

# Camden Schools Forum - Constitution and Terms of Reference

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Camden Schools Forum is established to meet the requirements of the Schools Forums (England) regulations 2012. Recommendations to change the constitution and terms of reference may be made at any time by the schools forum. The final decision on any proposed amendments rests with the authority except where specific issues are for the forum to decide. Changes may also be required from time to time to comply with new statutory requirements, as set out in the regulations.

## 2 Membership

### 2.1 Voting Members

Primary schools, secondary schools and academies shall be broadly proportionally represented on the forum having regard to the total number of pupils registered at them. Based on the pupil census as at January 2012 and allowing for other members, the schools forum shall comprise 20 voting members as follows:

#### School Members (17)

- (a) Primary schools – 7 representatives (4 headteachers and 3 governors – at least 2 headteachers and 2 governors must be from schools with nurseries).
- (b) Secondary schools – 6 representatives (3 headteachers and 3 governors).
- (c) Special and hospital schools – 2 representatives (1 headteacher and 1 governor).
- (d) Pupil referral units – 1 representative
- (e) Nursery school – 1 representative

Only one representative per school may normally be elected as a member of the forum at any one time. This restriction does not apply to substitutes.

The membership should broadly reflect the different types of schools and, in particular, ensure a balanced representation between voluntary aided and community schools.

#### Academy Members (1) – 1 representative

#### Non-schools Members (2)

- 1 from the private, voluntary and independent early years sector
- 1 from the authority 14-19 partnership

### 2.2 Observers (non voting)

The following shall be invited to attend meetings of the forum as an observer:

- Education funding agency (1 place)
- named member substitutes when not attending as substitute for a member

### 2.3 **Substitute Members**

Each group is entitled to nominate one substitute to attend meetings and to vote on behalf of any member within that group who is unable to attend a meeting. Each non school member may also nominate a substitute to attend and vote on their behalf.

In addition, headteachers have the option to nominate any senior member of staff from their school to represent them on the forum.

Substitute members may attend on behalf of members provided that the substitute would be eligible for appointment to the forum in the same way as the member for whom they are acting as substitute. The forum must receive notification of substitutes in advance of the meeting.

### 2.4 **Officers and members of the council**

The Executive Director Supporting People, Executive Director Corporate Services, the Borough Solicitor and / or their representatives shall be eligible to attend meetings of the forum for the purposes of providing advice. The Cabinet Member for Children shall also be entitled to attend meetings in an advisory capacity. No officer or elected member may be appointed as a non school member of the forum.

### 2.5 **Appointment Procedures**

#### School members

Headteacher representatives shall be elected by the primary and secondary headteacher groups. Governor representatives shall be elected by the joint chairs and governors meeting. Each representative group or sub-group will be responsible for determining the method by which they elect and nominate school forum representatives. The groups shall be responsible for notifying the clerk to the forum of the person elected within one week of the elections taking place.

Where headteachers or governors within a school group fail to make a nomination within two months of the request being made, the remaining representatives within the relevant school group shall nominate the representative to be appointed to fill the vacancy. Where there are no remaining representatives of the school group, the remaining schools members shall nominate the representative to fill the vacancy.

Any group may request the help of the clerk to the forum in organising and undertaking the election of representatives.

Headteachers and governors that hold multiple positions can only be elected to represent one of the school groups that they are eligible to stand for.

### Academy members

Shall be elected by the governing bodies of the academies in the authority area.

### Non-school members

Appointment of non-school members and observers shall be made by the authority from nominations received from those organisations and groups invited to be members of the schools forum.

### Notification to schools

The clerk to the forum will notify schools of any changes to the membership within one month of such changes being agreed.

## **2.6 Term of Office**

A schools member ceases to be a member of the schools forum if he or she resigns from the forum or no longer occupies the office that he or she was nominated to represent. The term of office for school members shall be four years from date of appointment unless the schools forum determines a shorter period is required for individual appointments to maintain a regular turnover of members. The period of membership will be stipulated at the time of appointment.

