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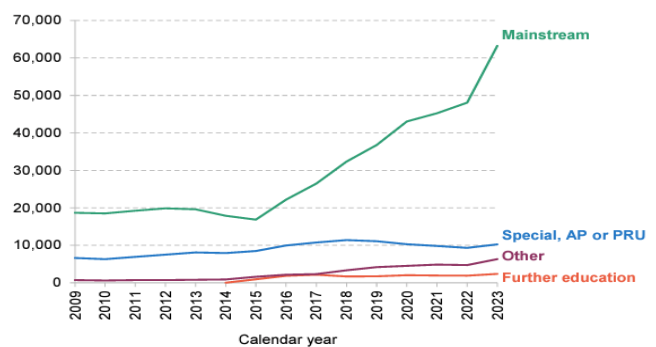
LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

The English SEND model is both broken and unworkable. That is not just my view but was the gist of the [National Audit Office's report](#) published in October. Indeed, they went on to note that the system was not improving outcomes for children and young people, that families lack confidence in the system, that the DfE does not know what capacity is required and that the current funding model is financially unsustainable.

All three of our Local Authorities are caught in this rolling financial disaster. The DfE have offered financial grants called 'Safety Valve' with tight conditions to invest in capacity so that they can reduce their deficits over time. The deficits are not reducing and initiatives such as linking mainstream funding to EHC plans (EHCPs) have actually incentivised schools and parents to seek EHCPs, which in turn increased costs as each plan required huge investments of schools and LA staff time to write and monitor. The graph opposite illustrates this at national level. We are in discussions with two of our LAs to manage down a colossal overspend on SEND and I hear that this same is going on in Bristol.

Figure 4. Number of new EHCPs, by school type



Source: [SchoolsWeek](#) 10 Dec 2024

The only way out of this doom-loop will be for government to prioritise the funding of SEND in mainstream schools and to reform a system that rewards SEND identification above SEND support; that will take a lot of money and very brave leadership.

In our Trust we have been doing all that we can to put SEND at the centre of our universal provision and to make our schools more inclusive of children with additional learning needs. Our Nurture UK approach does that, as does our central team investment in expert advice for SENDCos and teachers. I'd like to recognise the work that my colleagues Debbie Coker, Suzy Divine and Louise O'Rourke are doing to build this capacity in our trust. I hope that in schools you will give a shout out to all the people on your team who are really working for children in this complex system. I'm reminded of Teddy Roosevelt's remark, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." We don't have the big levers to move the SEND system but we can configure our Trust and our schools to make the best of what we have. Let's hope that the new government has the courage to tackle the system overall.

Gary Lewis

Chief Executive

Public Sector Pay Award 2025-26

You may have seen the [announcement yesterday](#) regarding the Government's recommended pay rise of 2.8% for public sector workers, including teachers, for 2025-26.

We will undertake some further work and research following this announcement and share information about the financial implications in next week's bulletin.

Louise Malik

Chief Financial and Operating Officer

Updates to HR Policies

A number of HR Policies have been reviewed and updated:

Policy	Location
Pay Policy	LSP Website, Foldr and ESS
Staff Expenses Policy	Foldr and ESS
Modern Slavery Statement	LSP Website, Foldr

These policies apply across the Trust. No further action is required except ensuring you are aware of, using and directing colleagues to the latest versions of these policies.

Reminder: Final checks for 14 February

Headteachers were emailed the latest attendance list for the 14 February Conference on Friday 6 December. Please ensure you have made all final checks by **3.30pm on Monday 16 December** and follow the colour-coding instructions on the sheet.

We will assume all spreadsheets are correct as of this date, and no further changes can be made after this.

Thank you to those who have already checked their list.

Any questions please email the [Lighthouse Learning Team](#).

Draft guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

As discussed at the Headteachers' Meeting later week a draft guidance document has been produced around the use of AI by trust staff and volunteers.

[Click here to read](#) this draft guidance document. If you have any comments or feedback please can you [email the Central Team](#) by the end of term.

New Central Finance Team Member

We are delighted to welcome Georgina Haslam “George”, to the Central Finance Team, full time, as a Finance Assistant. George joins us with a wealth of knowledge starting at All Saints School in Clevedon to her latest post as a Business Partner in Futura Learning Trust. She will primarily be supporting Easton, Fishponds and St. Mary Redcliffe Primary Schools when they transfer in January.



UK Sustainable School Leadership Survey



Tell us about your experience of school leadership

North Somerset headteachers and senior or middle leaders are invited to complete this survey. It is part of a major three-year research project exploring contemporary school leadership across the UK by academics at the Universities of Nottingham and Warwick and North Somerset is one of their case study areas. You can access the survey here:

https://warwick.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_agC03RAujDRNHSe

They've also published a [blog](#), a [flyer](#) and a [powerpoint](#) slide to explain the project.

Increase in RPA

The RPA 2025-26 price is increasing by £2 per pupil from 1 September 2025 - 31 August 2026 from £25 to £27 reflecting recent increases in inflation and the cost of meeting claims.

