

News Bulletin



LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Issue 23: 13 March 2024



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LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

I don't think that we are actually seeing a higher volume of complaints overall but it is undeniably the case that a small percentage are unreasonable, obsessive and possibly vexatious. I have dealt with a couple of these in the past few weeks and am happy to say that our policy gives us the tools to address this from a position of strength.

Good and sympathetic communication in the early stages of a complaint resolves the matter for most people. If they feel that they have been heard and sense the School's sincere desire to do its best for their child, most people are satisfied. There are also occasions when we don't get things right at the first attempt and an escalation in the policy helps us to do so, often when someone else is able to look at the complaint from a different perspective. In a minority of cases we do meet people who abuse the process, often because despite receiving a full explanation they want to escalate and repeat the loop over and again. I have advised two parents of our power under section 10 of our [Complaints Policy](#) to deem the complaint closed if it is not being pursued reasonably. I will have no hesitation in using this approach if your and my time are being wasted. For the most part, however, handling complaints is an opportunity to fix something that has gone wrong and I believe that we should engage very positively.

Can I take this opportunity to remind you that copies of response letters to formal complaints should be sent to enquiries@lsp.org.uk so they can be added to our Complaints Register.

On a related theme, I saw an item in last week's bulletin about displaying notices in reception asking members of the public to respect our staff. I will admit that I was somewhat deflated by reading this and then seeing the notices appearing in schools this week. Schools have asked for this support from the Trust and of course we are willing to give it and support you in taking a strong line in any instances where parents or others behave with aggression. We have powers to ban individuals from our sites and should use them. But can I ask Heads to consider carefully what the best way to address these cases is as I am certain that we are talking about a small minority. Good and warm communication is always the most effective way to engage parents and every negative communication should be greatly outnumbered by positives. I would not want us to fall into the 'battle mindset' that frustrates us when we see it in others.

Gary Lewis

Chief Executive

North Somerset School Place Planning Strategy- 2024 - 2027

North Somerset Council (NSC) are currently consulting on their draft policy for delivering enough school places to enable every child aged 4 - 16 (and those aged 16 - 19 in school sixth forms) to have access to a local school place in the 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27 school years. It covers both mainstream and SEND places for pupils aged 4 - 19. The plan needs to meet the needs of a changing population due to new housing in some areas; changes in pupil demographics with the declines in birth rates nationally now moving from the primary to the secondary school population; and the need for more local places for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.

As part of this consultation, NSC are also seeking responses to the draft Joint Commissioning Plan for SEND. This plan, written in partnership with the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, details the commissioning plans for a wide range of high-quality services for children and young people with SEND for pupils aged 0 - 25.

[Click here](#) to read the draft documents on the e.consult page.

Gary Lewis has responded on behalf of the Trust but schools are welcome to submit individual responses should you so wish.

The consultation closes on **Friday (15 March 2024)**.

Responses can be made either via the e.consult pages (link above) or to school.organisation@n-somerset.gov.uk



Compliance - Risk Registers and Health and Safety Minutes

As per the [Annual Planner](#) schools need to submit a copy of the most recently reviewed Risk Register and Health and Safety Committee minutes to the central team. The deadline for this was Monday 4 March.

Please email these to lgbreturns@lsp.org.uk as soon as possible.

Thank you so much to those colleagues who have already sent these through for their school.

Equalities Policies

An ever vigilant member of the public has been checking on school websites and has noticed that there are old Equality Policies on some school websites. These have all now been superseded by the Trust [Equalities Policy](#). Can you please make sure that your website is up to date and pointing to the correct policy. We shall review our trust policy once the government advice on transgender issues has been confirmed.

Gary Lewis

Chief Executive

iAM Compliant Lockdown Drill

A task for **annual lockdown drill** has been added to iAM Compliant. Can you please log into iAM and enter the date of your most recent drill by clicking on the **Set due date**, then add any findings/outcomes from the drill to the notes section. Similarly to a fire drill, the lockdown drill offers an opportunity to check that any systems or processes work successfully and that staff and students know what action they need to take in the event of a lock down.

Catering and Cleaning review meetings

Please save the date for the next Catering & Cleaning review meetings which will take place on **Tuesday 23 April at Nailsea & Backwell Rugby club**:

- Primary schools 9.30am-1pm
- Secondary schools 12pm-3.30pm

As with recent meetings there will be an opportunity to sample dishes from the new menus between 12-1pm.

Teachers' Pension Grant

The DfE has just issued details of the grant funding for the increase in the employers contributions to the Teacher Pension Scheme from April 2024. The previous estimate that we produced has been removed from Foldr. We will now recalculate the estimated grant funding based on the information that the DfE has issued and notify you as soon as it is available.

Applying for additional SCA funding

The Board of Trustees will soon be considering the annual update to our SCA plan. Given the condition issues across our school estate, only significant condition issues will be addressed through the 5-year SCA programme. Whilst it is really important that we continue to prioritise these significant condition issues, there are likely to be other projects that could have a huge impact on the outcomes or wellbeing of our children and young people, or staff, that are not likely to be identified for funding for a considerable number of years.

