

News Bulletin



LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Issue 22: 6 March 2024



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LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

I know that you will be glad to hear that our campaign on school funding is continuing to achieve some traction. The current edition of the Tes is leading with this article: [Spring Budget 2024: What schools need from Jeremy Hunt | Tes](#). It contains the following quote from me:

For 2023-24, minimum per-pupil funding levels were increased by 0.5 per cent, but ASCL said the funding floor protections introduced in 2020-21 have not been maintained during this spending review period.

Gary Lewis is CEO at the Lighthouse Schools Partnership multi-academy trust, which has 17 of its 30 schools receiving minimum per-pupil funding. Mr Lewis told Tes that the 0.5 per cent increase had left trusts with schools like his being “forced to cut to the bone”.

“We would like next year’s rise in the minimum per-pupil funding level (MPPFL) to be ahead of the overall settlement, to compensate,” he said.

“Currently minimum funding is only scheduled to rise in line with other funding in 2024-25, but that bakes in this year’s disaster - we need restoration. We cannot face another year like this one.”

I am pleased to have reassurances from our contacts in the DfE that we have the full attention on Ministers. This does not guarantee that we will get any more funding but we have done all that we can.

The outcomes from our Operational Review were shared last week. I am sure that there will be mixed feelings in schools as the future arrangements will mean a significant change for Heads and SBMs. The pace at which we implement these changes will depend on turnover but ultimately sits with schools, Heads and LGBs. We are not seeking a rapid switch, quite the reverse and Trustees reached this decision to proceed based on a strong recommendation from me and Louise. I am convinced that this will put us in the best position for the long term but also allows us to deliver the changes at a manageable pace.

Lastly, at this morning’s School Leaders Meeting I briefed Heads about the process for developing our new three-year Strategic Plan. I am looking forward to a conversation across the Trust about how we develop our partnership. My hope is that an even more confident voice of moral purpose and positive impact about collaboration will be heard.

Gary Lewis

Chief Executive

Outcome of the Operational Review Consultation

Consultation responses

We have had a request to share the full feedback that we received to the consultation on the operational review which has been uploaded for you to [view here](#).

Responses were made in the knowledge that they would be shared with the Board of Trustees. Because we did not inform responders that their feedback would be shared wider than this, we have anonymised the information attached.

Recruitment to posts in the Central Team

We will soon be starting the process to recruit to posts in the Central Team to deliver the new operational model. In next week's bulletin we will commence the internal recruitment to the 16 hour per week job share post of Finance Support Manager and to Finance Business Partner roles. We are happy to look at part time and job share arrangements for these roles. Interviews will take place after the Easter break. After the holidays we will also be starting the internal process to recruit to the Estates Support Officer and HR Assistant roles. For all roles we will be monitoring the progress of the change management process to ensure that redeployment opportunities are not missed.

Job descriptions

All of the job descriptions that have been independently evaluated are now available in a job description library. Heads and SBMs can find these in the HR Secure Area. There is a folder in the files area of the 'General' channel called Job Descriptions. Please contact the [HR Team](#) if you have difficulty locating these documents.



Admissions Arrangements for 2025-26

On Wednesday 28 February Trustees agreed the Admission Arrangements for 2025-26 for all LSP schools. These documents have been uploaded [to our website](#) and the Diocese and local authorities have been informed.

For ease, we strongly recommend that your school website directs parents to the [LSP Admissions webpage](#) for Admission Arrangements.

A copy of these documents have also been uploaded to Foldr: [LSP Policies/Admissions Arrangements 2025-26](#)

Any questions please email [Eleanor Capel-Davies](#), Head of Administration.

Poster regarding respect for LSP Staff

Sadly we have had a few reports from schools of recent incidences of rudeness and aggression towards colleagues (often frontline staff) from parents/members of the public.

All LSP employees have the right to work in an environment free from abuse. We have created a poster which you can display in your reception area etc reminding visitors about our expectations regarding this.

