

# North Tyneside Schools Forum

## Self-Assessment Tool Kit 2020/21



North Tyneside Council

### Schools Forum Self-Assessment Toolkit

This toolkit is provided by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and provides local authority officers and elected members with a framework for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their schools forum. The toolkit is designed as a set of questions which can be considered by individuals or the forum as a whole.

#### Noted below is the North Tyneside Schools Forum Self-Assessment

As at September 2020 (next review date September 2021)

Question	Yes / No	Notes
1. Are meeting dates set in well advance and details (including time and venue) published in an accessible manner to enable interested parties to plan their attendance?	Yes	A meeting timetable is agreed in September each year for the following Academic Year, dates are confirmed to members and published on the dedicated website. Additionally, all dates are communicated electronically to all non-member Head teachers, Chair of Governors and other stakeholder groups so that awareness of the dates is known in advance of the meetings.
2. Are meetings timed to coincide with key dates? (e.g. reporting of funding formula)	Yes	4 meetings take place per year and are timetabled to fit in with the annual/ forward plan and the cycle of decisions/considerations that need to be undertaken. This is also aligned with ESFA calendar.
3. Are meetings held in an accessible venue to enable observers to attend easily?	Yes	Meetings are commonly held at a central but currently due to COVID19 restrictions meetings are being held virtually. This will be reviewed in line with ESFA guidance. The meetings are normally held at a central location which is a public building and fully accessible for all, the room that the meeting is held in is able to accommodate this, however, due to COVID19 restrictions meetings are being held virtually and to accommodate public access the meetings are being live streamed.  The dates and times of the meeting are published in advance via the website, updated to other stakeholders and the meetings are open to the public. Forum members are provided with information as part of their induction including any additional support they need regarding access to both the building/papers/etc. This is also considered/ agreed on an on-going basis as individual needs/ changes.
4. Is there a dedicated website link for school's forum; is it current and regularly updated?	Yes	There is a dedicated page on the North Tyneside Council website that is accessible. The website is updated before each meeting and minutes, agenda and papers are also published. In addition, the most up to date/ recent reference documents issued from the ESFA or produced by Schools Forum combined with previous papers for each meeting are also published on the website.

Question	Yes / No	Notes
5. Are the agenda and papers publicly available on the authority's website at least 6 working days in advance of the meeting?	Yes	The papers are published one week (7 calendar days) before the meeting via the website, notified to members and circulated to other Head teachers and Governors.
6. Are the papers published as a single document, so that users can download easily?	Yes	<p>Since September 2020 papers are published both on a dedicated website which ensures all papers relating to that meeting are grouped together and can be printed or easily access via a tablet or PC before/ during the meeting and members are sent directly a PDF copy of papers for ease of reference/ printing.</p> <p>Members have been asked their views on a single document being published on the website and it remains their preference for documents/ papers to be published on the website as single items, as this allows them to easily view specific papers and to refer back to previous documents. Additionally, publishing separate documents on the website better supports the induction for new members as it allows previous meeting minutes, agenda's and papers to be easily accessed/ referenced.</p>
7. If papers are tabled at the meeting, are they published on the website promptly after the meeting?	Yes	See 5 above, papers are published in advance of the meeting – it is therefore the exception that papers are presented at the meeting, where this occurs the website is updated as applicable following the meeting.
8. Are draft minutes published a reasonable time (e.g. within 2-3 weeks) after the meeting, rather than waiting until the following meeting?	No	<p>Actions are noted to various colleagues/ officers and minutes will be made available within three weeks of the previous meeting and published on the website.</p> <p>Agenda's will be published two weeks before the meeting.</p>
9. Are the minutes clear and unambiguous, with sufficient detail to illustrate the discussions, without reporting verbatim every point made?	Yes	A note of the discussion and action points is noted. See 8 above.
<p>10. Is the constitution clear and appropriate? Including eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a clear process for ensuring proportional representation</li> <li>- the process for electing members and their tenure</li> <li>- the timescale for review is clearly set out</li> <li>- the process for dealing with repetitive non attenders</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>The Constitution &amp; Guidance is reviewed on an annual basis in line with the EFSA Good Practice Guide and other EFSA associated guidance to ensure that Schools Forum operates within current practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership is reviewed at every meeting to ensure appropriate/ proportionate representation.</li> <li>• An open and transparent recruitment/ appointment process is in operation when a vacancy arises, and membership tenure is noted in the Constitution &amp; Guidance 2018 (reviewed in September 2019) and recorded against each member.</li> <li>• Attendance is an agenda item within each meeting, deputising is accepted and there is a process in place for managing repetitive none attenders.</li> </ul>

