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Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

I know that many of you will be at the peak of recruitment season. When I was a Headteacher I remember Term 5 being a marathon of interview days. As a Central Team we are currently seeing this, on a smaller scale, with headship interviews. We appointed to Blagdon Primary just before the Easter break and we have interviews at both Horfield and Easton in the next few days. Deciding who joins your team is one of the biggest opportunities and also heaviest responsibilities in leadership. There is of course nothing better than making the right decision and seeing that person blossom in the new role and have powerful impact for good.

We are in our tenth year as a Trust and I will remember the complexities and dance of board-making as we appointed our first Trustees. As well as selecting for skills and experience we had to consider representation and also balancing a board with the right chemistry. We have been through that experience again (or rather our board has, quite properly I'm not involved) and Mark Blackman, Sheila Williams and Ben Yearsley recently became Trustees. Mark has been a secondary head, a Local Authority Director of Education and also a Trust CEO. He joins as a Diocese of Bristol appointee. Sheila was for a time Chair at Chew Valley School and is an experienced HR Director in the private and public sectors. Ben was Chair at Flax Bourton Primary and has a background in finance. They are already contributing extremely well on the board and it is great to have them in our leadership and governance.

Of the original Trustees only two are still on the board now; Dr David Tossell and Adele Haysom. As you are aware Adele will be stepping down from the Chair in the summer and we will make sure that we have an opportunity to thank her for her amazing work. Over the holidays I heard from David who sadly has decided, due to health reasons, that the time has come to leave our board. I am so sad to be losing David; his contribution to our Trust is immense. He served as our first chair and he has such a brilliant talent for asking the right question in the pithiest and clearest way. David has also been a great proponent of the 'after meeting email' where he captured all the threads, noted the challenges and often considered the problems or pressures as they might have affected me or other people. This blend of intellect, wisdom and humanity makes him such an exceptional person and we are very lucky to have had him in our counsels for so long.

As ever,

Gary Lewis, Chief Executive

Annual Planner 2026-27

We are pleased to confirm that we have now published the LSP Annual Planner for 2026-27.

[Click here to view the 2026-27 Annual Planner](#) which contains all sorts of dates, deadlines and reminders for next academic year and can be sorted by month, task or person/team responsible.

There are a few deadlines missing (primary assessment schedules and census dates) which will be added once these have been confirmed for 2026-27.

Upcoming Headteachers' Meeting

The next full Headteachers' Meeting is taking place on Thursday 7 May from 8.30am at Nailsea Baptist Church (BS48 2DS).

Calendar invitations and agenda to be circulated shortly.

Reminder: Preparing for School Booklet 2026

National Primary Offer Day was on Thursday 16 April - this means families now know which school their children will be joining in Reception in September.

A reminder that the LSP Preparing for School booklet should be included with any other welcome documents you send out over the next few weeks.

A PDF version can be downloaded [here](#).

There is also an electronic link if you want to send via a hyperlink in an email instead:

<https://www.lsp.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=835&type=pdf>



Reminder LSP Parent and Pupil Surveys

As mentioned in the last bulletin of Term 4, the window for Parent and Pupil Surveys this year is **Monday 20 April - Friday 8 May 2026**. Headteachers have all been sent an email containing the full set of instructions and links to their surveys, so you have everything you need to facilitate the surveys within the timeframe above. Staff Surveys will take place in Term 2 of next academic year. Please contact [Leah Evans](#) if you have any issues.

We are aware there has been an issue with the survey links being blocked for schools using RM as their broadband provider. This issue should now be resolved. However, please do contact us know if you are experiencing any problems. Thank you for your patience while we resolved this.

Guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by staff

Please find below an updated version of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by staff. This document builds on our existing guidance and reflects the continued development of AI in education, offering greater clarity and practical support for staff. It outlines expectations for safe, ethical and effective use, with particular emphasis on data protection, professional judgement and responsible practice, while also recognising the opportunities AI presents to enhance teaching, learning and reduce workload.

Headteachers are asked to share this guidance with all staff and support its consistent application across their school.

[Click to access Guidance on the use of AI by staff document.](#)



Key 2026-27 meeting dates for school leaders

As part of the Annual Planner/preparing for next year processes we can now confirm the schedule of a number of key trust-wide meetings for Heads and Operational Managers.

