

Halton's Children's Services Governors Report Autumn Term 2024

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Dear Governors,

Welcome back to a new academic year!

We hope that you all had a pleasant summer and are looking forward to a positive year ahead within your schools. I am pleased to share with you our Autumn term report for governors, which contains lots of important local and national updates which will support you in your vital work as strategic leaders in education.

Later this month, we will also be hosting our next governors briefing, on 24th September at 6pm at Halton Stadium. (The dates of all future briefings are below.) Please do try to ensure at least one governor from your school is able to attend.

Within this report you will also find updates on the changes to Ofsted inspections, details on teachers' pay and key changes to safeguarding guidance & many more reports. If there are ever any areas that you would like more detail, please do not hesitate to contact the named officer, or get in touch with me via phone or email.

Thank you, as ever, for your essential work as a governor in Halton and I hope you have a fantastic year in school.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Holmes

Acting Director of Education

1.1 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ITEMS FOR ACTION

2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOR INFORMATION
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the above list and take action where appropriate Ask for guidance and support if unsure from governors@entrust-ed.co.uk
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOR INFORMATION
2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the information and reassure leaders that the changes will impact on the inspection process and relieve some of the stress associated with the system. Be aware of the pressures placed upon leaders when an Ofsted Inspection is on the horizon. Be as supportive as possible before, during and after the inspection. Link Governor for Safeguarding (DSG) to reflect on the latest framework and engage with the blog and the webinar. Ask the question... what is the impact of any safeguarding training?
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOR INFORMATION
2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOR INFORMATION
2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please encourage Teachers to register online that haven't already done so. Communication to Teachers when these processes are expected to occur.
2.8	<p>All primary schools & settings are urged to continue with their own expansion plans, which need to be rolled out as soon as possible. All schools and settings in Halton have been advised that the DfE programme is to continue as expected in 2024-2025.</p> <p>The front-loading of places with LA funding is hoped to encourage increased demand from parents. Please do get in touch, or book on a briefing to find out more about this exciting initiative!</p> <p>Our local authority plans are to proceed with our expansion programme at pace to ensure there are sufficient wraparound places to meet demand as soon as possible. Please contact Clare Rowlands, (clare.rowlands@halton.gov.uk) or Hazel Fryman (hazel.fryman@halton.gov.uk) if you would like to find out more about the programme and what it could mean for your school.</p> <p>We are offering a series of online briefings in September, so please do book on if you would like to know more about the grant funding application process, or if you have general queries and would like to know more about the DfE programme and what it (and the funding) could mean for your school/setting.</p> <p>The briefing links are below:</p> <p>Wraparound Childcare Expansion: Opportunity to find out more about the grant funding process and talk through the Grant Funding Application form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday 17th September: 11:00 -12:00 https://forms.office.com/e/eapbFkKkQU Tuesday 17th September: 2:00 – 3:00 pm https://forms.office.com/e/vPJHsv8037 Tuesday 17th September: 4:00 – 5:00 pm https://forms.office.com/e/JyNXZU1hJq <p>General queries and opportunity to discuss expansion plans in your school/PVI setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 19th September: 3:30 pm https://forms.office.com/e/NR6e5ycn9U
2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and Governors are welcome to attend

2.10	<p>Governors <u>should ensure</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School has taken up the Free Thrive Approach training which is available to all settings within Halton. This is a £300,000 invest into training practioners to support SEMH. This needs to be taken up before the end of the Autumn Term. Support for mental health and wellbeing in schools The Thrive Approach 2. School has declared an interest in a the Free Team Teach training which is available to all staff including non-teaching staff. This will be open to governors also. This is a £50,000 investment in support behaviour across Halton. Home - Team Teach 3. School has taken up their 2 free places for the (NASEN) DBV SENDCO Conference 2024. This is crucial day to support SEND across Halton. <p>Further information about this can be found on the Halton Local Offer at Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND Local Offer (haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk)</p> <p>Or feel free to contact mike.stapleton-Chambers@halton.gov.uk</p>
2.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOR INFORMATION
2.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors with responsibility for Careers education advice and guidance to review.
2.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOR INFORMATION
2.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOR INFORMATION
2.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not panic!! • Be aware that there will be changes in the future, until more detail is provided continue with the current arrangements.
2.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOR INFORMATION
2.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The link governor for English to discuss the research report with subject leader and consider the summary report findings outlined above. • The link governor for Music to discuss the report with subject leader.
2.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure school leaders are aware of this scheme and that they know how to secure these products.
2.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOR INFORMATION

2.0

2.1	<p>Governor Directors Briefing Dates</p> <p>Halton Governor Conference 2024 15th November 2024 @DCBL Stadium 9am-4pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools who subscribe to the Entrust Governors Support and Development SLA are entitled to two free places and can book additional at £50 per delegate. • Schools and Academies who do not subscribe to an Entrust Governor Services SLA can book places for £110 for one delegate or £160 for two. <p>To book your place(s) on our conference please email: governors@entrust-ed.co.uk</p> <p>Spring Term Tuesday 28th January 2025 @DCBL Stadium</p>
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6pm-7pm

Free to all Governors in Halton

Summer Term
Tuesday 20th May 2025
@DCBL Stadium
6pm-7pm

Free to all Governor in Halton

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
Title: Senior School Quality Assurance Officer; DBV SEND Programme Lead
Tel: 0151 511 8129/07799740251
Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Actions

- FOR INFORMATION

2.2 General Advice Autumn Term and Suggested Tasks

Governors must have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school; they need to be influential in determining priorities for school improvement and have a clear role in monitoring progress and evaluating and evidencing impact. This involves a plan of action. A plan that is inspiring and motivating showing passion, vision and commitment to all. Connect this plan to your values, beliefs and educational purpose. Invite all to share ideas and invite feedback.

