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## Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

I had reason this week to look back over some older versions of our school improvement strategy. It actually shows a very interesting evolution of our thinking about school improvement, leadership and what it means to be working together in the complex relationships of a multi-academy trust. The earliest versions of the document talk about the 'Trust' when they actually mean the Central Team - which is an error that we still occasionally commit. They also very directly lifted the Ofsted assessment schedules and one can see that they depended on creating an alignment of our view with that of the inspectorate. There is a continuous thread through all the documents of 'receiving and giving' which points to our belief that we have excellent practice within our schools that needs to be shared. We have also always recognised that developing leaders was an essential foundation for improving provision.

What has been really interesting to see is how those themes have developed and clarified over time. Our [current School Improvement Strategy](#) has been written by Neil Lankester and he has added so much more about the spirit and skills of leadership that are needed to turn our ambitions into reality. The 'strategy' is now a 'handbook' that shows how we ensure that school improvement is not an event but a culture. It is in so many ways the core purpose of Headship and of Governance.

I wrote last week about our greater hunger and appetite for outcomes that show that we are giving the very best to our pupils and communities. Implementing the School Improvement Strategy with all our hearts is how we will achieve that mission. We know that school improvement visits are not enough to do that, although they are locations for the accountability and reflection that the strategy requires. The real business of school improvement takes place in the daily classroom visits and nudges to practice from leaders and the frequent challenge and enquiry of governance. If you haven't spent time in the school improvement strategy recently, I commend it to you. It really captures what we are here for.

As ever,

*Gary Lewis, Chief Executive*



You will remember that we reconsidered our position around consultation on policies a year or so ago, to reduce workload and unnecessary reviewing for those outside of the Central Team. A reminder that the [Trust's Policy Schedule](#) outlines who has responsibility for reviewing each policy and whether it will be consulted upon or not.

## Policy Publication - Complaints Policy

Following consultation and Trustee ratification the Trust-wide Complaints Policy has been updated and published.

This can be found [on our website](#) and also [on Foldr](#) (as well as template response letters):  
*LSP Policies\Operational Policies\Complaints policies, guidance and templates*

It is imperative that all complaints received are now handled under this version of policy (2 October 2025 onwards) so please ensure you update any downloaded versions you may have. This would include your website, although we do not advise having copies of trust-wide policies on your website as you should be linking to the [LSP policies page](#).

Key reminders in regards to complaints:

- An acknowledgement should be sent within 5 school working days, and a full written response within 15 school working days
- A copy of any formal Stage 1 response letter should be emailed to [enquiries@lsp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lsp.org.uk) so a copy can be saved centrally.
- If you have any questions or would like any help or support (including a sense check of letters) please [reach out to Eleanor Capel-Davies](#) in the LSP Central Team.

## Policy Publication - Debt Recovery and Overpayment of

The following policies have been reviewed and updated as part of the review cycle. Minimal updates and changes have been made.

- Debt Recovery Policy can be found on the [LSP Website](#) and [Foldr](#): *LSP Policies\Operational Policies*
- Recovery of overpayment and correction of underpayment of salaries can be found on [Foldr](#): *LSP Policies\Operational Policies*

There is no further actions required, except to ensure you are referring to the latest versions of these policies if required to use them.

## Policy Consultation - Reminder

A reminder that we are currently consulting on the following policies:

- **Finance Policy** [draft PDF version](#), or word version [via Foldr](#): LSP Policies\Operational Policies\Policies
- **Reserves Policy** [draft PDF version](#), or word version [via Foldr](#): LSP Policies\Operational Policies\Policies
- **Pay Policy** [draft PDF version](#), or word version [via Foldr](#): LSP Policies / Consultation - Pay Policy Sept 2025

Any comments or feedback needs to be emailed to [enquiries@lsp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lsp.org.uk) by Wednesday 15 October. Thank you in advance for your review of these documents.

## FINANCE UPDATES

### North Somerset SEND Funding Briefing - Monday 3 November

From January 1 2026 North Somerset will implement a new flexible SEND funding model. There will be a briefing on Monday 3 November 2025, which will provide detailed information about the funding changes and demonstrate how to use SEND funding support resources effectively.