All of these are included in the [Annual Planner](#) but we thought a summary article of these key dates, so they can be noted in your diaries, could also be helpful. Formal diary invitations will be sent out for these in due course.

Headteachers' Meetings (All) 8.30am-12.30pm	Headteachers' Meetings (Primary Only) 8.30am-11.30am	Headteachers' Meetings (Secondary Only) 8.30am-12.30pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 8 October 2026 • Thursday 14 January 2027 • Thursday 8 July 2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 17 September 2026 • Thursday 5 November 2026 • Thursday 3 December 2026 • Thursday 4 February 2027 • Thursday 11 March 2027 • Thursday 6 May 2027 • Thursday 10 June 2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 12 November 2026 • Thursday 11 February 2027 • Thursday 22 April 2027 <p>(Shorter, regular catch up meetings will also be organised for secondary headteacher colleagues)</p>
Operational Leadership Team Meetings 2026-27 Meetings online 9.00-10.30am (Central Team Operational Managers and Hub Business Leaders)		Operational Team Meetings 2026-27 Meetings online 10.00-11.30am (Central Team Operational Managers and all SBMs/OMs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 10 September 2026 • Thursday 8 October 2026 • Thursday 5 November 2026 • Tuesday 8 December 2026 (AM, full Operational Team Session) • Thursday 7 January 2027 • Thursday 4 February 2027 • Thursday 4 March 2027 • Thursday 1 April 2027 • Thursday 6 May 2027 • Thursday 10 June 2027 • Wednesday 7 July 2027 (All Day, full Operational Team Session) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 21 September 2026 • Monday 19 October 2026 • Monday 16 November 2026 • Tuesday 8 December 2026 (AM, full Operational Team Session) • Monday 18 January 2027 • Monday 8 February 2027 • Monday 15 March 2027 • Monday 26 April 2027 • Monday 17 May 2027 • Monday 14 June 2027 • Wednesday 7 July 2027 (All Day, full Operational Team Session)

Consultation: Operation of the Annual Support Fund

Today we are launching consultation on the operation of the new Annual Support Fund. Following consultation on the Core Services Charge for 2026-27, it was agreed to establish an Annual Support Fund with effect from September 2026. The fund has been created by top slicing the savings generated from the LGPS revaluation.

To inform the Trustees' decision making, and to enable you to influence the arrangements for the future, this consultation will run from **Wednesday 22 April until 5.00pm on Friday 15 May**. The consultation is aimed at Headteachers and Chairs of Governors although we would encourage you to consult or share with other key stakeholders, such as other Governors and School Business Managers.

Please submit your comments on the consultation to enquiries@lsp.org.uk. If you would like to submit changes to the proposed procedure, please highlight your changes or make them using tracked changes and also send them to this email address. The responses to the consultation will be shared with Trustees to inform their decision making on Wednesday 10 June. The confirmed procedure will then be issued in the LSP News Bulletin on Wednesday 17 June.

It is really important that all stakeholders have confidence that the resources allocated from the fund are:

- Equitable and fair
- Do not reward poor financial management
- Transparent
- Consistent
- Needs led

We can only hope to achieve this with your input and ownership. I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to encourage you to engage with this consultation.

Please do not hesitate to [contact me](#) if you have any questions on the consultation and I look forward to your responses. The proposed procedure and consultation document is available [on Foldr](#) (please see pathways below):

- *LSP Communications\Consultations\Support fund\Support Fund consultation April 2026.docx*
- *LSP Communications\Consultations\Support fund\Operation of Support fund.docx*

Louise Malik,

Chief Financial and Operating Officer

Expenditure outside of the Approved Budget

We would like to remind all schools that paragraph 16 of the LSP Reserves Policy states that schools must refer any spending decision outside of the agreed budget (over £15k for primary schools/£50k for secondary schools or 1% of the school's funding used to calculate the Core Services Charge, whichever is the greater) to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. Any permanent staffing increase must also be referred as well as temporary staffing exceeding the financial limits outlined above. It is worth stressing that approval must also be sought, not just for one-off projects, but where the increase is for general overspending, where it cannot be offset by making savings elsewhere in the budget.