This autumn schedule to support your strategic intentions serves to give an overview of responsibilities and help with your tasks.
Some activities need to be completed by a specific date.

Maintained Schools: Governing Boards (GBs) of maintained schools may delegate some of their decision-making powers either to committees or individuals. This will be highlighted in the Terms of Reference for those committees and confirmed in this autumn term meeting.

Academies: Governors of Local Academy Committees or Academy Councils (LACS) should refer to the MAT Articles of Association and Schemes of Delegation when deciding which of the items listed in this schedule relate to their work.

List of suggested tasks (actions, if undertaken, need to be minuted by your governance professional/clerk)

- Ask for nominations and then start the process to elect Chair and Vice Chair. Minute length of term of office in the role of COG/VCOG. One year is recommended.
- Decide and agree model of governance, terms of reference including Headteacher Performance Management and Pay Committee. Appoint associates if appropriate.
- Ensure Governance information on the school website matches Get Information. Updates need to be published within 14 days of any changes.
- Agree visit schedule by first referring to the school calendar of events to ensure no clashes.
- Update annual governance publication requirements, including attendance and publish on the school website. Recommend this is carried out termly.
- Check and confirm any carry forward from previous budget and identify/minute how this will be used.
- Check length of the school day in line with statutory requirements of 32.5 hours and check this information is now on the school website.
- Start to evaluate pupil outcomes using relevant performance data and resource those aspects that need attention.

- Review (there may not be any changes) the school’s Charging and Remissions policy- always an annual review. Publish this on the school website.
- Headteacher Performance Management- arrange date- Maintained schools need to appoint an External Adviser (EA). This must be completed by December 31st.
- Approve annual salaries following teaching staff and Headteacher Performance Management. Inform staff formally of their salary for the coming year.
- Review HR policies eg pay, appraisal, staff code of conduct
- Publish Pupil Premium impact report for previous year and spending for current year by 31st December 2024.
- Check the Sports Premium impact report for the previous year and spending for current year by was published by 31st July on the school website. Minute the acceptance of this report.
- Review Admissions and update website with this information. VA and foundation schools: consult on any changes to the admissions arrangements or consult with parents if it has not been changed for seven years.
- Audit voluntary school funds/school private funds.

General Reminders

The following Items MUST ONLY be carried out by the Full Governing Board

- Election of the chair and vice chair and length of term of office for these roles if not carried out at the end of previous term’s meeting.
- Removal of the chair or vice chair if appropriate
- Co-option of governors if there are vacancies.
- Appointment of associate members (use of correct terminology – these are **not** associate governors)
- Committee labels and terms of reference for committees
- Length of terms of office (within prescribed limits)
- Appointment of the governance professional (MATS) or clerks
- Appointment of the headteacher or deputy headteacher

Items that MUST NOT be delegated to an individual

- Alteration or discontinuance of the school
- A change to the category of the school
- Approval of the first formal budget plan of the financial year
- The determination of admission arrangements where the MAT is the employer.
- The decision to appoint a new headteacher or deputy headteacher (although the appointment process must be delegated)
- The suspension of a governor

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
 Title: Senior School Quality Assurance Officer; DBV SEND Programme Lead
 Tel: 0151 511 8129/07799740251
 Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Governor Actions

- Reflect on the above list and take action where appropriate
 Ask for guidance and support if unsure from governors@entrust-ed.co.uk

2.3 Updated Handbooks and Guidance

On 7th March 2024 the Department for Education (DfE) replaced The Governance Handbook with two new publication guides. One for Academy Trust Boards and one for Maintained schools. These publications replace the previous Governance Handbook, the Competency Framework, and the Clerking Competency Framework. These have been archived.

The Academy publication is now more aligned to the Academies Trust Handbook (ATH).

In these updated publications

- **must** is a legal or regulatory requirement or duty which must be complied with
- **should** is the minimum good practice which should be applied (unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative approach better suits the circumstances)

Where neither a **must** or **should** is used, the content refers to a generally held view of high-quality governance.

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers

Title: Senior School Quality Assurance Officer; DBV SEND Programme Lead

Tel: 0151 511 8129/07799740251

Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Governor Actions:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.4 Ofsted Changes since April 2024

The removal of one or two word inspection grades for overall effectiveness was announced on 2 September 2024. Sir Keir Starmer, Prime Minister said "I'm committed to improving the chances of young people and delivering on my mission to break down the barriers to opportunity. We are driving up school standards by replacing the one-word Ofsted grade with new report cards to give parents a clearer picture of school performance."

- Overall grade categories of Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate will no longer be issued.
- Ofsted will still inspect schools against the same standards, and reports will continue to give details on specific aspects of how a school is performing, as they do now.
- Early next year, school improvement teams will be set up in every area, and the government said it would continue to intervene in struggling schools.
- By September 2025, parents will be able to view a new "report card" describing what inspectors have found at a school.
- For inspections this academic year, parents will see grades across the existing sub-categories: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management.

New inspection handbooks to be published later in September.

Announced changes to ungraded inspections, including that:

- Ofsted will replace deep dives with a focus on groups of subjects (e.g. 'core' subjects and 'vocational' subjects)
- Headteachers and senior leaders will play a larger role in ungraded inspections to help reduce the burden on subject leaders

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
 Title: Senior School Quality Assurance Officer; DBV SEND Programme Lead
 Tel: 0151 511 8129/07799740251
 Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Reflect on the information and reassure leaders that the changes will impact on the inspection process and relieve some of the stress associated with the system.
- Be aware of the pressures placed upon leaders when an Ofsted Inspection is on the horizon.
- Be as supportive as possible before, during and after the inspection.
- Link Governor for Safeguarding (DSG) to reflect on the latest framework and engage with the blog and the webinar.
- Ask the question... what is the impact of any safeguarding training?