Given the significant impact of the funding changes on school budgets and SEND provision, it is advised that **all relevant staff attend the meeting**, in particular:

- Headteachers
- SENCOs
- Finance/Business Managers

#### Meeting Details

**Date:** Monday, 3 November 2025    **Time:** 9:30am

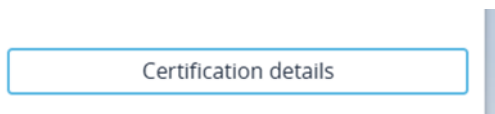
**Teams meeting link:** [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 384 865 582 614 7

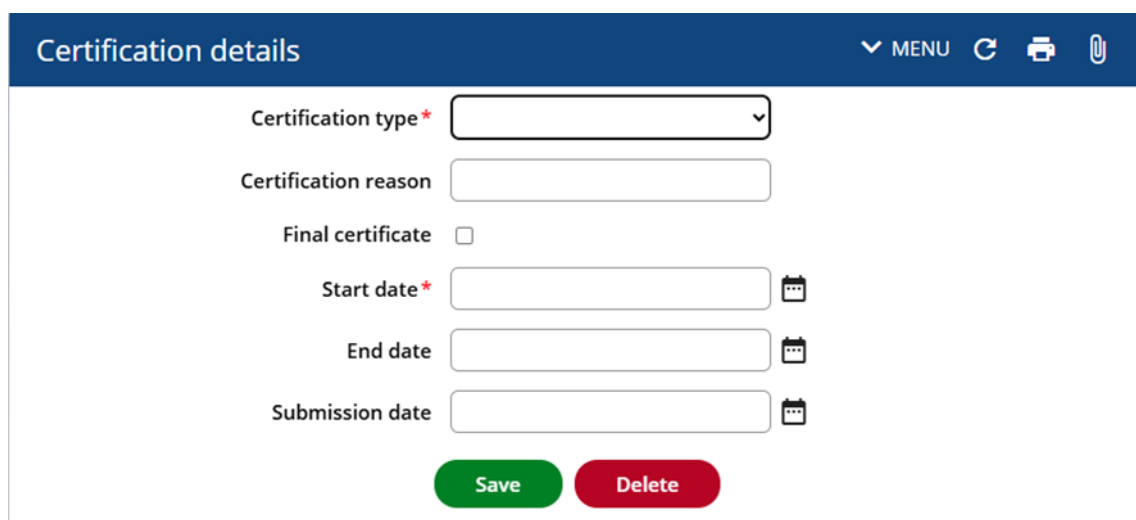
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## iTrent: Absence recording

There is a new option on the sickness absence screen on iTrent to record Fit Notes and Self Certifications:



This feature allows you to record certification details, and you will receive a notification three days before the certificate's end date, as a reminder to request a new certificate.



The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Certification details' with a dark blue header. The form contains the following fields and controls:

- Certification type \***: A dropdown menu.
- Certification reason**: A text input field.
- Final certificate**: A checkbox.
- Start date \***: A date picker field with a calendar icon.
- End date**: A date picker field with a calendar icon.
- Submission date**: A date picker field with a calendar icon.
- Save**: A green button.
- Delete**: A red button.

## Appraisals—Recording Spreadsheet

An appraisals spreadsheet has been uploaded to the LSP HR Secure Area on Teams. Please can you enter the 'appraisal completion date' once each appraisal has taken place. If they will not take place, then please email [hr@lsp.org.uk](mailto:hr@lsp.org.uk) to confirm why they will not take place.

We require this information so that we can report to our Trustees at the Staffing and Pay Committee meeting in November and therefore we would appreciate receiving this data no later than **Friday 14 November**.

## Annual Safeguarding Declaration & Childcare Disqualification

If you have a new starter you must manually allocate the annual declaration to them, please ensure that you are selecting the most up to date one titled '0900 - Annual Declaration of Safeguarding and Annual Training'. A guide is available on LSP HR Secure.

Primary schools will also need to allocate the Childcare Disqualification Form.

Schools with Central SLAs can request this from their Central Team HR contact.

## Casual Contracts

In order to ensure compliance with Employment Law, all schools are reminded of the following requirements regarding casual employees, who must not be processed as leavers unless one of the following conditions has been met:

- The individual has formally resigned in writing; or
- The individual has explicitly confirmed, in writing, that they do not wish to continue undertaking casual work for the Trust (we have a letter template that can be sent to casual employees who haven't worked for a period of time, this is available on LSP HR Secure Area on Teams > General > Files > Documents and Forms > Leavers & Variations to Contract)

Periods of inactivity do not constitute resignation or termination as they are still classed as contracted employees. Failure to comply with the above may lead to legal and financial risk, including claims relating to unfair dismissal, continuity of service, and employment rights.

Any queries, please contact the [LSP Central HR Team](#).

## Reporting Managers

Please check and ensure that each employee has been assigned a Reporting Manager in iTrent. This will ensure that system notifications are directed to the correct person, and that the structure for the school is accurate.

