



### Schools Forum

Date: 5 November 2020

Time: 8:30 to 10.20am

Venue: Virtual Microsoft  
(MS) Teams

### Paper

# B

Public

## SCHOOLS' FINANCES AND COVID-19

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### Summary

Reports were presented to Schools Forum at their meetings on 25 June and 17 September on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Shropshire schools' finances, outlining the issues that had emerged and were being faced by schools and academies. This paper provides an update on developments in the first half of the Autumn term.

### Recommendation

This report is for information only.

## REPORT

### Background

1. Schools were closed from 20 March as the Government escalated its efforts to curb the increasing spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) across the country. Schools remained open, however, for the supervision of the children of critical workers and for vulnerable children. As the national position improved, the restrictions were eased, meaning that from 1 June primary schools were able to extend opening to children in nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, while from 15 June, secondary schools were able to welcome back students in Years 10 and 12. From the beginning of the Autumn term there was a full reopening of schools, operating within the Government's COVID safe guidelines.
2. Schools Forum has received reports at their meetings on 25 June and 17 September on the impact on schools' finances at each stage of the national crisis and the issues that were emerging in the education sector at that time. This report updates Schools Forum on developments since they last met.

## Covid-19 Schools Fund

3. The arrangements for the COVID-19 Schools Fund were detailed in the Government guidance initially issued on 7 April - *School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) for the period March to July 2020*. This guidance was updated on 24 June, accompanied by further guidance on the process for schools to claim exceptional costs related to COVID-19, with a deadline set for 21 July for first claims to be submitted online.
4. The Council was notified on the first payment from this fund made to Shropshire maintained schools at the end of August, as they are responsible for passporting these payments into maintained school budgets. Academy trusts will have been contacted regarding the outcome of any claims they submitted.
5. A further round of payments to maintained schools was received in October, relating to claims made in the summer. The following table summarises the approved claims for maintained schools both in August and October.

	<b>August 2020</b>	<b>October 2020</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of maintained schools receiving payments	32	21	<b>53</b>
Total payments to these schools	£84,711	£57,319	<b>£142,030</b>
Analysed as:			
• Premises	£45,953	£22,403	<b>£68,356</b>
• Free school meals	£23,495	£18,695	<b>£42,190</b>
• Additional cleaning	£15,263	£16,221	<b>£31,484</b>

6. It is understood that some claims remain outstanding, in particular where schools put the costs they were seeking to reclaim in the 'Other costs' part of the form. These are still being assessed and so further payments may be released later this term.
7. The June guidance indicated that 'further claims will be possible in a subsequent claim window in the autumn and details regarding that process will be published later in the year'. Local authority officers have been seeking confirmation from the Department of Education on when this claim window will open and whether the criteria for costs that can be reclaimed will be expanded. The only feedback received is that the claim window will provide a final opportunity to reclaim any unclaimed costs from the Summer term.
8. A recent meeting with primary headteachers highlighted the following issues relating to finance from these school leaders:

### Wrap around care

- Parents aren't accessing wrap around care/clubs at the level they were previously - huge private income implications.
- Private income losses e.g. childcare if schools close again for local lockdowns.
- Costs of running after school/breakfast clubs with such low numbers this term.

### **Extra cleaning**

- Additional cost of cleaning materials and resources such as handwash etc. and additional cleaning hours.

### **Staffing**

- Extra costs to cover absent staff
- Absence insurance doesn't cover COVID-19 isolation
- Supply cover costs through staff absence due to waiting for tests.

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Catch-up Premium**

9. On 20 July the Government announced £1 billion of funding was being made available to support children and young people to catch up. This includes a one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year 'to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time'.
10. Individual school allocations of catch-up premium have been calculated on a per pupil basis as follows:
  - £80 per for each pupil from Reception through to Year 11 in mainstream
  - £240 for each place in special, alternative provision and hospital schools.
11. Schools will receive the funding in three tranches: autumn 2020, early spring 2021 and in the summer 2021. The autumn and spring payments will total £46.67 per pupil/£140 per place, and the summer payments will be £33.33 per pupil/£100 per place. The spring and summer term payments will be based on the October 2020 census data.
12. Shropshire schools will be receiving a total provisional allocation of £2,880,840 for the academic year 2020 to 2021. The payment for the autumn term 2020 is £720,210. The attached Appendix 1 details provisional allocations by individual school.
13. Details on the conditions of the grant are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-catch-up-premium-provisional-allocations/coronavirus-covid-19-catch-up-premium-conditions-of-grant-for-academic-year-2020-to-2021-for-local-authorities> .

## **f40 Letter on the Impact of Covid-19 on School and Education Funding**

14. The lobby group f40, on behalf of their 42 member local authorities and school forums, including Shropshire, has written a second letter to the Department for Education on 20 October, highlighting a series of areas regarding the impact of Covid-19 on school and education funding. They had previously written on 12 August – this letter was shared with Schools Forum at their meeting on 17 September. The letter is attached in Appendix 2.