2.5 Safeguarding Revisions to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DfE

Revised Statutory Guidance

The Department for Education (DfE) published an updated version of the statutory safeguarding and child protection guidance for schools in England, Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) in September 2024.¹ This version replaces previous editions of the guidance. It was initially published for information only in May 2024.

The guidance sets out what schools and colleges in England must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18.

The changes are minimal for this year given the [Safeguarding children in schools and colleges Call for Evidence](#). Annex F of the draft guidance includes a Table of Substantive Changes from the 2023 document and a table of revisions can be found below.

The revisions to the document include:

Summary	No changes
Part one	Safeguarding information for all staff
Page 4	Definition of 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' - amended to reflect the updated 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023)
Paragraph 18	'Early help' - amended to reflect revised 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Missing to include education, home and care · Where students have 'experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.'
Paragraph 19	'Abuse and Neglect' - heading amended to include 'exploitation' (also throughout the document as applicable)
Paragraph 24	'Indicators of Abuse and neglect' - additional text included 'including where they see, hear, or experience its effects' when referring to domestic violence.

Paragraph 29	'Safeguarding Issues' - 'deliberately missing education' amended to reflect revised definition of 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education' in 'Working together to improve school attendance.'
Paragraph 54	Makes reference to the 'Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners' which was updated in May 2024.
Part Two	The management of safeguarding
Paragraph 93	Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR - paragraph included to comply with DPA/UKGDPR requirements. This cross references to the 'Data Protection in Schools Toolkit' updated in April 2024
Paragraph 171	'Alternative Provision' - text added to clarify school remains responsible for the pupils they place in alternative provision
Paragraph 200	Makes reference to the new responsibility on Virtual School Heads to champion the attendance, attainment and progress of children in kinship care which comes into force in September 2024.
Paragraph 204	Links added to NSPCC advice on protecting children with SEN; and deaf/disabled children and young people
Part Three	Safer recruitment
	No changes
Part Four	Safeguarding concerns or allegations made against staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors
	No changes
Part Five	Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment
Paragraph 497	'Early help' - text amended from 'providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life' to reflect 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023)
Annexes	A - E
Annex A	No changes
Annex B	The guidance states that 'This preventing radicalisation section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14 March 2024.'
Annex C	The section on Holding and sharing information has been amended in terms of record keeping to include additional information 'Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.'
Annex D	No changes
Annex E	No changes
Contact:	

Name: James Jordan
Title: Safeguarding Children in Education Officer
Tel: 0151 511 7656
Email: James.jordan@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.6 School Teachers Pay Award and PRP

1 School teachers to receive 5.5% pay award

School teachers will receive a fully funded 5.5% pay award in line with the recommendations of the school teachers review body (STRB).
Schools will receive almost £1.2billion additional funds to cover this cost at a National level.
The 5.5% will apply from 01 September 2024 and is equivalent to an increase of over £2,500 for the average teacher taking the median salary for 2024/2025 to over £49,000.
This applies to maintained schools as academies have freedom over their pay and conditions.

2 Performance related pay system

The requirement to use the performance related pay system will be removed from September 2024.

Contact:

Name: Bridget Wale-Akinlua
Title: HR Business Partner (Schools)
Tel: 0151 511 6282
Email: Bridgetwale.Akinlua@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.7 Teachers Pension

Teachers Pension :

It is important for all teachers to register for My Pension Online at www.teacherspensions.co.uk/forms/registration

This will assist teachers to understand the value of their pension and plan for their retirement. It also enables Teachers' Pensions to effectively communicate information about the Scheme, particularly when they start their role or a new job and when they leave.

Teachers Pay Award:

The Teachers 2024/2025 Pay Award agreement will be finalised by mid-October so will likely be processed in the November pay period and back dated to 01/09/2024.

Staffing structures for Teachers salary progression will be distributed towards the end of September. Instructions will be included in the email for this annual exercise.

NJC Pay Award:

The 2024/2025 pay offer has been rejected by two of the unions who are currently balloting members on industrial action. This will delay implementing the pay award until later in the year at the earliest. Further update details can be found here

[SLCC | Local Government Pay Claim 2024/25 – Update](#)

Contact:

Name: Robert Jennings
Title: Senior Pay and Pensions Officer
Tel: 0151 511 8271
Email: Robert.jennings@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Please encourage Teachers to register online that haven't already done so.
- Communication to Teachers when these processes are expected to occur.

2.8 DfE's Wraparound Childcare Expansion

Schools and Multi-Academy Trusts (together with PVI's*) have been tasked, by the DfE, with increased responsibility in ensuring accessible and high-quality wraparound childcare.

The aims of the programme are to:

- expand access to wraparound provision for parents of children YR – Y6
- begin September 2024 (to be up and running by Sept 2026)
- expand childcare 08:00 am to 6:00 pm, five days a week during term-time
- childcare must be reliable and regular, not ad hoc
- if provision is off the school site, parents must not be required to pick up/drop off
- childcare is paid for wraparound care by parents, it is not subsidised

The DfE funding can be used for:

- Covering staffing costs
- Training
- Transport costs e.g. minibus hire
- Resources *(some DfE restrictions)
- Contributing to running costs whilst demand builds

Funding cannot be used for:

- Subsidising the cost of places. Any places created should be paid for by parents.

Contributing to running costs of existing wraparound places

Contact:

Name: Hazel Fryman or Clare Rowlands
Title: Wraparound Childcare Leads
Tel: 07968306961
Email: Hazel.fryman@halton.gov.uk / Clare.rowlands@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

All primary schools & settings are urged to continue with their own expansion plans, which need to be rolled out as soon as possible. All schools and settings in Halton have been advised that the DfE programme is to continue as expected in 2024-2025.