Non-school members shall remain in office until they resign or until the authority makes a further appointment to replace the non-school member on nomination from the relevant body.

## **2.7 Failure to Attend Forum Meetings**

If a member fails to attend any meeting for a period of twelve months commencing with the date of the last attendance, whether represented by a substitute or not, they shall be deemed to have resigned from the forum unless the forum consent to the absence.

## **2.8 Training**

All new members will receive an introduction email from the clerk to the forum to include a copy of the terms of reference, a list of members and any relevant government guidance. The Local Authority will arrange training opportunities, at the request of the forum.

## **3 Procedures**

### **3.1 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The forum shall elect a chair and vice-chair from among its voting membership at the first meeting of the academic year. The maximum period that any member can serve as chair shall be four years during their total period of membership of the forum.

At any meeting of the forum at which the election of chair is before the meeting, the clerk shall act as chairman during the election of the chair. At any meeting where both the chair and vice-chair are absent, the

forum shall elect, from those voting members present, a person to take the chair for that meeting only.

### **3.2 Appointment of Clerk**

The authority shall appoint a clerk for the schools forum.

### **3.3 Meetings**

The schools forum shall meet at least five times a year in accordance with a schedule of meetings determined by the authority to align with the timing of decisions required for issues relating to school funding. The forum will be consulted on the planned dates for the year ahead at the meeting preceding the start of academic year. An agenda together with supporting papers will be issued at least five days prior to the meeting.

Additional meetings may be called by the clerk in consultation with the chair. At least two weeks notice will be given of any additional meetings except in the case of an emergency. In exceptional circumstances and subject to approval of the chair, it may be necessary to seek the views of members outside of a formal meeting of the forum. Where this is necessary, the issue and any decision taken will be reported to the next meeting of the forum.

### **3.4 Public/Private Meetings**

All meetings of the schools forum will be held in public with the minutes and papers, except where confidential, made available to the public.

### **3.5 Quorum**

The forum shall be quorate if at least forty percentage (8 members) of the total voting membership are present. If a meeting is inquorate it can proceed but any decisions (e.g. election of a chair, or a decision relating to funding conferred by the funding regulations) would need to be ratified at the next meeting. An inquorate meeting can respond to authority consultation, and give views to the authority.

### **3.6 Declaration of Interests**

Forum members must declare at the start of the meeting any relevant personal, financial or business interest, which they or any person closely associated with them has in any matter to be considered by the forum. The member must withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item unless expressly invited to remain.

Where the interest is pecuniary only, the member shall be required to declare the interest but, subject to the approval of the forum, will be permitted to speak and vote on the matter.

### **3.7 Voting Procedure**

Where necessary, decisions of the forum shall be taken by a majority of voting members present when voting on a proposal. If there are an equal number of votes for and against a proposal, the chair shall have

a second or casting vote. Representatives with observer/advisor status are not entitled to vote.

Non school members, other than those who represent early years providers, must not vote on matters relating to the funding formula that determines the amount to be allocated to schools and academies.

### **3.8 Working Groups**

The forum may establish sub-committees or working groups to consider particular issues. Any recommendations of such groups require approval by the forum before they become formal advice to the authority.

### **3.9 Confidentiality**

In the case of particular matters to be discussed by the forum, information of a confidential nature may be provided at the forum meetings. Members of the forum, substitutes, observers and officers must observe the confidentiality of such items. Prior to the discussion of any confidential items, any person in attendance who is not a voting member may be asked to withdraw from the meeting.

### **3.10 Members Expenses**

The authority will reimburse the reasonable expenses incurred by members attending meetings of the forum. Members are asked to note that the whole cost of operating the forum is charged against the schools budget.