Now that all schools are doing monthly forecasting, the Central Finance Team will be actively monitoring projected outturn each month and enforcing this part of the Reserves Policy. There is a form available for schools to seek approval; the form has recently been updated to reflect, not just requests for approval for spending on one-off projects in advance, but to request approval retrospectively for projected overspending across one or more budget headings. Please complete this form as quickly as possible so that Trustees can scrutinise applications swiftly. This will enable more effective management of school finances, help us understand any difficulties being faced at school level and enable the Central Team to offer support to Headteachers and Governors where needed. For schools operating under the Centralised Services SLA, the application process will be completed by the Finance Business Partner in consultation with the Headteacher. The application form can be downloaded [from Foldr](#):

School Business Managers - Trust Wide - Finance documents and forms - Templates and forms - Approval for spending outside agreed budget 2025-26 - revised form

Finally, Headteachers should know that they can, and should, ask the [Central Finance Team](#) for help with their finances if they feel that they are struggling to manage their financial position. We are here to help and support you.



Budget Planning 2026-27 - Next Steps

Thank you for the work you have done on preparing your 2026-27 3-year budgets so far. As you know, the initial deadline for reviewing the budget for 2026-27 was Tuesday 21 April. Primary Schools should have also updated a new Deployment Model with their staffing for 2026-27 (as far as it is known) and to match the staffing in the Master Scenario. The Central Finance Team will begin to quality assure these draft budgets over the coming few weeks.

A 2026-27 Organisational Change Team folder has been set up for each school so that Deployment Models and future Business Proposals can be shared securely and we can ensure that all parties are working on and reviewing the same version. The Education Team, and the Central Finance and HR Teams will have access to all schools.

As outlined in the budget planning timetable, we have copied the Master Scenario to a Whatif Scenario called Whatif2627_AllSchoolsDraftBudget.V1. This will enable you to model any organisational change required to balance an in-year budget for 2027-28. If you require any additional Whatif Scenarios, please do not hesitate to contact the team. It is worth noting that any obsolete Whatif Scenario from 2025/26 should be reviewed and deleted. Please [let us know](#) if any can be deleted.

Schools now have until **Thursday 4 June** to consider and cost alternative staffing structures or to consider where non-staffing savings can be made to reach an in-year balanced budget for 2027-28, where possible. Primary schools should also update their Deployment Model including the comparison tab for 2027-28 - this will help schools see where potential savings could be made. As mentioned above, please upload your Deployment Model into the secure team set up for this purpose.

Please be aware that although Whatif Scenarios can be used for modelling purposes, any proposed staffing changes for your final Approved Budget must be built into your Master Scenario by Thursday 4 June for Central Team and LGB scrutiny.

Finally, we have devised a proforma to log any proposals for organisational change so that they are easier to track and review. This should also help draft a Business Proposal in the Autumn Term should one be required. We have not included this form within the Deployment Model but made it available as a separate document for ease. It should, however, be updated with your proposals to match staffing both in the Master Scenario and the Deployment Model for 2027-28 and should be made available for Central Team review via the Organisational Change Team folder referred to above. The form can be downloaded [from Foldr](#):

School Business Managers - Trust Wide - Information for 2026-27 budgets - Organisational Change Log for Deployment Model

For schools using the centralised service, your Finance School Business Partner will work with you to produce your budget and complete your deployment model and change log.

Removal of SCP2 for overtime claims

Further to our [previous communication](#) regarding the removal of SCP2, it is important to be aware of the following when inputting overtime into iTrent; SCP2 is removed with effect from 1 April 2026 with all employees on this pay scale moving to SCP3. Therefore, when recording any additional hours, please ensure that the correct date earned/date worked is selected. These hours should be paid one month in arrears. This ensures that the hours are paid at the correct pay scale, i.e. any hours worked until 31 March 2026 will be paid at SCP2 and any hours after 1 April 2026 will be at SCP3.

Please also be mindful when authorising overtime to ensure that the correct date and pay scale is reflected.

If there are any queries, please [contact the Central HR team](#).

New Workflows in iTrent

We have arranged for new workflows to be set up in iTrent to provide notifications to Reporting Manager's as identified in iTrent. The notifications will provide information to reporting managers on documents that will be helpful to access at an early stage and will save time in finding related documents.