The front-loading of places with LA funding is hoped to encourage increased demand from parents. Please do get in touch, or book on a briefing to find out more about this exciting initiative!

Our local authority plans are **to proceed with our expansion programme at pace** to ensure there are sufficient wraparound places to meet demand as soon as possible. Please contact Clare Rowlands, (clare.rowlands@halton.gov.uk) or Hazel Fryman (hazel.fryman@halton.gov.uk) if you would like to find out more about the programme and what it could mean for your school.

We are offering a series of online briefings in September, so please do book on if you would like to know more about the grant funding application process, or if you have general queries and would like to know more about the DfE programme and what it (and the funding) could mean for your school/setting.

The briefing links are below:

Wraparound Childcare Expansion: Opportunity to find out more about the grant funding process and talk through the Grant Funding Application form.

- Tuesday 17th September: 11:00 -12:00 <https://forms.office.com/e/eapbFkKkQU>
- Tuesday 17th September: 2:00 – 3:00 pm <https://forms.office.com/e/vPJHsv8037>
- Tuesday 17th September: 4:00 – 5:00 pm <https://forms.office.com/e/JyNXZU1hJq>

General queries and opportunity to discuss expansion plans in your school/PVI setting:

- Thursday 19th September: 3:30 pm <https://forms.office.com/e/NR6e5ycn9U>

2.9

Health and Safety Training

During June this year 4, full day training sessions were held at the DCBL Stadium directed toward school staff and governors.

The content included such areas as legislation, policies and procedures. It also included a planning and accident investigation exercise.

Updates were given on Asbestos, Legionella and CDM regulations by HBC Property Services Section.

Attendees included Head Teachers, School Business Managers, Site Staff and Governors.

A total of 72 staff from assorted schools attended from around the borough.

The next training session which is the half day H&S briefing will take place in October. Speakers are currently being confirmed and the full details will be released in the near future.

Staff and governors are welcome to attend.

UPDATE: The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill (aka Protect Duty, Martyn's Law) was mentioned in the Kings speech recently. At this time there is still no movement on this legislation.

Contact:

Name: Colin Hill
Title: Principal Health & Safety Advisor
Tel: 0151 511 7967
Email: Colin.hill@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Staff and Governors are welcome to attend

2.10

What is DBV? How can Governors ensure schools are involved?

Delivering Better Value – Update

Delivering Better Value (DBV) is a Department for Education programme working to identify and implement local opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Halton was identified as eligible to apply for DBV grant funding. Halton requested £1m of grant funding, primarily to build resilience across all educational systems to support and include learners with Social, Emotional Mental Health Needs. The initiatives outlined in our bid are designed to allow schools and settings to support SEND children effectively, without necessarily having to request an Education Health and Care assessment, alleviating the demand for specialist placements, and reducing both the risk of out of borough placement and permanent exclusions.

This additional resource presents a significant opportunity to positively transform inclusive practices across Halton. All schools should be taking the current opportunities outlined below, which are free to them.

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
Title: Senior School Quality Assurance Officer; DBV SEND Programme Lead
Tel: 0151 511 8129/07799740251
Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

Governors **should ensure**:

- School has taken up the **Free** Thrive Approach training which is available to all settings within Halton. This is a £300,000 invest into training practitioners to support SEMH. This needs to be taken up before the end of the Autumn Term. [Support for mental health and wellbeing in schools | The Thrive Approach](#)
- School has declared an interest in a the **Free** Team Teach training which is available to all staff including non-teaching staff. This will be open to governors also. This is a £50,000 investment in support behaviour across Halton. [Home - Team Teach](#)
- School has taken up their **2 free places** for the (NASEN) DBV SENDCO Conference 2024. This is crucial day to support SEND across Halton.

Further information about this can be found on the Halton Local Offer at [Delivering Better Value \(DBV\) in SEND | Local Offer \(haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk\)](#)

- Or feel free to contact mike.stapleton-Chambers@halton.gov.uk

2.11 Early Years Updates

Early Years Childcare Expansion

In April 2024, the roll out of the Early Years childcare expansion began. From April eligible working parents of 2-year-olds became entitled to 15 hours Free Early Years Education.

This new entitlement operates alongside the existing 15 hour entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds, parents cannot claim both.

From September 2024, 15 hours free entitlement has now extended to eligible working parents of children from 9 months old.

By September 2025 the number of hours will increase to 30 hours for all eligible children of working parents from 9 months old until starting school.

Parents can check their eligibility and generate a code by visiting [Homepage | Childcare Choices](#) Schools offering places to nursery aged children should remind parents to renew their codes on time or their claim will not be validated.

The new entitlements will impact nursery classes and schools which offer 2 -year -old provision and may also impact children starting nursery classes at age 3, who previously couldn't claim their Free Early Years entitlements until the term after their 3rd birthday. Parents may now be eligible and claiming the working element of the 2-year-old funding.

Childcare Expansion Capital Funding

To support the delivery of the Childcare expansion programmes, Capital funding has been allocated to local authorities.

Halton Borough Council has been allocated a total of £314,798.59 funding for Capital projects.

DfE guidance anticipates that 80% of this will be spent on Early years projects to create the spaces needed under the expansion, (primarily to develop places for children between 9 months and 2 -years old) and 20% to create additional Wraparound Childcare places for school aged children.

The following criteria will be considered by the panel when discussing each application (Please see Funding Panel Criteria appendix 1)

- Demand and sufficiency within the locality.

- Quality of Provision
- Value for money including 25% contribution to the total cost from alternative sources.
- An overview of the Capital Works estimated costs and timescales (detailed estimates and plans to be provided in the full application.)
- Financial sustainability of the investment.

Schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent settings and childminders can apply for the funding.

