

TITLE	2020/21 Contingency Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 14 October 2020
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

RECOMMENDATION

That Schools Forum notes that:

- no allocations have been made from the de-delegated contingency fund to date in 2020/21, and
- that the Early Years Provider Reserve Fund was fully spent in 2019/20 in line with funding conditions.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report forms part of regular updates to Schools Forum on the contingency de-delegated by maintained schools in 2020/21 to the local authority to manage on their behalf.

There have been no applications nor allocations made in the current financial year in respect of the de-delegated allocation that was approved by Schools Forum at its meeting on 18th December 2019.

It is planned to extend the contingency reporting arrangements to also include the Early Years Provider Reserve Fund. In the financial year 2019/20, the Early Years Provider Reserve Fund was £203,376. This was used fully during the year in line with funding conditions. In addition to increase hours for current providers, there was a new PVI setting, a new maintained nursery class, and 17 new childminders during the year.

Further development of reporting in this area will be taken forward through the Early Years Task & Finish Group.

2020/21 Contingency Update

.01 Purpose of the Report

This report is to inform the Schools Forum on how the Council is applying the de-delegated school's contingency budget, and the Early Years Reserve Fund.

.02 Recommendation

That Schools Forum notes that:

- no allocations have been made from the de-delegated contingency fund to date in 2020/21, and
- that the Early Years Provider Reserve Fund was fully spent in 2019/20 in line with funding conditions.

.03 Background

This report forms part of regular updates to Schools Forum on the contingency de-delegated by maintained schools in 2020/21 to the local authority to manage on their behalf.

The contingency is to support schools in financial difficulties not of the schools own making i.e. falling rolls, exceptional circumstances and to fund closing schools that still have a deficit.

Schools wishing to access the fund should initially meet with the Schools Finance Manager to assess whether the school meets the application criteria. Each claim is assessed on its merit, with approval required by the Assistant Director for Learning, Achievement & Partnerships.

.04 Financial Summary

There have been no applications nor allocations made in the current financial year in respect of the de-delegated allocation that was approved by Schools Forum at its meeting on 18th December 2019.

.05 Early Years Reserve Fund

As part of budget setting for the Early Years Block, a provider reserve fund is set aside. This provides for a prudent approach in managing natural in-year fluctuations in provision, while balancing being able to pass on the maximum hourly rates to providers.

In financial year 2019/20, the Early Years Provider Reserve Fund was £203,376. This was used fully during the year. As well as current providers having increased hours, there was a new PVI setting, a new maintained nursery class and 17 new childminders during the year.

Additional Early Years funding was received in July 2020 for the previous financial year, and this was distributed out to all settings in early September based on their total hours claimed during 2019/20. There were 4 settings that closed during 2019/20. The total final adjustment for these setting was £1,943 and this has been held aside in case of further query.

It is planned to meet with the Early Years Task and Finish Group in early January 2021 to discuss rates for 2021/22 once provisional rates from the DfE are received in December. The format of ongoing Provider Reserve Fund reporting will be agreed through that group.

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