

Service Level Agreement 2023-24
Southampton Schools' Finance Business Partnering
support

1. Introduction

1.1 The services specified are provided under the terms of and at the prices detailed in the Response Sheet.

1.2 The service level agreement offers financial support to schools.

1.3 Ad-hoc consultancy work falling outside the scope of this SLA may be provided at an additional cost, subject to the availability of staff. Schools are invited to contact the relevant manager to discuss any additional work required.

2. Service Options – Financial Management Support to Schools

2.1 Essential Service

These services are provided for the benefit of all maintained schools or on behalf of the Executive Director Wellbeing (Children & Learning), in the role of managing the resources of the Portfolio. They are funded directly from the Strategic Management or School Improvement sections of the Children's Services Budget and are **not charged** to schools, regardless of the service options which they choose to purchase. The services are:

- Central financial monitoring.
- Financial updates on essential services e.g. change in banking supplier.
- Processing of grants.
- Processing of occasional sundry income e.g. donations
- As part of the Council's website to include information that the schools may find of use and assistance e.g. change of contacts for Schools Finance Support Team, Schools' Financial Practices and Procedures and other guidance and information.
- Information on corporate annual financial procedures e.g. closure of accounts
- Proactive advice via email on common system problems, system or procedural changes, not already advised via other means e.g. Business World Team, DfE website.
- Attendance at business managers officers' conferences / meetings as required and subject to availability.
- Financial monitoring of information supplied / requested for schools causing concern or in a deficit budget situation.

- Support following identification of a specific need as requested by the Executive Director Wellbeing (Children & Learning).
- Processing of business world journals between one school and another.

2.2 Schools using alternative payroll providers.

Schools that do not use the payroll services provided by the authority will not be charged for the processing of associated journals, however in cases where the reconciliation requires a large amount of Finance support due to the lack of information from either the school or their payroll provider, Finance Business Partnering reserves the right to charge.

2.3 Subscription Service

These services are charged through the SLA.

For schools who did not buy back finance service, there will be an hourly rate charged of £99 if you need any assistance with any of the following activities. This will also be subject to the availability of staff time.

Each school requiring financial management support will be allocated a finance support officer from the Schools Finance Team. Most of the following services will be delivered by a named officer specific to the school but there may be occasions where support is provided by other staff in the SCC Finance Team:

- General financial support including up to two visits to the school each year as requested
- Assistance with annual budget setting, updating 3-year budget plans, budget revision and detailed deficit recovery planning.
- Assistance with annual closedown of accounts.
- Assistance with monthly financial monitoring.
- Assistance with reconciling payroll accounts
- Assistance with grant applications
- Assistance with regular extra income streams such as childcare vouchers
- Assistance with financial information from the Department for Education website
- Advice on the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)
- Advice on benchmarking and value for money.
- Assistance with petty cash reconciliation.
- Advice on Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) e.g. identification and correction of coding ERROR advice.
- Up to one session of specialist financial training including induction training for new head teachers and new school finance staff. This could be group training or one to one support..

- Refresher training session at the Civic Centre e.g. Petty Cash.
- Support and advice from the whole finance support team with a wide range of knowledge across the authority e.g. Treasury Management.
- Advice on Community and unofficial accounts.
- Assistance with appointment of finance officers (and administrative officers with finance duties) as requested.
- Attendance at governors' finance meetings (special circumstances only).
- Financial training of governors as requested and up to one session a year
- Schools Finance email helpline, open 5 days per week.

2.4 Ad Hoc Services and consultancy work

The following are examples of services that may be provided **outside** of the Subscription Service, subject to the availability of staff. The level and charge for services to be negotiated between school and the Finance team. If requested by the Executive Director Wellbeing (Children & Learning), this work will be treated as essential services.

- Full finance manager/bursar service on behalf of a Cluster or group of schools to include budget preparation, finance monitoring for head teachers and governing bodies, strategic financial planning and closedown requirements.
- Any project or support on any individual issue in excess of 2 day's work.
- Completion of grant applications.
- Other charges for routine activities will be at the discretion of the Finance Business Partner
- For schools who chose not to purchase the subscription service but then require financial management support from the Schools Finance Team.
- Termly reconciliation of Payroll Bank Account and Payroll Control Account 'P' Cost Centre.

2.5 Schools with a deficit balance

Schools who chose not to purchase the subscription service but are required to have financial management support and advice from the Schools Finance Team to help manage their deficit recovery must be automatically enrolled to the subscription service at the full annual cost.

Finance Management SLA Charges 2023-24

Annual Cost £2,190	Ad hoc Hourly Charge £99
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