Capital Grant Applications and further details about funding criteria will be available from 9th September 2024.

Early Years Financial Incentive

To further support the Early Years childcare expansion. Halton is one of the local authorities chosen to pilot the financial incentive scheme which aims to encourage new and returning Early Years workers into the sector.

School nurseries classes and maintained nursery schools can advertise the financial incentive scheme, £1000 golden hello, when recruiting staff. Terms and conditions apply. This is only available for staff working with nursery age children (not reception), the post must be permanent and the recruits must be new to Early Years or returning after a period of 6 months. For more information please contact early.years@halton.gov.uk

Contact:

Name: Sarah Campbell
 Title: Early Years Team Lead
 Tel: 0151 511 6940 / 07721183211
 Email: Sarah.campbell@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.12 FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS Careers education advice and guidance

If you are new to being a School Governor with responsibility for careers education advice and guidance, or would welcome a refresher, you may find the resources specifically for School Governors on the Careers and Enterprise company website useful.

<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk>

Go to the website above, then scroll down to the resources by category and select **Governors**.

Contact:

Name: Háf Bell
 Title: 14-19 Programme Leader
 Tel: 0151 511 7255
 Email: haf.bell@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Governors with responsibility for Careers education advice and guidance to review.

2.13 Health Protection Update

General Health Protection Update

Schools and Early Years settings play a crucial role in preventing the spread of infections and providing important information to parents and families. During the winter months, there is often an increase in cases of communicable diseases, which, combined with the growing demands on staff, can present significant challenges within educational settings. However, by taking proactive measures throughout the year, schools can better prepare for and prevent infections, ensuring smooth operation and minimising disruptions.

Health protection in schools and Early Years settings is a top priority for the Public Health team. Since the COVID pandemic, there has been a rise in infections such as Scarlet Fever. Nationally, there is also a resurgence of measles, with outbreaks in the North West and some local cases. It is essential that schools are well-prepared to prevent, control, and respond to such health concerns.

School governors have an important role in supporting proactive measures to address a variety of health protection issues, including measles. This can involve encouraging schools to engage with health protection efforts, ensuring staff know who to contact and when, and emphasising the importance of incorporating infection prevention and control practices into daily routines.

e-Bug is a free educational resource designed for Key Stages 1-4, covering topics such as respiratory hygiene, antimicrobial management, and basic infection prevention and control practices. In conjunction with this year's annual flu campaign, the health protection team plan to collaborate with partners to more effectively integrate e-Bug resources into schools. This will involve various delivery methods tailored to meet the specific needs of schools. Initially, we are looking to gauge interest in these resources and determine if they would be beneficial or if schools are already using alternative resources.

Improving School-aged Immunisation Uptake

Governors can also play a role by supporting the School Immunisation Team's in-house sessions and advocating for the importance of vaccination uptake, especially for MMR and flu. By implementing these measures, schools will not only equip children and young people with essential tools to enhance overall public health, but also improve school attendance rates which will essentially improve educational attainment rates.

Bridgewater NHS Flu Vaccination Programme in Halton Schools:

From September to December, the Bridgewater NHS School-aged Immunisation Service will deliver flu vaccinations across Halton. The team will visit all local authority nurseries attached to a school, as well as all primary and secondary schools. The flu programme targets children from Reception to Year 11, with those attending SEND schools remaining eligible up to 17 years. Community clinics will be available for home-schooled children.

The Nasal Flu Spray Vaccine is offered to all eligible children and an alternative Injectable vaccine is available for those unable to have the nasal spray. Parents/carers will receive information from school early September. They must complete eConsent forms or telephone the team to provide consent and indicate their preferred vaccine option before the school session.

To improve school-aged immunisation uptake rates within Halton, the team are working closely with schools to offer support Initiatives to educate and prepare pupils prior to vaccination. Offering classroom workshops at primary schools and a lunchtime drop-in advice session for secondary schools. The team also offer to support school with parental engagement through attendance at school events: parents' evenings, open days, and teacher-led parent coffee groups.

Schools are invited to contact the school-aged immunisation team for more information and to discuss support initiatives further. Tel: 0151 495 5066, email: bchft.haltonimmsteam@nhs.net

Contact:

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Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION.

2.14 Support with PSHE from Health Schools Partnership

Halton Healthy Schools Programme

The Halton Healthy Schools Award is based on a whole-school approach to physical, social, and emotional health and wellbeing. The programme is facilitated by Halton Health Improvement Team (HIT) and delivered by HIT and a range of partners.

100% of primary schools engaged with the programme in 2023-24, which we hope to replicate this academic year. Unfortunately, many secondary schools have not taken up the offer in recent years. Last year, 50% of secondary schools and 75% of SEN schools accessed the offer.

Everything on the Healthy Schools offer is free of charge. It includes pupil workshops and assemblies, staff training, parent workshops, lesson plans, resources, frameworks for whole-school approaches to mental health and tackling obesity, and more.

Everything on the offer will contribute to developing or enhancing whole-school approaches to health and wellbeing, and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) delivery.

PSHE in Halton

Anecdotally, we have heard that teaching staff delivering PSHE do not always feel that they are best-placed to deliver vital education on Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education, due to lack of knowledge, training and confidence on the range of PSHE topics.

In June 2024, with the support of Halton's Acting Director of Education, Benjamin Holmes, we sought to better understand current PSHE provision across secondary schools in Halton. We distributed a survey to gather information on current PSHE delivery. This information would help shape the Healthy Schools Offer to meet the needs of schools; enabling us to support schools in addressing concerning trends of STIs, teenage pregnancy, vaping prevalence, online safety concerns, obesity.

Unfortunately, there were just four responses from across all secondary schools, which means we still know little about PSHE provision in Halton's secondary schools, and whether further support for staff, training and resources are needed.