[Click here to download](#) a PDF copy you can print out. The poster can also be found on Foldr: [LSP Communications/Health and Safety](#)

Data Capture Reminder - Photocopiers

Several schools have made us aware that their photocopier contracts are coming to an end in the next few months. As a few years have passed since our 'photocopier speed dating' event we would like to take the opportunity to update the information we hold centrally.

A reminder to upload your current photocopier information, using the spreadsheet link previously sent to you (emailed on 21/02/24) by **Friday 22 March**.

LSP Spring Newsletter

The next LSP Newsletter will be published at the start of Term 5. As always, we love to share positive and interesting news from across the Trust, so if you have any news stories or photos from your school that you would like us to include, could you please [email them to me](#) by **Monday 25 March**.

You can stay up to date with Trust news on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and on the [LSP website](#).

Leah Evans

Communications Officer

Budget planning process for the 3-year period starting in 2024-25

At their meeting on Wednesday 28 February the Board of Trustees agreed the budget setting assumptions for the 3-year period starting in 2024-25.

There are still many unknowns in terms of our cost base for this period but estimates have been made for items such as the support staff pay award for April 2024, the teachers' pay award for September 2024 and non staffing increases such as cleaning and catering costs. We will keep these assumptions under review and update them as new information is received.

This information will be shared with you in a **special LSP Budget Bulletin on Thursday 7 March**. This will enable us to incorporate the outcome of North Somerset Council's (NSC) decision on the future of Top Up Funding which is being considered by the Strategic Schools Forum on Wednesday 6 March.

Unfortunately, the budget assumptions that we have made are highly likely to produce unsustainable budgets across the Trust. The increase in our GAG funding for the 2024-25 financial year varies for each school depending on a range of data but overall, our funding is increasing by only 1.32% when compared to the current financial year. Due to a 9.8% increase in the National Living Wage in April 2024, we are anticipating another significant increase in April 2024 for support staff. If this follows the same format as in the last two years, we anticipate an overall increase for support staff costs across the Trust of 7.95%. We are also anticipating a teachers' pay award of 3.5% in September 2024, on the anticipation that anything higher than this would be funding by the Government. We are unlikely to know the outcome of either of these awards for some time.

With staffing costs making up over 80% of the income we receive it is easy to see that the increase in staffing costs will dramatically exceed the 1.32% increase in GAG funding.

There are many other factors that will affect our financial position. Some, such as NSC top up funding, and cleaning and catering costs will put further pressure on our budgets. There are a few glimmers of light with electricity and gas renewals being considerably lower than we have budgeted and some elements of the operational review, such as more trust-wide procurement, giving us the potential for future savings.

Historically schools have produced budgets in the summer mainly based on maintaining current staffing and spending arrangements and agreed these with their LGB. Where this results in a deficit, schools and the Central Team have worked together in the following Autumn to follow a change management process to rectify the projected deficit.

Whilst this has worked successfully in the past, it was very challenging to achieve in the last budget round and, given the financial position described above, we feel that it will be very challenging again this year. We also feel that Heads and LGBs should begin the process of rectifying projected deficits as part of the budget setting process, rather than consider it as a separate exercise. We are, therefore, planning a more detailed and structured budget setting process for 2024-25. More information about this will follow shortly.

Continued...

Budget planning process for the 3-year period starting in 2024-25

Continued...

We recognise that this will impact on workload by bringing the budget planning forward, particularly for School Business Managers, and may result in changes to the date of your LGB meeting to set the budget. We hope, however, that swift and informed decision making will improve the process for all involved, and give us the best possible opportunity to resolve the projected deficits.

We do recognise how difficult this year's budget setting process is likely to be for everyone involved and will support you in the process. For many the burden will not just be the process but the outcome of that process as well. Please make use of the people and tools already available to support you and share with us any thoughts of what more we could do. We will continue to lobby on behalf of all of our children and young people for fair and adequate funding in education.