Each year we now set aside a small proportion of our SCA funding for these more developmental projects. The amount of funding for this purpose is determined annually and will depend on the funding available and the cost of addressing the most serious condition issues in our school estate.

The funding available for 2023-24 is £60,000. SCA funding can only be used to address building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency or health and safety issues and therefore, any additional projects must also meet these criteria.

Rather than create a bureaucratic process that requires significant work for both schools and the Central Team, we would like to utilise Estates Development Plans that you may already have in place, or can develop between now and the application point. Schools will be able to apply for this funding for projects between £2.5k and £30k in a Primary School and £15k to £50k in a Secondary School. We will need to know the following information:

- Description of the project
- Estimated cost
- Impact on outcomes or wellbeing and for what group e.g. pupils, staff, community
- Proposed timescales
- Whether any other funding sources are available and what they are

If all of this information is already available in your Estates Development Plan, then you will only need to provide this plan to apply for funding and a breakdown of the planned use of your devolved capital. If the information above is not in your Estates Development Plan, then it will need to be provided in addition. Estates Development Plans need to have been approved by your local governing body (LGB) before they can be used to support this application.

A [proforma](#) that you could use as an Estates Development Plan is available if you do not already have one and a [proforma](#) to demonstrate the planned use of your devolved capital is also available. Applications for this funding need to be submitted by **Friday 3 May 2024**.

Reminder: 2024-25 NNDR bills

In the 2023-24 financial year, a new centralised National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) payment process was implemented where rates bills were paid directly to the billing authority by the ESFA on behalf of the mainstream maintained schools and academies. The same payment process will apply in 2024-25.

Schools will receive their NNDR bills for information only. The billing authority will continue to submit the NNDR claims and adjustments via the online portal in 2024-25.

BACS Payment Runs

We have seen a vast improvement from the schools with regards to meeting the noon submission on a Wednesday each week, thank you. Unfortunately, we are still finding ourselves chasing a couple of schools on a regular basis, this does impact the payment process especially when we have a member of the team or an approver out of the office either due to sickness, working hours or annual leave.

With Easter fast approaching we would like to remind you of future scheduled runs and the appropriate deadlines. Regrettably due to reduced staff during the Easter Holidays it is highly unlikely that we will be able to meet any late or unexpected payment requests during this time. The affected payment runs will be:

Payment Run W/C	Deadline for Paylist to LSP (Midday)	Funds to reach recipients a/cs	Term Holidays
18/03/2024	20/03/2024	27/03/2024	
25/03/2024	27/03/2024	03/04/2024	
01/04/2024	NO PAYMENT RUN		
08/04/2024	10/04/2024	17/04/2024	Easter Break
15/04/2024	17/04/2024	24/04/2024	
22/04/2024	24/04/2024	01/05/2024	

In addition, could you please ensure all paylist signatories sign and print their full name and position. This will allow the team to identify the signatory as an authorised approver.

Many thanks,

The LSP Finance Team

Recording Sickness Absence

Following a [previous bulletin](#), we would like to remind schools to **only enter an end date** for sickness absence on iTrent once the employee has returned to work. If an employee is off sick for more than one day or signed off work, please record the date the sickness is expected to end using the 'expected end date' option (use the end date stated on fit note if applicable) and leave the 'end date' box empty until they have returned.

If an end date is entered before the employee has returned, they will continue to receive full pay even if they aren't eligible which could result in an overpayment. Also, by not updating the absence record with an end date once an employee has returned to work, this could cause problems with pay calculation if the individual is nearing their sick entitlement being used which could cause an underpayment.

Please note: if an employee has multiple roles, an end date will need to be recorded against all roles.

If you have any queries, please [contact the HR team](#).



Vacancies within the Central Trust Services Team

We are advertising internally, in the first instance, for posts within the Central Team. The posts are:

- **Finance Support Manager** - JM3, 16 hours per week (job share), term time only + 20 days, starting in September 2024
- **Finance Business Partner** - JM1, term time only + 20 days. Starting in September 2024, we are happy to look at part time or job share applications

Both of these roles work as part of the Finance team to deliver a financial support service to schools including the delivery of a service level agreement to manage schools' high level financial functions. To undertake one of these roles successfully you will need to be totally committed to the provision of a high-quality service to schools. You will have experience of financial planning and forecasting for schools and of supporting and challenging Headteachers and Governing Bodies. You will be innovative with a strong focus on continuous service improvement. You will need to build and maintain strong and effective working relationships.

If you think that you have the skills and enthusiasm to carry out these roles, we would love to hear from you. To find out more about the positions please read the job descriptions and person specifications.

For further information and to apply for either of the roles please use the links below:

[Finance Support Manager](#)

[Finance Business Partner](#)

The closing date for the roles is **Monday 15 April** and interviews will be held on Monday 22 April for the Finance Support Manager role and Monday 29 April for the Finance Business Partner roles. We would be grateful if you could circulate this information to relevant staff in your school.