OFSTED

Personal Development is one of the four key judgements by OFSTED.

"Beyond Personal Development, a well-considered and comprehensive PSHE programme can contribute to all four judgement areas, as well as being essential to safeguarding."
PSHE Association

"In the new inspection model, we are particularly interested in how schools contribute to the personal development of children. This area is now a judgement in its own right. This makes more space in inspection for discussing things like the PSHE lessons in which wider life issues can be explored."

Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman, July 2019

Schools are judged on their intent, effectiveness and quality of provision. It is therefore essential that teachers delivering Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education and suitably trained in these topics and are confident to deliver effective education on topics that prepare young people for life in modern-day society, and prepare young people for making informed choices about risk-taking behaviours that will affect their health and wellbeing in to adulthood. Staff should also be able to tailor this education to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

Scoping

We would like to ask that the board of governors support the Healthy Schools Partnership in understanding better how schools are ensuring that the Personal Development element of the PSHE curriculum school is currently being delivered.

We would like for all school staff (not just leadership) to complete this survey to help us understand:

- Who delivers PSHE
- What training staff have to deliver PSHE
- Where resources/lesson plans are sourced
- Training and resources required from the Healthy Schools partnership
- What support is needed in terms of curriculum delivery from partners with expertise in any topic areas, such as RSE, drugs and alcohol, tobacco and vaping.

The survey can be found here:

<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/RSEandHealth>

The aim of this survey is to ensure that the offer of FREE support via the Healthy Schools partnership is meeting the needs of secondary schools, and helping to plug any gaps in training, resources and session delivery.

We are keen to ensure that all secondary schools are delivering the highest quality PSHE, so that young people stand the best chance of becoming happy and healthy adults, able to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing.

Contact:

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Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.15 New Government Possible Changes

We now have a new Secretary of State for Education- Bridget Phillipson. We anticipate that there will be many changes.

We don't know exactly what the new Labour government will change, we are hearing that possible changes include the following (but have no details yet). There is no time-scale on any of those pledges, and some are just proposals, some were included in the Kings Speech but key changes may include:-

- A drive on recruitment and retention, aiming to recruit a further 6,500 teachers including reviewing bursaries and the early career framework (ECF) to support Early Career Teachers (ECTs).
- Every new teacher to hold (or be working towards) qualified teacher status (QTS).

(This would change requirements for academies and independent schools, which currently don't have the requirement for teachers hold QTS.)

- Introducing a teacher training entitlement, to make sure teachers stay up to date.
- Reviewing the way bursaries are allocated, as well as the structure of retention payments
- Improving leadership through a new mentoring framework
- Reinstate the school support staff negotiating body, to address recruitment and retention in support roles. This is likely to be included as part of a new employment rights bill.

- Ofsted inspection reforms, including replacing single-word Ofsted inspections with report cards
- Include multi-academy trusts (MATs) in the inspection system, and enable direct intervention where schools and trusts aren't performing to the highest standards
- Introduce a new annual review of safeguarding, attendance and off-rolling
- Provide regional support teams
- A full curriculum review,
- The government plans to require **all schools** to teach the national curriculum. This has implications for Academies. This requirement will come after a review of curriculum and assessment – conducted by working with school staff, parents/carers and employers, which will include:
 - Improving the quality of maths teaching across nurseries and primary schools
 - Looking at the right balance of assessment methods, while protecting the role of exams
 - Funding evidence-based early-language interventions in primary schools
 - Supporting children to study a creative or vocational subject until they're 16
 - Protecting time for PE
 - Making sure schools address misogyny, and teach pupils about healthy relationships and consent
 - Guarantee two weeks' worth of work experience for every young person.
 - Improve careers advice in schools and colleges.
 - A national music education network, with information on courses and classes for parents and carers, teachers and pupils.
 - All schools to co-operate with their LA on admissions, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) inclusion and place planning.
 - Introducing a community-wide approach to improving SEND inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools
 - Making sure special schools cater to those with the most complex needs
 - Free breakfast clubs in every primary school
 - Extending childcare by opening 3,000 primary school-based nurseries
 - Introducing a supervised tooth-brushing scheme for 3 to 5-year-olds, focused in the areas with the highest needs
 - Limiting the number of branded items of uniform that schools can require (possible three branded items)
 - Provide access to specialist mental health professionals in every school, *'so every young person has access to early support to address problems before they escalate'*.
 - Plans for 'young futures hubs' in communities, including open-access, drop-in mental health hubs for children and young people.
 - Increased focus on inclusion and mental health, including free breakfast clubs in all primary schools with a new *'children's wellbeing bill'*.

- Improving SEND expertise in mainstream schools
- Single unique identifiers for children – this would aim to improve data-sharing across public services.
- Updated trade union legislation based around good faith negotiation – the government **won't** proceed with plans for minimum service levels in schools.
- Ending VAT exemption for private schools – this would also end business rates relief for the schools affected, it would invest the money into state schools.

It's unclear what will happen to policies and guidance already under review which include:-

Prior to the election, the DfE had published draft guidance on:

- [Relationships, sex and health education \(RSHE\)](https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/administration-and-management/government-policies-and-legislation/need-to-knows/dfe-launches-consultation-on-draft-update-to-relationships-sex-and-health-education-rshe-guidance/)
 - <https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/administration-and-management/government-policies-and-legislation/need-to-knows/dfe-launches-consultation-on-draft-update-to-relationships-sex-and-health-education-rshe-guidance/>
- ['Gender questioning children'](https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/administration-and-management/government-policies-and-legislation/need-to-knows/have-your-say-on-the-dfes-draft-guidance-for-schools-on-gender-questioning-children/)
 - <https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/administration-and-management/government-policies-and-legislation/need-to-knows/have-your-say-on-the-dfes-draft-guidance-for-schools-on-gender-questioning-children/>

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Recommendation to Governors:

- Do not panic!!
- Be aware that there will be changes in the future, until more detail is provided continue with the current arrangements.