You can run a Position & Structure Details report from iTrent to identify current Reporting Managers and any gaps.



## Aspens Catering Update

### Aspens New Management Structure

School Business Managers and Office Managers have been emailed information from Aspens regarding their management structure change, details of key contacts for schools and the escalation process if ever needed. Please note this may be a change in contact for your school.

### Autumn/Winter Menus

Schools have been emailed the new Autumn/Winter menus from Aspens which go live from **Monday 3 November** starting on Week 1. Please ensure parents have access to these menus and that they are uploaded to your school website. Select will be updated shortly.

## Bromcom - SIMS Linked Documents

Just a reminder that as part of the move over to Bromcom, no further linked documents should be being saved onto pupil files in SIMS. All linked documents relating to current pupils will be downloaded and re-uploaded centrally and remotely. For full details, please see the email to SBMs/OMs from Trust Services sent on 03/10/2025.

## Staff Absence Scheme (SAS) Invoices

We are aware that SAS have sent out invoices this week for any additional payments required. This could be due to originally agreeing an estimate and now the school's confirmed FTE has increased and therefore there are additional costs.

If you have received an invoice, we strongly advise you check this against any previous quotes or subsequent staffing changes to ensure you are confident the charges reflect your current staffing.

Please be aware that, as per the previous communications, the invoices are based on the staffing listed within your SAS Portal. If you have not been into your Portal and ensured your staffing is correct (deadline was 15/09/25) then you may be being charged for incorrect staffing.

If you need any support, please contact [trustservices@lsp.org.uk](mailto:trustservices@lsp.org.uk)

## Automatic Doors Servicing

Schools with Automatic doors have them serviced as part of the central contract with Avon Armour. A pre-authorised remedial amount of £400 has been agreed with Avon Armour so that in the event repairs are required, and parts are being carried on the van (e.g. replacement batteries) so the repairs can be carried out whilst the engineer is on site. This will save a return 'call out' fee being charged.

## DPO Workshop and Actions

Following on from the Data Protection (DPO) workshop last week, here are the agreed actions:

- Schools will review the third-party processor sheet in Teams (ROPA & DPIAs Team) to make sure that all the third-party processors we use have been included and if any are missing then we will add them at the bottom **by Friday 10 October** (you don't need to carry out all the checks, just add the **Supplier & Use**).
- We will hold a 'Drop In' session on **Wednesday 15 October at 11.00am** where One West will be available to answer any questions you have (invite to follow).
- Schools that were allocated a DPIA will complete it by **Friday 7 November**.
- Schools to review the ROPA in their Teams channel (suggested initial approach would be start with the first two columns. Do you carry out that activity at school? If the answer is No then hide the row, if the answer is Yes, do you use a third-party processor in which case list them in column 1). The next step would be to move from left to right of the spreadsheet, paying particular attention to any orange text and changing it to black if it accurately reflects what happens in your school or editing if it doesn't. **Aim to complete by end of Term 2.**

Completing these actions will put us in a really good position for the next round of support calls which start in January 2026, and more importantly will mean that we have made significant progress with this project and fulfilling our legal obligations with regard to GDPR.

For those who could not attend, Trust Services will be running a mop up session in the Central Team Offices **on Tuesday 21 October at 10.00am** to provide you with an opportunity to carry out some of this work with no interruptions and support on hand. Please email [trustservices@lsp.org.uk](mailto:trustservices@lsp.org.uk) to confirm your attendance.



## Working Effectively Together - Consultation with Governors and Headteachers

At the recent Chairs' Forum we discussed how we are working as a Trust to deliberately raise our ambition around what our pupils can achieve including how Governors and the School Improvement Team can work together effectively to support this. We have recorded the presentation that was given and this [can be viewed here](#).

We would like governors to gather the views of their governing body and submit response via [the Forms link here](#).

Headteachers can [give their views via this link](#).

All responses should be returned by **Monday 1 December**.

Thanks in advance.

*Neil Lankester, Director of Primary Education*

## Governor/Trustee Safeguarding Declarations 2025-26

As you are aware the deadline for undertaking mandatory safeguarding training and resources and the Annual Safeguarding Declaration for Governors and Trustees was Friday 3 October.

Clerks can [click here](#) to view who has signed the declaration for their Local Governing Body. Please chase up anybody yet to complete the training and/or declaration. This list will be updated again on Friday 17 October so you can check completion rates again.

The direct links to the declaration form, and connected documents, can be found on the front page of the [LSP Governance SharePoint](#) site.

If you cannot access the declaration register please email [enquiries@lsp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lsp.org.uk) so we can check your access.

