

Minutes of the SBM / SAO Network meeting held at Macbeth Centre on 24th September 2025

Name	School
Caroline Plummer	H&F
Brigid Simmons	Woodlane High School
Barbara Williams	Wendell Park Primary
Jo Grenfell	Jack Tizard
Michelle Foster	Fox Primary
Caiya Bissessar	St Mary's
Catherine Freitas	Kenmont Primary
Tamsin Roberts	Holy Cross
Marie-Laure Mghabghab	Normand Croft Community School
Asma Begum	Thames Federation
Sharon Whitehead	All Saints
Andreea Palade	Cambridge School
Sue Harris	John Betts
Kelly Norris-William	Old Oak
Holly O'Donnell	Flora Gardens
Apologies	
Tina McQuire	Sir John Lillie
Caroline Collins	Miles Coverdale Primary School
Jessica Quinn	St Johns Walham Green
Gemma Keatley	Larmenier & Sacred Heart
Presenters	
Name	Company
Daniel Stacey	Education BI Lead, Business Intelligence Service H&F
Daniel Weedon	BI Ed Data Analyst, Business Intelligence Service H&F

Present

1. Present / minutes of last meeting

CP welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through housekeeping

Minutes of last meeting – The minutes were agreed with the following points clarified:

- Internal Audit confirmed that there is no requirement for Headteachers to sign off the pre-pay report and this can be completed at the reconciliation stage
- A question was raised about going paperless; previously Internal Audit have confirmed that this is okay on the basis that there is a full audit trail showing authorization and segregation of duties. This may be easier to do once FMS moves across to a cloud-based system with the ability to upload invoices.

2. General discussion:

- Summer payments have been processed early due the LA finance system being down for 10 days
- Question relating to payroll providers following the decision by the LA to end their HR SLA. Headteachers are meeting today to discuss a group procurement / tendering exercise to ensure best value. The HR Team will still complete some statutory duties, although at this stage it is

not clear which ones, but it is likely to be minimal. CP received an email from HR Connect who also have a HR service and support a number of schools in the Kent area. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to invite payroll providers to a future meeting once we are further into the process. **Update** The working Party led by Headteachers will look into this and invite HR Providers to present at their meetings.

- There was discussion relating to the change by HR Connect to self-service for payroll. It was agreed that the timing has been challenging and the training webinar was not particularly good, but some have found the handbook more useful. There was a discussion about whether self-service would result in less mistakes due to human error although it was also felt that errors could also increase due to the nature of our roles and the busy school environment. Those that have already started using self-service have reported that the system is a little 'clunky' and not very user friendly for non-payroll experts. A query has been raised by Theresa at SBS regarding the format of the costing report and whether the format will be compatible with their system. It was agreed that self-service potentially creates more work for SBLs for no reduction in the cost of the SLA. SBMs were invited to email CP with their issues / concerns and she will organise a group response to HR Connect.
- CP advised that she has been working with Georgina Herry regarding setting up a central area for templates, policies, planners, compliance, H&S, HR, admissions, audit and other relevant documents and for sharing good practice. This will be called the SBL Hub and CP will keep us updated. It will also include LA, and DfE updates. CP will be working with Marlon Barnes regarding updates to H&S compliance. CP has asked that we email her with any other suggestions for the SBL Hub **Update** Hub is now up and running - [SBL Hub](#)

3. Training & Conference

A conference for H&F SBLs is being planned for the Summer term 2026 and more details to follow in due course

CP has been in discussion with the DfE and ISBL regarding potential training topics for future meetings and also gave a reminder about the CIPFA course recently circulated by the LA. This is heavily funded and although the deadline has now passed, there may still be an opportunity to enrol

There was discussion about the DfE Buying for Schools platform and JG reported that Jack Tizard have used this successfully for their photocopier contract.



SBL Network
intro.pptx

4. Data / Business Intelligence Team Presentation

Introductions given together with an overview of roles and the team. There are three staff in the Childrens BI Team, although they work closely with other colleagues and teams within the LA and are always happy to take calls and answer queries. Full presentation attached below.

There was discussion about some of the key areas in the Autumn 2025 census as follows:

- This census calculates the DSG so is vital in ensuring that funding is correct
- Schools should check their DfE and Collect logins in good time and update their GIAS information
- Census files should be uploaded to Collect not School to School unless told otherwise by the Data Team and ensure that you press 'submit'
- All errors must be corrected and queries investigated. It was agreed that it is useful to receive a copy of the standard wording for the notepad entries beforehand
- Once the census has been uploaded, schools must run all reports to remove the 'launch reports' error message. However, these cannot be run for 24 hours following uploading as the DfE run an overnight update
- Unfortunately error messages can sometimes flag weeks after submission

- All EHCP information and key indicators for SEN funding must be completed to ensure that correct funding is received. If a child is in the process of receiving an EHCP it is useful to speak to parents / carers / SENCO to check whether or not this has been finalised
- There was a discussion relating to FSM eligibility and schools reported that there still appear to be gaps in terms of whether schools are being notified of children who are eligible. The lists being received from the LA are not updated frequently enough and it is difficult to contact the Benefits Team with queries. Schools should email Daniel with specific queries
- FSM will be protected until 2026/27 and this is likely to be reviewed in September 2026. In this respect schools should not put end dates on FSM as this will create a query or error
- There was a question relating to checking nursery funded hours as it can be challenging to obtain the information needed from parents /carers. The LA are able to give schools access to Synergy so that they can check 30 hour code eligibility. There was discussion about supporting parents in schools to apply for FSM and 30 hour funding. **Update** It has now been confirmed that schools are not able to check EYPP eligibility themselves, it needs to be checked through the benefits team. We are waiting for an update on the best way for schools to raise queries with the benefits team.



School SBM Meeting
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