Louise Malik

Chief Financial and Operating Officer



Support Staff - Pay Progression

The support staff pay progression spreadsheets have been available to schools from **LSP HR Secure in Teams from Friday 1 March**. The spreadsheet will identify the current grade and spinal column point (SCP) for each support staff member.

You may notice that the data has been pulled directly from iTrent. Some columns (which are predominantly blank) have been hidden and we would ask that you please do not delete or move any columns so that Neo People are able to run a bulk upload.

If any of the data is incorrect, please highlight this and provide us with the correct details and any effective dates.

Can you please review the spreadsheet, and identify for each staff member whether they will progress to the next SCP by clicking the relevant option in the drop-down box. If for any reason you decide not to allow progression where an individual is eligible, can you please provide details in the 'comments' column of the spreadsheet so we have a record of this. Once the spreadsheet is complete, Headteachers are asked to sign off the spreadsheet before it is submitted to HR.

Please note that this spreadsheet should not be saved in a lower version of excel otherwise the formulae will not work for the drop-down boxes.

Please can we ask that the completed spreadsheet is uploaded on to LSP HR Secure in excel format and not a scanned copy, by **10am on Friday 22 March**.

We will send the data to Neo People to action any pay change, which will be paid from Monday 1 April 2024. Staff will receive this increment in their April pay. Please note that the increment will be put into iTrent for schools centrally.

Confirmation letters informing staff of their pay progression will be added to LSP HR Secure so that the School Business Manager/Office Manager can distribute to staff prior to April pay day.

If you have any queries, please email HR@lsp.org.uk.

Summary of key dates

Spreadsheet available to schools - HR Secure folder in Teams	Monday 1 March 2024
Schools to return completed and authorised spreadsheets to HR Secure folder in Teams	10 am. on Friday 22 March 2024
Central HR team to instruct changes to payroll prior to payroll cut off date	2 - 12 April 2024
Central HR team to produce letters	12 - 19 April 2024
Letters available to schools for individual staff from HR Secure folder in Teams	w/c Monday 22 April 2024
Pay day - Schools to send letters to individuals prior to pay day	Tuesday 30 April 2024

Recruitment during Change Management (March until August 2024)

As you are aware many of the schools across the Trust are affected by change management processes. Some roles are being deleted, which means that a member of staff (MOS) is likely to be 'at risk' of redundancy, and so we have a duty to look for suitable alternative roles within the Trust to avoid redundancies, where possible.

With this in mind the Central HR team have created a document ([Trust wide redeployment pool \(School Version\) - review before advertising .xlsx](#)) for all schools to review ahead of advertising, or if you are currently advertising ahead of appointing, to see if there is a suitable person who could be 'slotted-in' to the vacancy at your school. We anonymised the MOS, but we have indicated the role, grade and hours that the MOS currently works, along with the hub that they are currently working. We hope that this will provide you with enough information to identify if there is someone of interest to you. If you are interested in anyone who is listed in the spreadsheet, please follow the below process:

1. Contact the Central HR Team, identifying the person you are interested in, and provide us with the details of your vacancy, including hours, salary, job description.
2. Central HR will then provide the vacancy details to the MOS and arrange a date/time for you to meet. Please note if it is a different role, then the member of staff may need to be interviewed to check their suitability into the role.
3. Following the meeting/interview we would then confirm the outcome. If the member of staff is appointed there is usually a 12-week trial period to confirm the role is suitable.

Please note: Headteachers, School Business Managers and HR leads have access to the Trust wide redeployment pool spreadsheet.



Job Evaluation Scheme

The aim of a job evaluation scheme is to provide a method of determining on a systematic basis the relative importance of a number of different jobs, whilst avoiding prejudice or discrimination. The outcome of job evaluation provides a score that can be applied to a pay and grading structure to determine the applicable grade for a post.

