

Herefordshire Schools Forum

Information for potential members

This information sheet is designed to help you understand whether you would like to be considered for membership of the Herefordshire Schools Forum. It explains what the forum is and what being a member of the forum entails. It also gives links to documents such as the national guidance and minutes of previous meetings.

What is the schools forum?

Each local authority is required by law to establish a schools' forum. Details of the current requirements are set out in the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012.

The forum considers matters relating to funding for schools and settings in Herefordshire. It acts as a consultative body on some issues and a decision making body on others.

Under current regulations the forum acts in a consultative role for:

- changes to the local funding formula (the local authority makes the final decision)
- proposed changes to the operation of the minimum funding guarantee
- changes to or new contracts affecting schools (school meals, for example)
- arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in pupil referral units, and in early years provision

Under current regulations the forum has the power to decide:

- how much funding may be retained by the local authority within the dedicated schools grant (for example, providing an admissions service, or providing additional funding for growing schools)
- any proposed carry forward of deficits on central spend from one year to the next
- proposals to de-delegate funding from maintained primary and secondary schools (for example, for staff supply cover, insurance, behaviour support)
- changes to the scheme of financial management

The schools forum is made up of representatives from local authority maintained schools, academies and some non-school organisations such as 16-19 education providers and diocesan boards. The allocation of seats between local authority schools and academies is designed to be broadly proportional to the number of pupils attending such schools.

Details of the current membership of the Herefordshire Schools Forum can be found on the Herefordshire Council website at:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=444>

The future of the schools forum

The Department for Education consulted in the summer of 2021 on completing its reforms to the National Funding Formula for schools. The document [Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/95444/fair_school_funding_for_all_completing_our_reforms_to_the_national_funding_formula.pdf) set out proposals to continue to work towards a hard national funding formula where the department determines schools' budget allocations centrally.

While the move to a hard nationally set formula will change the role and responsibilities of the schools forum, the department still sees a need for a local forum to facilitate the engagement of schools and other providers in decisions and consultation on local matters. It remains important that the schools forum has an active, engaged and representative membership.

What do members of the forum have to do?

Schools forum members have a responsibility to represent the interests of their peer group rather than their own individual school. You would be expected to:

- attend meetings of the forum, which are held at least 4 times a year, usually on a Friday morning;
- represent the views of your group or sub-group and contribute to setting policy on school funding in Herefordshire;
- communicate information from the forum back to colleagues; and
- encourage engagement with local authority consultations and projects.

Since 2020, meetings of the forum are usually held remotely via an online platform, which reduces the need for travel and therefore the time commitment required. On occasions the forum may choose to meet in person where it feels this would be beneficial.

Who can be a member of the forum?

Members of the forum fall into one of three groups: schools, academies and non-school. Within each group there may be sub-groups, for example a sub-group for local authority maintained primary school headteachers within the schools group.

Regulations specify minimum membership requirements. Each local authority determines the membership of its own schools forum, ensuring that it satisfies the regulations and takes account of the profile of education provision in the local area.

Representatives of the schools group are specified in the constitution as either headteachers (or their representatives) or governors. Headteacher's representatives can include a head of school, assistant head, deputy head, school finance manager or similar.

Representatives of the academies group can be any senior person associated with an academy trust including a headteacher, headteacher's representative, governor or an officer of the academy trust. The decision on who to nominate is made by the academy proprietors.

What is the term of membership?

The schools forum is re-constituted every four years. The next term of membership covers the academic years 2025/26, 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/2029.

If a member of the forum ceases to hold the post in which they were elected to the forum their membership will cease. Members may also resign from the forum with reasonable notice if they find themselves unable to fulfil their duties. Any vacancies that arise during the term will be filled for the remainder of the term.

The number of seats allocated to academies and local authority maintained schools must be broadly in proportion with the numbers of children in each type of school. A report will be presented to the forum annually which will include analysis of pupil numbers and, if required, changes will be made to the number of seats allocated to each group to ensure they remain in proportion.

Mid-term adjustments may also be required in the event that changes are made to the regulations governing schools forums.

Where can I find more information?

The following links provide more information on the operation of the forum:

DfE guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-forums-operational-and-good-practice-guide-2015>

Agenda papers and minutes of previous meetings:
<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=444>

Herefordshire schools finance:
https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200227/support_for_schools_and_settings/460/school_finance_information

For an informal discussion about the work of the forum and the requirements on members please contact:

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