

Schools Finance Support 2025-26

CONTACT:

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Contact information is regularly issued to schools with details of link finance officers for each school. This is also readily available on our web page accessible on [LEAP](#)

SUMMARY OF SERVICE

The SCHOOLS FINANCE TEAM offers support in all areas of school finance, including statutory and non-statutory financial support to help with the effective financial management in schools. The service provides support for your school across a range of management and administrative financial functions. The team's knowledge of schools' differing needs enables us to provide a bespoke tailored support service specific to the needs of your school, in an efficient and cost-effective way.

Statutory items (cost free) provided to maintained schools by the Schools Finance Team:

- Administration of the delegated and devolved funding formulae.
- Advising schools of budget shares and answering brief telephone queries regarding budget shares.
- Administering and managing the Dedicated Schools Grant and its contingency funds.
- Ensuring the Local Authority's financial database is up to date, including the processing of completed and accurate final returns from schools for incorporation into the LA's Annual Statement of Accounts.
- Preparation of the Scheme for Financing Schools following consultation with schools and other stakeholders
- Monitoring of schools budgets for LA purposes.
- Administration of Teachers Pension contribution payments

SUMMARY OF SERVICE AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS WHO BUY THE SCHOOLS FINANCE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

General

- A telephone help-line service on all financial queries, during term-time from 9.00am to 4.30pm
- A reduced telephone support service is available during school holidays.
- Remote support service for trouble shooting, and basic technical support.
- E-mail advice and support service during term-time with reduced service during school holidays.
- Advice guidance and support with school's individual financial planning and monitoring to enable better financial control.
- Access to the Schools Finance Webpage which contains comprehensive financial information, guidance and support notes, model policies, training manuals, links to useful websites, advice on coding and cost centre structures, VAT guidance and good practice guidance on school's financial value standard assessments
- Regular bulletins advising of updates and reminders
- VAT guidance and advice, including the validation of quarterly VAT submittal reports
- Advice and guidance on compliance to Hillingdon's financial regulations and Standing Orders
- Advice and guidance on capital monitoring
- Assistance with salary monitoring / checks
- Network opportunities: Arranging periodic meetings for admin/finance officers to discuss any new developments in finance and for the mutual exchange of information

Budget Planning

- Provision of budget planning tool (including licence costs, initial training, and on-going support)
- Guidance, assistance and advice on the planning and creation of annual, medium term, and long-term budgets.
- Interpretation of budget formula
- Guidance on allocation of budgets to appropriate Consistent Financial Reporting format
- Assistance with calculation of staffing costs through provision of advice on up-to-date salary scales, national insurance rates, on-costs percentages, and employers' superannuation costs
- Budget planning training sessions, full day training for new finance staff¹
- Budget planning workshops to support budget setting process for finance staff. This could also be virtual.

¹ This applies to 1 staff change per year. Any additional staff change will be subject to availability and may incur a cost to the school. Training could be face-to-face or remote.

Assistance with internal budget management in schools

- Guidance on SIMS Financial Management System (FMS) for effective budget monitoring
- Advice on producing financial reports for the Senior Management Team, headteacher, governors, budget holders, Local Authority, and external agencies.
- Provision of monthly cash advance statements detailing budget allocation and any changes during the year
- Liaison on financial frameworks, benchmarking and reconciling of budgets with cash advances.
- Assistance with budget monitoring using customised templates.
- Assistance with the preparation of cash flow statements
- Advice and guidance on completing the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

SERVICES THAT CAN BE PURCHASED AT AN ADDITIONAL COST - £60 per hour.

- Any additional visits over and above the SLA.
- Finance induction training for new, temporary, and permanent staff - chargeable if over and above purchased visits
- Finance induction training for new headteachers - chargeable if over and above purchased visits
- Finance induction training for new governors - £60 per hour / per person (group training prices available on request)
- Temporary assistance where administrative / finance officer is absent. Please note, this is subject to availability in the team.
- Budget Monitoring - Compilation of reports for Governing Bodies
- Assistance with finance staff recruitment - advice on skills and experience requirements/provision of competence tests/attendance at interviews

SERVICE STANDARDS

Schools will be notified promptly of any changes to their named link officer

Schools will be notified promptly of any changes to charges

An initial response to all queries from schools within 72 hours

Correspondence to be acknowledged within 7 working days with a full reply within 12 working days

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Schools are encouraged to provide feedback to the service manager as well as discuss any specific requirements

Service provision will be reviewed continuously to maximise opportunities to enhance what we can offer schools.

ENTITLEMENT

Schools call upon the service will be accommodated as far as resources allow. We will continue to offer a two-tier level of telephone support service with schools given the choice whether they buy ten or twenty hours of telephone/remote support.

Additional charges (using an hourly rate of £60 per hour) may apply at times when a school uses more than the allocated telephone or remote support per annum. However, if this occurs the school will be contacted to discuss before additional charges are applied.

Where capacity allows, we will offer an ad-hoc bursar support package to assist schools who appoint new bursars. This package will include induction of new staff and support them with quarterly returns and year-end processes².

Link officers are required to be office based where possible so that they are available to support / assist all their schools. Visits to schools will therefore be limited to the number included in the price of SLA purchased and where capacity allows additional chargeable visits can be scheduled. Any additional visits will be charged at an hourly rate of £60.

School visits could be in person or virtual subject to requirement/need. The maximum no of hours for a visit is six hours.

Schools converting to Academy or Amalgamating will be charged the full annual cost which will incorporate support in closing of the redundant school's accounts. Usually within three months of conversion or closure.

SLA Type:

Annual Subscription - Yes

School Type (Maintained):

Nursery	Yes
Primary	Yes
Secondary	Yes
Primary Special	Yes
Secondary Special	Yes

COSTS

Charges for the financial year 2025/26 will be as follows.

Option 1

Standard Service including 1 visit per year and up to 10 hrs of telephone/remote support

Nursery/Primary Schools £1,790 + £310 for Budgeting Software

Secondary Schools £2,288 + £310 for Budgeting Software

Option 2

Standard Service including 1 visit per year and up to 20 hrs of telephone/remote support

Nursery/Primary Schools £2,271 + £310 for Budgeting Software

Secondary Schools £2,763 + £310 for Budgeting Software

² This is limited to one bursar change per financial year. Additional changes may incur cost and will be subject to availability.