Many of the support staff roles across the Trust stem from Local Authority posts and were determined through their job evaluation scheme and pay and grading structure. When new posts have been created within the Trust grades had been determined through benchmarking and, in some cases, through independent evaluators such as Browne Jacobson.

This is not a sustainable process and we would like to establish an internal panel (including union representatives) that can evaluate and moderate roles in the future.

The first part of this is to choose a job evaluation scheme. There are a number of schemes available and, whilst they vary in the participation requirements, they all have the same basic function.

In the Trust we use the NJC support staff scale and the NJC has its own Job Evaluation Scheme which covers all jobs covered by the NJC terms and conditions. The scheme is well used and supported and comes with minimal costs to introduce and maintain. As a result, it is the NJC job evaluation scheme that we plan to implement across the Trust. This is the scheme that the roles generated through the operational review and the reviews of the Estates and IT teams have been evaluated along with the Learning Partner role.

In broad terms, when a new job description is required, the following process will apply:

- Job description and Person specification researched and produced
- A desktop evaluation will be undertaken by trained evaluators in the Central HR team
- A trained job evaluation panel will meet approximately 2 or 3 times a year to formally evaluate any new roles created
- A trained moderation panel will also meet approximately 2 or 3 times a year to moderate the outcomes from the job evaluation panel
- An appeals process will be available to individuals
- A review process - to a sample of job descriptions evaluated within the past 5 years to monitor changes in the job description/person specification and the evaluation score for the role

We are now arranging to train up to 16 individuals to form evaluation and moderation panels. We will be contacting our support staff unions to ask them to be involved in this process and will be training members of the Central HR team and the HR Lead in the secondary schools. We will also be looking for volunteers from other staff across the Trust.

continued...

Job Evaluation Scheme

continued...

Job evaluators and moderators can come from any position across the Trust as long as they have an interest in taking part in this work and are able to be released to do so. We will provide funding for cover for any pupil facing staff that take part in job evaluation or moderation at a set rate per half day.

We are planning 3 full days of training on the 9th, 16th and 23rd of May. We will fully fund the cost of the training centrally and fund release costs for any pupil facing staff that require cover.

We hope that you will support this initiative with its intention to provide equality in our pay and grading arrangements. We would be really grateful if you would share this opportunity with your staff and ask if any would be willing to volunteer for this role.

If you or your staff have any questions about this, please contact [Tania Newman](#).





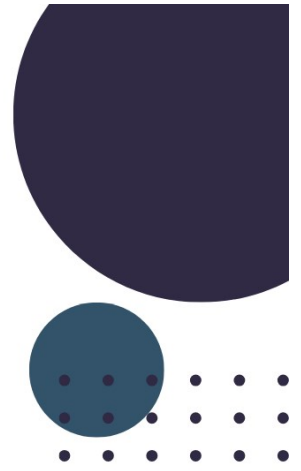
Upcoming Lighthouse Learning Sessions and CPD Networks

Please email [Lighthouse Learning](mailto:info@lighthouselearning.co.uk) if you have any questions about the below events.

Date	Event	Audience
Term 4		
Monday 11 March 1.00-4.00pm	LSP SEND Network @ St Peters' Primary Full details to be circulated to attendees shortly.	SENDCos (primary and secondary)
Wednesday 13 March 3.30-5.00pm	Secondary Network Slots	Secondary Heads
Friday 15 March 8.30am–4.00pm (moved from Monday 4 March)	CHANGE OF DATE: LSP Primary English Network @ St Peters' Primary Details have been sent to English Leads from Lighthouse Learning	English Leads
Wednesday 20 March 4.00-5.00pm	LSP SEND Training Session: Dyslexia and Universal Provision. Online Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 359 584 640 199 Passcode: Poca5u	All LSP Staff
Wednesday 20 March 7.00-8.00pm Or Thursday 21 March 10.30-11.30am	Chairs' Forum. Online An opportunity to discuss latest governance themes with other LSP Chairs and share best practice. Chairs, or a representative, to attend one of these dates as content is repeated.	Chairs