Chairs' Forums

Last week I circulated the Teams invitations to the upcoming Chairs' Forums:

- **Wednesday 20 March 2024, 7.00-8.00pm**
- **Thursday 21 March 2024, 10:30-11:30am**

This is an opportunity to discuss the latest governance themes with other LSP Chairs and share best practice. The sessions will be led by the Chair of Trustees and the CEO and are a great opportunity to discuss the latest governance themes with other LSP Chairs and share best practice

If you are a Chair planning on stepping down this year please consider bringing your successor along to the rest of the Chairs' Fora this year - please forward this invitation to them, or [email me](#) so they can be invited.

The two sessions will be covering the same topics, so you only need to attend one of them.

Chris Hills

Governance Professional

Reminder: Update on any changes to your Local Governing Body

A reminder to ensure that you have [completed the online form](#) (which is also linked on the LSP Clerks SharePoint), notifying us of any updates to your Local Governing Body (LGB), by **12 noon on Thursday 14 March**. Anything submitted after this deadline will not be considered until July 2024. It is worth noting that Trustees can make re-appointments in advance (for example reappoint in March for a term of office which will expire in May 2024).

When a governor does leave your local governing body it is very important that they are reminded that any documentation they may have relating to school/governor business is returned to the school and they cannot discuss/share anything they have been privy to whilst on the board for confidentiality and safeguarding reasons.

If you have any questions please contact [Chris Hills, Governance Professional](#).



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		
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. Teams invitation already circulated	Chairs
Monday 25 March 1.15-4.00pm (moved from Monday 18 March)	LSP Primary Science Network @ St Peter's Primary Details will be circulated shortly.	Science Leads
Tuesday 30 April 9.15am–3.15pm	Child Bereavement Support Training. Stanton Drew Village Hall Click here to register Sign up Deadline Thursday 28 March	Pastoral Leaders, Support Assistants etc

Reminder - SEND Training Session - Wednesday 20 March

Delivered online via MS Teams, by Suzy Divine, Lead Teacher for SEND. Open to all LSP staff so please forward the link below to relevant colleagues.

When: **Wednesday 20 March 4.00-5.00pm**

Delivered online via MS Teams

The session will cover:

- What is the Specific Learning Difficulty: Dyslexia? Unravelling the 'It's just literacy' myth
- Dyslexia in the mainstream classroom
- Rapid reasonable adjustments and 'Universal Provision' to meet the needs of Dyslexic learners

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 359 584 640 199

Passcode: Poca5u

UKLA/OU Reading for Pleasure Quality Mark

The UKLA/OU Quality Mark, now in its second year, recognises and rewards schools that have developed, embedded and enriched their Reading for Pleasure (RfP) culture and ethos with demonstrable impact on staff knowledge and practice, on parents and, most significantly, on young people's recreational reading.

Achieving the UKLA/OU Quality Mark will position schools as centres of excellence for nurturing young readers who choose to read widely and frequently, within and beyond school. The QM is open to all primary, junior and infant schools in the UK.

This will be a wonderful opportunity for LSP schools to be recognised for the strong work they have done to firmly embed reading for pleasure for their pupils.

If your school would like to apply to be part of the second cohort, there is an information briefing on Wednesday 24 April, from 2-4pm (booking form is within the [Press Release](#)).

West100 Leadership Bursaries 2024-25

(Please share with DHTs and AHTs)

We are delighted to once again offer our aspiring headteachers bursaries to complete the West 100 (W100) programme in the next academic year. Full details of the programme [can be found here](#) but we know the impact of the programme from our four participants who are taking part this year. They have told us:

“The W100 has been the best CPD I’ve completed. It’s given me the opportunity to reflect on the type of headteacher I want to be and the culture and principles that my school will have.”

“Through W100 I’ve been able to explore lots of different schools and examples of school leadership from across the country.”

“I’m so glad to be part of this programme and have met inspirational current and future headteachers and visited amazing schools.”

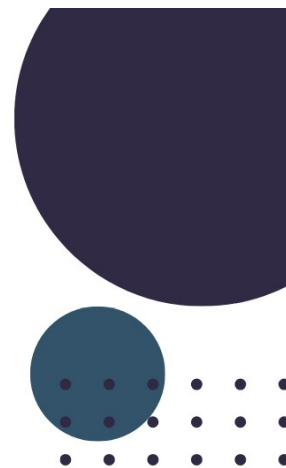
The W100 programme is an important part of our Trust leadership development and succession planning and we are keen to support our aspiring headteachers to take part in the programme.

There is a briefing from the W100 team on **Wednesday 20 March** (please register [using this link](#)) but if you are interested and would like to be considered for an LSP bursary please complete [this form](#) and we will be in contact to share more information and discuss further.





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**

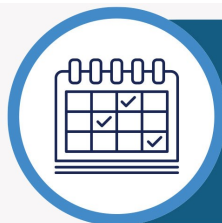
Sign Up Deadline: 9.00am on Thursday 28 March

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
Friday 3 May	Deadline for applications for additional SCA funding	Heads & SBMs