Should your school receive a call from Ofsted, this register will form part of the evidence for safeguarding checks/single central record.

Any new governors who join over the course of the academic year will also need to complete the safeguarding declaration.

Any questions please get in touch.

*Central Administration Team*

## Information Gathering—Clerks’ Appraisals

All Heads and Chairs have been emailed a short appraisal questionnaire for your Clerk. Please ensure you complete the appraisal by 5pm on **Monday 3 November**. Its really important we have this feedback so we can celebrate the work they do as well as develop an effective CPD programme.

## Information Gathering—Key LGB Information

Thank you to all Clerks who have already completed the [LGB info spreadsheet](#).

Please can Clerks complete this for all LGB’s including meeting dates (tab at the start) by the end of Term 1 (Friday 24 October).

## LGB Term 2 Agenda

The [Term 2 Agenda](#) is now available on SharePoint. Please use it as a starting point when planning your Term 2 LGB Meeting. Term 2 is quieter than the Term 1 agenda, so it provides a good opportunity for your LGB to explore and challenge key areas.

## Effective Questioning

In our governing body meetings, whether it be at Trustee or Local Body level, questioning is important because it ensures good governance, accountability, and effective decision-making.

Without questioning meetings risk becoming passive. With questioning, they become purposeful, transparent and impactful.

Below is a link to the NGA for some example questions we could be using.

[Search Results Page | National Governance Association](#)

## Pupil Premium: The Role of Governors

It was lovely to hear such positive feedback on last Thursday’s Pupil Premium CPD session with Natalie Wilcox. If you were unable to attend, you can find the recording [here](#).

Please let your Clerk know if you attended the CPD session in person or watched the recording, so that they can keep a record of your training.

## Primary Geography Curriculum Training (Tranche 1)

Thank you to all of you who attended the first training session on the Primary Geography Curriculum last week. If you had staff who could not attend [please share this link](#) with them so they can watch the recording of the sessions.

Remember you need to attend the final session on **Wednesday 8 October at 3:45pm**.

The webinar [can be accessed here](#). Please ensure you are signed up in advance, to assist with a smooth start.



## Upcoming Webinars - Change Management and SEND

# CHANGE MANAGEMENT WEBINAR



LIGHTHOUSE  
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

This webinar will talk attendees through the process and timelines relating to proposals for change management and will also provide examples of the templates used. There will be a short time for Q&A.

**Tania Newman**  
Director of HR

**Sue Warneford-Thomson**  
Schools Finance Support  
Manager



Monday 20 October 2025



2:15 - 3.00 PM

**BOOK YOUR PLACE**

# SEND WEBINAR

DYSCALCULIA & MATHS ANXIETY IN THE CLASSROOM

Hosted by: Suzi Divine - Lead Teacher for SEND

All Lighthouse staff are invited to join this upcoming SEND webinar. This session will focus on Dyscalculia and maths anxiety, including signs/symptoms, and strategies for support



Wednesday 12 November



3:30 - 4.30 PM

**BOOK YOUR PLACE**

## Upcoming Lighthouse Learning Sessions and CPD Networks

Please email [Lighthouse Learning](#) 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.

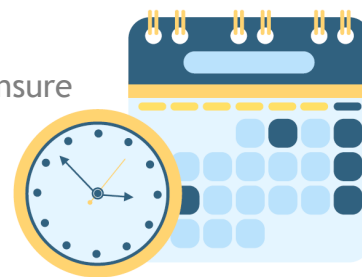
The full programme of Lighthouse Learning CPD on offer for 2025-26 can be found on the [LSP website](#).

DATE	EVENT	AUDIENCE
Monday 13 October 3.30-4.45pm	<b>Primary Maths Network</b> Online via Teams	Primary Maths Leads
Monday 20 October 2.15pm	<b>Change Management Process Webinar</b> <a href="#">Click here</a> to sign up for this webinar.	Heads, SBMs and HR Leads



# 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
Wednesday 15 October	Deadline for feedback and responses to Finance, Reserves and Pay Policy consultations.	All
Friday 24 October 2025	Deadline for Teacher and Leadership Performance Development (Appraisals) to be completed.	Heads & SBMs
Friday 31 October 2025	Deadline for Support Staff Appraisals to be completed.	Heads & SBMs
Friday 7 November 2025, 10:00 am	Deadline for schools to return teaching and leadership pay progression spreadsheets to the HR Secure Team channel.	Heads, SBMs & HR Leads



## KEY LINKS

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 2025/26

Click to view the Annual Planner for next academic year (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](mailto:newsletter@lsp.org.uk)