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Briefing note

To: Schools Forum

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Purpose of the Paper:

Information	√
Consultation	
Decision	

Title of Briefing: Special Leave - Part 1 & 2 Service Level Agreement (SLA) – Update

Background:

A report was presented to Schools Forum on the 7th March 2018, noting that the Special Leave SLA, required review from 1st April 2018 as whilst monies paid into the SLA had increased overtime (due to increasing pupil numbers), the associated costs of the SLA had not remained in alignment with budgets.

As noted the SLA provides for:

- Part 1 - the costs associated with the absence for teaching staff on Maternity, Adoption, Paternity, Shared Parental Leave and Jury Service, where those employers chose to be part of this SLA, to be reimbursed to employer. Maternity remained by far the bulk of claims and whilst claims were variable in volume, cost and duration (resulting in predictions and budget planning requiring a wider number of assumptions) the vast majority of individuals consistently claimed the entire paid leave element.
- Part 2 – the costs associated with this absence for reimbursement to the home/ host employer. The SLA applied equally to all schools whose employers chose to be part of the SLA – including teaching, leadership and support staffs and was operated within an annual agreement. The profile of use had always had an element of variance/ risk for each year the SLA had been in operation. Recently use profile had further varied due to increased membership levels and changes in the value of unit cost.

Schools Forum agreed that they wished to continue to operate the SLA for 2018/19 at a value of £24.73 per pupil, pupil reference points were to be inclusive of Reception to Year 11 and a review of indicative values was required. Schools Forum were also clear that the SLA had to work within budget allocations and therefore claims were to be paid retrospectively, the value of claims would be reviewed and where applicable a range of options be discussed before reimbursement took place.

In September 2018 Schools Forum received a report which noted for the period from 1st April to 31st August 2018 (5 months) both parts of the SLA remained within expected parameters with a slightly reduced number of claims in Part 1 Maternity but an increase in Part 1 Paternity, Shared Parental leave and Adoption. For Part 2 utilisation/ commitment remained within expected parameters. For both parts of the SLA, the overall value of each claim had increased due to role of the applicant, pay awards/ pay progression, employer cost increases.

Current Position:

- Part 1 - Maternity leave claims (as at end of October 2018) appear to be on the increase; this is a reverse pattern to the 2017/18 and both the claimant number and the value per claim is continuing to experience a steady increase with the numbers of claims year to date at its highest level.
- Part 2 - Trade Union Facility Time claims remain line with expectations but again the value per claim has increased.

The SLA (Part 1 and 2) will remain under review for 2018/19 with further monitoring taking place up to year end. An update/ options report will be presented to Schools Forum in April 2019 for consideration of:

- a. refund values inclusive of claims for April 2018 to March 2019.
- b. continuation of the SLA from 1st April 2019, and if so
- c. is a review of the overall cost (£24.73 per pupil) and the indicative costs for each element (Part 1 £20.13) and Part 2 (£4.60) necessary

Recommendations:

Schools Forum having read this report, clearly understanding the information provided and having asked sufficient questions to ensure clarity:

1. note the contents of this report.