## **4 Functions of the Schools Forum**

### **4.1 Consultation**

The authority will consult the schools forum on:

(a) Formula changes - any proposed changes to the factors & criteria and the methods, principles and rules that are contained within the Funding Formula and the financial impact of any such changes. Consultation shall take place in sufficient time to allow the views expressed by the forum to be taken into account in the determination of the formula and in the initial determination of schools budget shares before the beginning of the financial year.

(b) Contracts - at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender consult the forum on the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services being a contract paid or to be paid out of the local authority's schools budget where either:

- the estimated value of the proposed public services contract is not less than the specific threshold which applies to the local authority in pursuance of Regulation 7(1) of the Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993; or
- the estimated value of the proposed public supply contract is not less than the specific threshold which applies to the local authority in pursuance of Regulation 7(2) of the Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995.

(c) Financial issues - the local authority shall consult the forum annually in respect of the authority's functions relating to the schools budget, in connection with the following:

- Arrangements to be made for
  - the education of pupils with special educational needs;
  - the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
  - early years education;
  - insurance;
  - free school meals.
- Prospective revisions to the local authority's scheme for the financing of schools;
- Administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the local authority;
- Arrangements for the implementation of support to schools in financial difficulty.
- such other matters concerning the funding of schools as the local authority sees

(d) the authority may consult the Forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit, and shall take into account any views expressed by the forum.

## **5. The Role of the Local Authority**

The authority shall take into account the views expressed by the Forum in setting its schools budget or, where appropriate, taking other decisions in relation to the funding of schools or the provision for pupils.

**Role of Education Funding Agency on Schools Forum**



*Chairs and Clerks of Schools Forums.*

31 August 2012

Dear Colleague,

As you may recall from our previous announcements about the reformed funding system, we will have observer status on schools forums. We believe that this will enable us to support the local process and provide a national perspective. We have said that an EFA representative will not attend every meeting but may want to see how the Forum is working, and could be asked to attend specific meetings if members thought it helpful or if there were any concerns about the running or composition of the forum.

It might be helpful if we clarify our role. This is to be impartial and ensure local authorities are compliant with the requirements of the new system and are behaving reasonably.

We have already explained in our previous announcements that we will not investigate general representations from individual schools that have lost funding under the new formula arrangements. What we will investigate is complaints from maintained schools or Academies that suggest they will be unreasonably funded as a result of the local authority not applying an allowable formula factor or not requesting an exceptional factor. We will also monitor the impact of the new formulae on different types of schools to inform future funding policy.

We thought it would be helpful if forums had a named contact for each region. We already have service delivery teams in place but for more technical queries and issues, there is a Funding Reform team, which will be able to offer advice and attend where there are particularly complex issues. The team includes two experienced local authority secondees and already has close contact with local authorities through regional finance officer meetings. If you have any general queries about the reforms or if you would like someone from the EFA to attend because there are particular concerns of the nature set out above, please contact

[:reformteam.funding@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:reformteam.funding@education.gsi.gov.uk)

The table below shows the contact in each team for each region.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Service Delivery Team</b>	<b>Funding Reform Team</b>
London	Sue Samson	Bev Pennekett
SE	Sue Samson	Bev Pennekett
SW	Sue Reekie	Bev Pennekett
East	Martin Lamb	Keith Howkins
West Midlands	Sue Reekie	Keith Howkins
East Midlands	Martin Lamb	Keith Howkins
North-west	Liz Butcher	Gavin Monument
Yorkshire and Humberside	Liz Butcher	Gavin Monument
North-east	Liz Butcher	Gavin Monument

As we move towards the implementation of the reformed system, we believe that you and your forums play a critical role in the scrutiny of local authority proposals. We hope that forum members will be actively engaged and we will be stressing to both maintained schools and Academies the importance of communicating with their representatives on their forum.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Howkins,  
Team Leader, Funding Reform Team  
Education Funding Agency, Department for Education

Copied to  
Chief Finance Officers,  
Finance Officers,