The new notifications will occur when:

- When an employee has an absence logged as stress it provides details of the EAP to the reporting manager to share with the employee, along with the Stress Management Policy.
- When a return date is added to iTrent for all absences, it provides the reporting manager with a self-certification and return to work form to complete and record the date of the meeting in iTrent.
- When a leaving date is entered into iTrent the reporting manager will be sent a link to the Exit Interview form to prompt a meeting to be set up with the employee.

Guidance notes on these processes [can be found here](#).

Support Staff Pay Progression

All pay progression letters have been produced and are available in HR Secure for support staff. The Central HR team have informed payroll of these increments, so schools do not need to do this. Can schools please check the letters before they are given to employees, and if there are any queries, please contact hr@lsp.org.uk.

Please can schools arrange for employees to receive letters in advance of pay day (Thursday 30 April).

Data Protection Audits - Follow Up Calls

Most schools received their Data Protection Audit Teams call during Terms 3 and 4. As part of this a follow up call would have been organised for Term 5 or 6. If schools would like any support ahead of this follow up call, please do not hesitate to [contact Trust Services](#). For centralised schools, a member of the Trust Services Team will also attend the call with you.

Waste Collection Contract: Invoices and Charges

A reminder for schools that whilst Hills invoices are paid centrally and recharged, schools should be checking their invoices monthly to ensure they are happy these reflect the collections that have taken place. When received centrally at the beginning of each month, the previous month's invoices are posted within the Waste and Recycling Folder in School Business Managers in Foldr. Any queries should be directed to Hills Key Accounts for review. If there is a need for a credit, this will be sent centrally and then allocated to the school accounts.

If there are changes to any weekly collections, schools are notified by email and should be monitoring invoices to ensure the charges are correct. As per the contract, any missed collections due to the contractor should be rescheduled within the following couple of days. The missed collection will not be charged but the rescheduled collection will. Any missed collection due to the customer (e.g. bins not out, no access available etc) will be charged to the customer and no additional collection made.

Census Day Catering - Thursday 21 May

The final census day of the academic year is Thursday 21 May. The number of schools meals taken on this census day do not contribute to the DfE funding calculations. However as usual we would encourage schools to promote the Aspens special menu as they will be holding one of their monthly Theme Days on this date - this time it will be 'Out Of This World'. The menus are already on Select/Swift available for families to order. If you need any further promotional material, please contact Aspens.



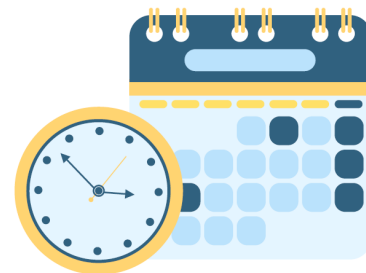
Upcoming Lighthouse Learning Sessions and CPD Networks

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

DATE	EVENT	AUDIENCE
Monday 27 April 8.30-11.30am	Primary DHT/AHT Network English Hub Room @ St Peter's Primary, Portishead	Primary DHT/AHTs
Monday 27 April 1.00-4.00pm	Early Years Network English Hub Room @ St Peter's Primary, Portishead	Early Years Leads
Monday 27 April 3.30-4.45pm	Primary Assessment Network Online via Teams	Primary Assessment Leads
Tuesday 28 April 6.30-8.00pm	New Chairs' Training @ LSP Central Team Offices, Gordano School	New LGB Chairs
Wednesday 29 April 3.30-4.00pm	Secondary Raising Standards Network Online via Teams	Secondary Standards Leads
Wednesday 29 April 3.30-5.00pm	Secondary Maths and MFL Networks <i>Natalie Wilcox to circulate Teams links directly</i>	Secondary Maths and MFL Leads
Thursday 30 April 3.30-5.00pm	Secondary English Network <i>Natalie Wilcox to circulate Teams links directly</i>	Secondary English Leads
Reminders of the Term 6 dates will follow in due course		

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).



DATE	INFORMATION	FAO
Monday 27 April	Deadline to review and send out Support Staff Pay Progression letters ahead of April pay day.	Heads & SBMs/ OMs
Thursday 7 May	Headteachers' Meeting. Nailsea Baptist Church from 8.30am	All Heads
5.00pm on Friday 15 May.	Deadline to respond on Annual Support Fund Consultation. Comments and feedback should be emailed to enquiries@lsp.org.uk	Heads, Chairs and SBMs



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