The Finance Team has updated this per pupil increase in IMP on your behalf and the system will calculate the increase in costs for 2025/26 and other years based on your projected pupil numbers.

UIFSM per meal increase

The DfE have confirmed an increase to the per-meal rate for Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM). The rate will be increased from £2.53 to £2.58 for 2024-25, backdated to September 2024 and we have updated IMP to reflect this increase in funding. If you have updated IMP with October census day meal uptake numbers and have a reasonable estimate for January 25 uptake, you do not need to take any further action. IMP will calculate the increase in funding for you and this will be reflected in your next forecast.



Pay Progression - Teaching and Leadership

Pay progression letters are now available from the HR Secure area of Teams.

Headteachers and School Business Managers/Office Managers will have received an email to confirm that letters for their school(s) are available to download from HR Secure. Schools will need to check the letters prior to issuing them to staff ahead of pay day on **Friday 20 December**.

If there are any queries regarding the letters, please contact hr@lsp.org.uk.

Timesheets Module via iTrent

The timesheet module in iTrent is now live. Schools have received two user guides to share with staff. The user guides provide information to enable staff to submit a timesheet and for reporting managers to authorise/reject timesheets using the iTrent system. The two guides are as follows:

- User Guide - Timesheet and Overtime Process for Employees
- User Guide - Timesheet and Overtime Process for Reporting Managers

These documents are available [on Foldr](#)—location below:

LSP Communications / HR / Training

Schools can roll out the timesheet module to all staff in a ‘big bang’ approach, or if they prefer to groups of staff in a staged process.

The timesheet module in iTrent is designed to alleviate the amount of administration that has previously been carried out in schools through the entry data of timesheets. It allows the staff member to enter their timesheet directly into iTrent and for reporting managers to authorise or reject the timesheet. Once timesheets have been authorised by the reporting manager, the timesheet will automatically be added to the payroll system, allowing the timesheet to be paid. School Business Manager’s/Office Manager’s can check authorised timesheets ahead of payroll to make any necessary adjustments, if needed.



Chairs' Forum - confirmation of January date

The next LSP Chairs' Forum will be taking place on:

- Thursday 23 January 2025 @ 10.30-11.30am
- Thursday 23 January 2025 @ 7.00-8.00pm

Please make a note in your diaries.

Each session will cover the same content so please attend the session at the most suitable time for you. MS Teams invitations for these sessions will be sent in early January. So you accept the date/time that you will be attending.

A reminder that the full programme of CPD for Governance, including Forums and New Chairs' Training, can be [found on our website](#).

Governor CPD: Nurture and SEND Webinar

Thank you to those who attended the Nurture and SEND Webinar on Wednesday 4 December – we hope you found the session helpful.

The recording of this webinar can be found on Foldr (LSP Communications\Workshop Presentations) or you can [click here](#).





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.

Agendas, Teams links (if required) and other resources will be emailed one week in advance of each network. The full programme of Lighthouse Learning CPD on offer for 2024-25 can be found on the [LSP website](https://www.lighthouselearning.co.uk).

DATE	EVENT	AUDIENCE
Wednesday 11 December 3.30 - 5.00pm	LSP History Curriculum—Tranche 2 Primary Schools To sign up for the webinar click here.	Primary Heads and staff
Thursday 12 December 4.00pm onwards	LSP Geography Curriculum: Staff Voice Gathering Click here to sign up or this session	Primary Staff

Unlocking Letters and Sounds - LSP Training

Lighthouse Learning is funding three face to face training sessions for new members of staff who join LSP Schools. There are limited places available at each session and schools will be charged £50 for non-attendance. Confirmation and joining details will be sent a week before the CPD. Dates remaining are:

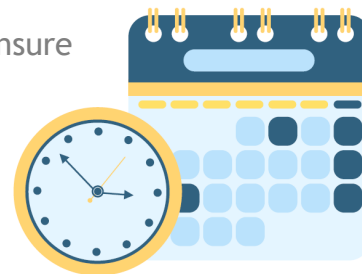
- Wednesday 15 January
- Wednesday 21 May

Training will be delivered in the English Hub Room, St Peter's Schools, Portishead BS20 6PZ and a sandwich bag lunch will be provided. Timings are 8.30 - 3.30pm and delegates must attend the whole day.

[You can book places by clicking here.](#)

KEY DATES, DEADLINES & REMINDERS

These reminders do not replace the LSP Annual Planner so please ensure you are checking this regularly (link on next page).



Key Dates

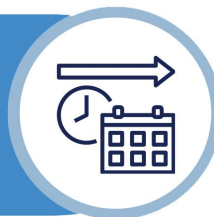
DATE	INFORMATION	FAO
Tuesday 17 December 8.25-11.00am	Trust-wide SBM/OM meeting @ Gordano School	SBMs/OMs



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 2024/25

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



SHARE WITH US

Don't forget, you can submit your school news stories to
be shared in our newsletters and on our social media.

Email your stories to: newsletter@lsp.org.uk