



A request was made during the recent Head Teachers' Termly meeting that we reassess the LBH subscription plan used for FFT Aspire in Hillingdon schools.

There was a feeling that the current charges may mean that some schools, particularly those that are smaller, are put off by the costs given the cohort sizes.

This is a perfectly reasonable assertion, and we are committed to explaining and reviewing our charging policy. At this point in time, we have not changed our charging policy, this document explains the current charging approach and seeks your feedback on it. If a better approach can be identified, we are open to listening to suggestions.

Before going any further we will be using data from the FFT Invoice to us. We will NOT use real school names or accurate pupil counts and subscription costs, they will be close approximations. Our intention is to keep your financial arrangements confidential. I suspect head teachers will be able to identify their school in some of the examples.

Schools can subscribe to FFT in one of two ways, either directly or via a local authority subscription plan. Our school FFT landscape consists of:

School Type	No. of Schools	Schools wishing to Subscribe to FFT	Schools who have Opted Out of FFT Services	Schools Subscribing Directly to FFT
Infant	11	10	1	0
Primary	56	44	8	4
Secondary	22	17	4	1
Total	89	71	13	5

FFT Charging Scheme for LA's

FFT calculates their fees based on Flat Fee per school type and a charge per pupil, as follows:

Flat Fees	Amount £GBP
Infant School	£55.00
Primary School	£70.00
Secondary School	£500.00
Cost per Pupil	£0.34 per pupil

For this year the number of pupils was based on the January 2022 School Census pupil counts.

Here are 3 examples:

School Type	No. of Pupils	Flat Fee	Cost per Pupil	Charge to LA Flat Fee + (Pupil Count * £0.34)	Charge from LBH	Direct Cost
Infant	60	£55.00	£0.34	£90.40	£120.00	<£200.00
Primary	300	£70.00	£0.34	£180.00	£220.00	£654.00
Secondary	1400	£500.00	£0.34	£976.00	£870.00	£2,300.00



In this example it looks like the small primary school is supporting the large secondary school. It is obviously cheaper for all schools to use the LBH subscription method. By using our subscription approach Infant and Primary schools receive a 70% to 73% discount on the Direct costs. Secondary schools receive about 53% discount. In this economic climate this is worth taking advantage of.

However, this is not “free”. When a school “Opts-out” of the FFT service the local authority is still charged for their pupils. There are 8,489 pupils that attend “opted-out” schools that we are charged for. This cost is being passed onto the schools using this service. The more schools that drop out the higher the contributing schools must pay. There are 2 or 3 large secondary who have Opted-out where Opted-in schools are covering their FFT pupil costs.

Our internal usage of FFT is minimal, however until now we have continued to subscribe because of the value to our schools.

LBH Charges to Schools

FFT issues, a rather large, invoice to LBH. In this example we are using fictional figures for illustration

Cost Item	Amount £GBP
School subscription cost	£44264.16
LA per pupil cost	£2,390.99
LA base cost	£3,344.85
Total due excluding VAT.	£50,000.00

We pay FFT £50,000 and cross charge each school to recoup the School Subscription Cost. Our current approach is to charge each a fixed fee. This year we are looking to charge Infant schools £120, Primaries £220, and Secondaries £870.

The cost we are proposing this year have increased by a small amount per school type. Our invoice cost has gone up by just over 10%. Your costs are:

FY Year	Charges to Schools			% Increase by Year		
	Infant	Primary	Secondary	Infant	Primary	Secondary
2020	£95.00	£170.00	£730.00			
2021	£105.00	£195.00	£820.00	10.53%	14.71%	12.33%
2022	£110.00	£205.00	£840.00	4.76%	5.13%	2.44%
2023	£120.00	£220.00	£870.00	9.09%	7.32%	3.57%



This charging approach was developed prior to 2017, pre-Covid, pre-high inflation and higher interest rates. If a school can suggest a new approach, we would like to hear from you, we want it to be equitable for all schools.

Each year we review the scheme as if too many schools pull out of the LA subscription offer it may become financially unviable.

FFT do not charge a subscription fee to PRU and Special Schools, neither does the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Send an email to Naveed Mohammed (nmohammed@hillington.gov.uk) and Marc Sherman (msherman@hillington.gov.uk) with your suggestions.