2.16 Statutory Property Risk and Compliance; Ensuring Healthier and Safer Environments

Safe and compliant learning spaces are a strategic priority for leaders. However, not all are fully aware of where the gaps are in their estate and where servicing is lacking. A building should be safe for all to walk into on a daily basis. Poorly maintained buildings increase the risk of accidents and potential liabilities. Good estate management enables you to keep on top of your statutory responsibilities and maintain a safe and compliant estate.

[The Good Estate Management for Schools \(GEMS\)](#) guidance which was updated in late April 2024 helps education leaders to take a strategic approach to their estate management. This can help to reduce running costs, prioritise and procure maintenance services more cost effectively and make informed decisions about investment. The GEMS self-assessment tool is designed to help headteachers, executive leaders and governing bodies to assess your organisation's approach to estate management and identify where you are following good practice and areas which require further development. The checklist spans 12 areas of estate management including health and safety, performance management and sustainability, emergency planning and procurement of estate services.

Using a central, cloud-based solution can help you to keep track of your compliance needs, service logs and dates of when equipment and buildings were last checked, so you have a complete picture of your compliance needs. Ensuring that your buildings remain safe and compliant can be particularly resource intensive. Rather than directly employ specialist staff, external qualified maintenance teams can manage your refurbishment, replacement and expansion projects on your behalf. They can ensure you meet your statutory obligations to test

and inspect the mechanical and electrical services within your buildings and maintain the efficiency and reliability of your systems.

Entrust offers a managed service that delivers an extensive range of service contracts. These contracts meet the demands of the wide range of legislation that exists to maintain the safe operation and management of mechanical and electrical systems within school buildings.

Academies are directly legally responsible for the duties associated in complying with this legislation. Entrust provides access to contractors and manages the performance of the contractors by monitoring changes in legislation; updating contract specifications to maintain compliance and deliver best value; assessing contract bidders to select the best available supplier; managing schedule adherence; conducting Engineer Site Audits on the contractors; verifying invoice details; auditing work reports; validating defects reports; resolving report and invoice queries before they reach the client.

Entrust can also provide online access to your statutory property risk and compliance service schedules and records via the dedicated Entrust Property Portal.

All work activity is undertaken in accordance with a bespoke contract specification designed to comply with the relevant industry standards including British Standards and European Directives.

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Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.17 Curriculum Updates

English Review March 2024

An Ofsted subject report on the quality of English in primary and secondary schools in England was published in March 2024. This report looks at how English is being taught across the country.

In summary it stated:-

- Schools prioritise reading and make sure that the curriculum develops pupils' reading.
- Schools have invested in phonics programmes and training so that teachers know how to teach pupils to read.
- Once pupils are able to read accurately, schools are less clear about how to build fluency and comprehension.

The report found that the teaching of reading has significantly improved since the phonics screening check was introduced, and that schools have successfully invested in programmes and training to ensure teachers can sufficiently teach pupils to read.

According to the report, the writing curriculum often introduces complex tasks too soon and primary pupils are not provided with enough practice opportunities or teaching to become "fluent with transcription early enough."

Ofsted also said that primary schools "too often" chose English texts to study based on their curriculum links, "rather than on how they might advance pupils' knowledge of the English language and understanding of literature."

Many schools also appear unsure of how to teach spoken language in a way that will enable pupils to express themselves confidently. The report states that "teachers often attribute pupils'

weaknesses in speaking to a lack of confidence rather than realising that they have not been taught what they need to know about the topic”.

The report also highlighted how national assessments can distort the English curriculum. Schools *“expect pupils to repeatedly attempt complex tasks that replicate national curriculum tests and exams [...] at the expense of first making sure that pupils are taught, and securely know, the underlying knowledge they need.”*

Concerns were also raised over basic spelling errors, including the use of capital letters and full stops, and also the disconnect found between the different modalities of English.

The main recommendations from the report are as follows:

- Ensuring that the national curriculum requirements for spoken language are translated into practice, enabling pupils to learn how to become competent speakers.
- Encouraging pupils to read a wide range of books to build a reading habit once they are reading fluently.
- Ensuring that teachers have access to high quality English literature and language professional development, alongside enough time to develop subject knowledge.
- Ensuring that statutory tests and exams do not disproportionately influence curriculum decisions
- Ensuring that the curriculum takes full account of the foundational reading, writing and spoken language skills that pupils need to carry out complex task.

Music Development Plan

In May 2024 schools were reminded by the DfE to publish a summary of their music development plan on their school website.

All schools should have a music development plan, as set out in the [national plan for music education](#).

The DfE are asking schools to publish a summary of their music development plan on their website before the start of the 2024 to 2025 academic year. Schools should then update the summary before the start of each new academic year.

Publishing a summary will help schools to:

- raise awareness of their music development plan.
- promote the school music offer to parents and prospective parents.
- give greater opportunity for schools and music hubs to work together.

The Department for Education worked with teachers and leaders at both primary and secondary level to design the summary template.

The template is not mandatory, and schools should feel free to adapt it. For example, although it is designed for the whole-school level, some schools might find it helpful to adapt it for particular key stages. Schools can contact their local [music hubs](#) for support with their music development plan.

