Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears and directly to the majority of claimants. In certain circumstances, housing costs may be paid to landlords or Universal Credit may be paid more frequently. In general, there is a delay of between 6 and 8 weeks before someone will receive a payment, although there is the ability to apply for an advance payment (a partial payment).

In areas where everyone is already claiming Universal Credit, they are generally reporting overall increases in rent arrears and issues with budgeting.

Claims are made online. From the date a claim is made, an assessment period commences of one month. The claim is reviewed at the end of each assessment period and payment is made based on the circumstances during the period.

*Claims are made online at [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit)  
More information is available at [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)*

## **Universal Credit and Free School Meals**

At present, anyone in receipt of Universal Credit is entitled to Free School Meals. This includes people who would formally have only applied for Working Tax Credit, or both Child and Working Tax Credit and who are not presently eligible for Free School Meals. Please be aware, therefore, that there is likely to be an increase in the number of pupils who may be eligible for Free School Meals

### **Administration of Free School Meals where someone has applied for but not yet been awarded, Universal Credit or another qualifying benefit**

Department for Education have advised that anyone who has applied for a benefit but not yet been awarded it, is NOT eligible for Free School Meals. This applies to Universal Credit

claimants even where they may be waiting for 6 to 8 weeks for their entitlement to be confirmed.

We will advise schools where we have received an application for Free School Meals and the parent has applied for a qualifying benefit, but entitlement has not been confirmed. In these cases, we cannot confirm entitlement to Free School Meals. Also the Council may not always be aware of all UC claimants.

It would be for the school to decide whether they allow the child to have a free meal, or they decide to waive payment for the time being. If the school decides to do this, then for this period they **cannot** treat the child as having been awarded Free School Meals and they could not be recorded on the census as having had Free School Meals for this period, and thereby gain entitlement to the pupil premium.

### **Effect on schools funding**

As things stand presently, because anyone in receipt of Universal Credit is eligible for Free School Meals, we anticipate that this would increase the amount of pupils eligible for a free meal, as long as parents are aware of this, and therefore increase the pupil premium schools would receive. As schools continue to retain that pupil premium for 6 years, the ultimate effect could be an increase in the level of pupil premium funding received.

Full service Universal Credit is presently live in Newcastle, but the Free School Meals team there have not seen a significant increase in take up of free meals. They are not sure if this is because parents are not aware of their eligibility or for other reasons. The mailshots we do to benefit claimants would hopefully help to identify anyone who is eligible to some degree.

### **Will this remain the position going forward?**

The Department for Education have committed to looking at how eligibility for Free School Meals will be assessed going forward with the further roll out of Universal Credit nationally. This will involve a consultation, but it is yet unclear when this will happen. It seems likely that they will look to reduce numbers eligible for Free School Meals from some point in the future.

Helen Paine  
04 October 2017



All Head Teachers

Our Ref

CO'N/BT

Date:

05 October 2017

Dear Colleague

**Introduction of Universal Credit and Free School Meals**

I am aware that you have already received a briefing from the Council (updated version attached) in connection with Universal Credit in Gateshead. However, in summary, Universal Credit is a national benefit which will replace existing benefits such as Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Job Seekers Allowance, Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits. Universal Credit will be rolled out in Gateshead from 11 October 2017.

There are significant concerns that those parents/carers claiming Universal Credit will receive the benefit in arrears with a likely 6-8 weeks wait between claim and payment.

The Department for Education has advised that anyone who has applied for a benefit but not yet been awarded it is not eligible for free school meals. This applies to Universal Credit claimants even where they may be waiting 6-8 weeks for entitlement to Universal Credit to be confirmed.

This situation will clearly place significant financial uncertainty and strain on those families already experiencing financial challenges.

Children with parents/carers in receipt of Universal Credit **will** be entitled to free school meals for their children but the delay of 6-8 weeks could mean that our most financially vulnerable families may struggle to have the resources to feed their children.

I know how, as leaders of Gateshead schools, you consistently go that extra mile to ensure that our most vulnerable children are supported in a myriad of ways. I am therefore asking you, and your Governors, if you would be good enough to ensure that the introduction of Universal Credit does not result in hungry children that have not received a school meal if it is needed. I know school budgets are stretched but I also know you will continue to do everything in your power to support vulnerable children and families.

I thank you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely



Caroline O'Neill  
Strategic Director  
Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Encl

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