LIGHTHOUSE
LEARNING



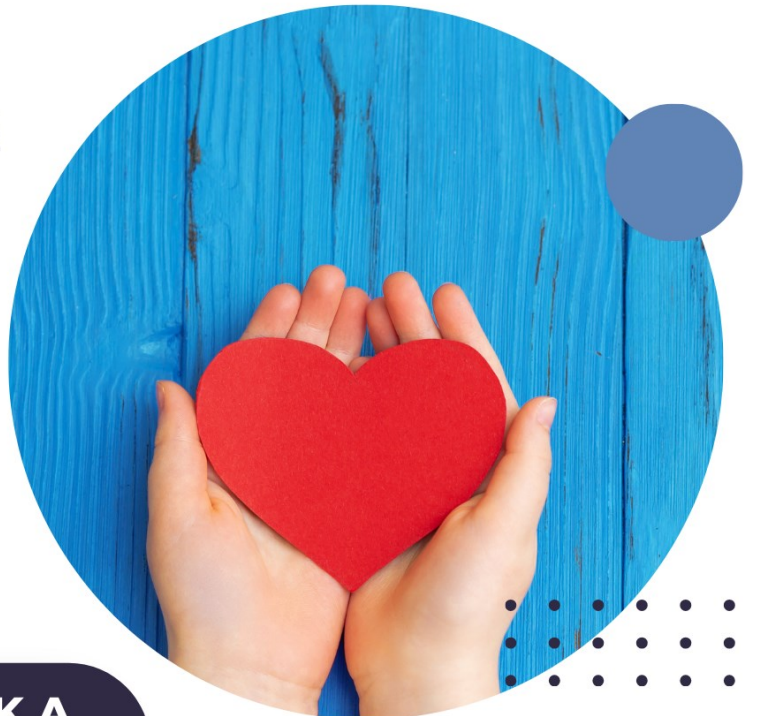
CHILD BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT TRAINING

TUESDAY 30 APRIL

9.15AM-3.15PM

STANTON DREW VILLAGE HALL (BS39 4EJ)

- FREE TRAINING FOR LSP STAFF
- DELIVERED BY WINSTON'S WISH AND SPONSORED BY THE 'TRACTOR EXPRESS' CHARITY
- SUITABLE FOR: PASTORAL STAFF, LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS, HEADS OF HOUSE ETC



**CLICK HERE TO BOOK A
PLACE**

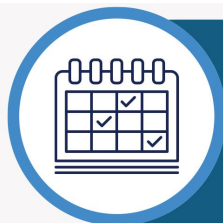
Sign Up Deadline: 9.00am on Thursday 28 March

Any questions email
lighthouselearning@lsp.org.uk

KEY LINKS, DATES AND DEADLINES

These reminders do not replace the Annual Planner so please ensure you are checking this regularly.

Please note the following links will only work for those who already have access to the relevant site or folder. If you feel you need to be given permission to access something please [let us know](#).



Annual Planner

Click to view the Annual Planner
(Via Sharepoint)

Bulletin Index

Click to access an index of
previous bulletin articles



Previous Bulletins

Click to access previous editions of the
LSP Weekly News Bulletin

The Beacon

Click to read the latest edition of the
LSP Newsletter: The Beacon



DATE	KEY DATE OR DEADLINE	FAO
Thursday 14 March 12noon	Deadline to update online form detailing changes to your LGB for Trustee sign off.	Clerks
Friday 22 March 10.00am	Deadline to upload reviewed Support Staff Pay Award spreadsheet to HR Secure Area.	SBMS & Heads
Friday 22 March	Deadline to upload Data Capture regarding Photocopiers (as per email from Tracey Joyce on 21/02/24)	SBMs