Take Part in EEF Research in 2024-25

The EEF are actively recruiting schools for research trials and projects in a range of priority areas including:

- Story Choices & interactive story book reading (Early Years)
- Mathematics Mastery (KS1&2)
- Maths Champions (Early Years)

Further information

[Subject report series: English](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-english)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-english>

[School music development plan: summary template](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-music-development-plan-summary-template)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-music-development-plan-summary-template>

[Mathematics Mastery – subsidised programme](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/mathematics-mastery-subsidised-programme)

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/mathematics-mastery-subsidised-programme>

[Primary - Support great teaching and learning for five-to-11-year-olds.](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/primary)

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/primary>

Contact:

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Recommendation to Governors:

- The link governor for English to discuss the research report with subject leader and consider the summary report findings outlined above.
- The link governor for Music to discuss the report with subject leader.

2.18 Period Products in Schools – Free Resources

The period product scheme provides free period products to girls and women in their place of study. It is available to [state-maintained schools](#) and DfE funded 16 to 19 education organisations in England. The scheme ran for the academic year 2023 to 2024. In April 2024, it was extended until July 2025.

The DfE has a contract with Personnel Hygiene Services Limited (phs), which allows you to order a wide range of period products and have them delivered when you need them.

This guidance contains information on:

- choosing and ordering period products
- distributing products within institutions
- tackling stigma

Period products should be available for all who need them, when they need them, so they can access education. Having periods should not be a barrier to education for anyone.

Further information

[Period product scheme for schools and colleges](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england>

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Recommendation to Governors:

- Ensure school leaders are aware of this scheme and that they know how to secure these products.

2.19 Safety of Modular Dining Tables

There have been warnings of incidents in connection with the use of modular dining furniture, particularly during close-down and storage.

This type of dining furniture features collapsible tables with fixed stools. The mechanism that allows the furniture to fold for storage/un-fold for use, can lead to finger, hand and forearm trapping and related crush injuries. In addition, when folded, the unit can become a topple risk if the locking mechanism is not fully engaged. Care must be taken to not accidentally bypass the locking mechanism by forcing tables past their safe locking position to squeeze them into tight storage spaces.

Tables should always be stored in the fully locked position. Additionally on some modular systems, the castors allowing the unit to be moved once folded, do not have an integrated braking system to prevent movement once placed in the chosen storage location. This means that they will move easily when little pressure is applied, which could lead to injuries, especially to young children.

If this occurrence is coupled with an unlocked folded table, serious injury could result.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for opening/closing and storage.

Ensure that all staff who use these modular systems have received effective instruction and training on how to handle them, including correct fold-out and close-down procedures.

Ensure that a risk assessment is in place for this type of equipment and all staff who use or handle these modular systems read and confirm their understanding of the risk assessment and its control measures.

Always ensure that the locking mechanism is fully engaged before moving and remains fully engaged once in the storage location.

Never bypass the safe storage 'locked' position, such as when storing away in a cupboard to fit multiple units or items into the allocated space.

Ensure that folded tables are stored in a location where they cannot be accessed by unauthorised persons and/or children.

Inspection of this type of equipment should take place in line with any manufacturer's recommendations – please consult the information you were provided with at the time of purchase or contact your supplier.

Inspections should include a visual check before use and at the end of use by staff and a recorded inspection of the modular tables completed regularly and in line with manufacturer guidelines

Further information

Manufacturer's instructions

Check if your insurance company requires an annual inspection.

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Recommendation to Governors:

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Halton Governor Conference 2024

Preparing for the future!

Friday 15th November 2024 | 09:00 – 16:00 | Halton Stadium, Lower House Lane, Widnes, WA8 7DZ



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Programme

Time	Item
08:30-09:00	Delegate arrival, information stands, refreshments and breakfast baps
09:00-09:10	Welcome
09:10-10:30	Keynote: “The Academy Sector, Academisation and why Due Diligence is key to getting it right” Jeff Marshall; Managing Director at J&G Marshall Ltd <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An update on academisation and what it means for governors.• The importance of due diligence and what it looks like.• Time for discussions around the process.
10:30-10:45	Break: Refreshments and information stands
10:45-11:45	Workshop: “Preparing for Ofsted” This workshop is designed to familiarise governors with the process and expectations of an Ofsted Inspection. It will equip governors with the knowledge and understanding to engage in meaningful conversations with inspectors.
11:45-12:15	Presentation: “The benefits of embedding excellent School Resource Management (SRM) in your school” Chris Mills; DfE Head of SRM Engagement & Outreach or Cherise Heavy; DfE Comms & Engagement lead on the SRM Engagement & Outreach team. Learn more about the Department for Education’s free School Resource Management (SRM) offer, a suite of free tools, guidance and support, designed in partnership with the sector, to help schools build their resource management capability and obtain best value from all of their resources, to maximise outcomes for learners.
12:15-13:00	Lunch and information stands
13:00-14:00	Workshop: “Understanding Your School’s Curriculum” This workshop will provide governors with the opportunity to explore their own school’s curriculum offer in the light of current Ofsted recommendations and help them identify and recognise positive examples of impact when visiting their schools or talking with school leaders.
14:00-14:20	Graham Tague; Head of Governor Services at Entrust <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The importance of training• How can Entrust support?• SLAOnline
14:20-14:35	Break: Refreshments, cookies/fruit and information stands
14:35-15:35	Workshop: “Effective Support and Challenge” We will explore how, what and why monitoring is necessary and how governors can challenge leaders in a supportive and effective manner.
15:35-15:50	Q&A panel
15:50-16:00	Plenary session, close and raffle

Cost and how to book

- Schools who subscribe to the **Entrust Governors Support and Development SLA** are entitled to **two free places** and can book additional places for **£50 per delegate**.
- Schools who subscribe to the **Entrust Clerking SLA** can book places for **£50 per delegate**.
- Schools and Academies who do not subscribe to an Entrust Governor Services SLA can book places for **£110 for one delegate or £160 for two**.

To book your place(s) on our conference please email: governors@entrust-ed.co.uk quoting course code GS-1124-T001.