Question	Yes / No	Notes
11. Is there an induction pack or training programme available for new members?	Yes	There is an induction programme and member support arranged at appointment. Member induction is updated regularly, and periodic updates are also provided for members which ensures both new and existing members are supported.
12. Is the election process clear and transparent? i.e. representatives are elected only by the group they are representing, whether phase-specific for maintained schools, or by the proprietors of academies for academy members.	Yes	There is a clear process for the election of members which is also referenced in the Constitution & Guidance.
13. Do the papers contain clear recommendations and indicate in a consistent manner whether the item is for information, consultation or decision?	Yes	<p>Papers presented have a summary at the end of the paper noting Recommendations to Schools Forum. Report templates have been altered to ensure that papers presented are noted for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information,</li> <li>• consultation,</li> <li>• decision</li> </ul> <p>Members are all provided with a member pack (as noted in the Constitution &amp; Guidance) which includes reference documents on the role of Schools Forum, Schools Forum Powers &amp; Responsibilities, Schools Forum Structure, etc to support them in their role.</p> <p>Members have also asked that where voting is required extra clarity on which member can vote for which item is added to the reports and the manager presenting the report takes a lead on noting this to members for their reference. Additionally, the Agenda also notes member voting and meeting dates/ actions for reference.</p>
14. Is it clear to observers who attendees at the forum are representing? (eg by use of name plates, indicating sector)	Yes	All members have name plates which indicate their name and role, they are also provided as part of their member pack and overview of the area they are representing. This not only supports observers, but also provides clarity to members and confirms what they are able to vote on where a vote is necessary. Please see point 13 above for further clarity for member voting.
15. Does the chair manage the meeting well, ensuring that all are able to contribute to the agenda items, that no bias towards any sector is evident and that no single person or organisation is able to dominate the discussion?	Yes	<p>A Chair and Vice Chair are appointed on an annual basis, agreed by the members.</p> <p>The Chair/ Vice Chair are clear on their role and responsibilities and ensure that the meetings provide opportunity for all members to equally share views and opinions.</p>
16. Is there inclusive participation in discussions for all phases and types of members?	Yes	Point 15 above. Additionally sub groups are formed where the need arises and each of the groups formed have the opportunity for members to participate and actively contribute.

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17. Do members actively canvass views and objectively represent their whole peer group at the forum and provide feed back after meetings?	Yes	<p>The Forum membership is set up to support members being able to canvass/discuss the matters in hand with the colleagues they are representing in their locality/ network meetings.</p> <p>Since December 2018 all Head teachers who are not a member of Schools Forum are to be invited to attend the meeting as observers to better support their representatives and to increase a broader understanding collectively of Schools Forum business.</p> <p>A Network Group for Governor representatives was established in May 2018, but it is not as effective as hoped. This was also supported via an updated for Governors on the role of Schools Forum and Head teachers also regularly update their Governing Body on the role of Schools Forum.</p> <p>To better support the 4 Governor representatives in their role annual virtual updates on the role of Schools Forum will be provided and the Schools Forum Governor members will also be supported to set up a periodic briefing update for the Schools Forum members in the Sectors they represented. The LA Governor Services support team and the Team who lead on Schools Forum Members induction will provide this support.</p>
18. Where votes are required, is it clear who is eligible to vote for different items?	Yes	Point 11 and 14 above.
19. Where votes are required, are the arrangements for recording the votes clear and unambiguous?	Yes	<p>Members are clear on voting arrangements and all members with effect from December 2018 are issued with a member's pack (as noted in the Constitution &amp; Guidance 2018 – reviewed in September 2019) which clearly indicates what they are able to vote on for their role on Schools Forum. This is explained to all new members at induction.</p> <p>Members are also provided with further guidance on how voting operates periodically, and members continue to be given 'point-in-time' support as/ when a vote is required. Please see above for further information/ guidance provided to support member voting.</p>
20. Is there a system in place for a decision if votes are tied?	Yes	<p>If there is a tied vote members are asked if they wish to reconsider their vote or to receive further information to allow them to reflect on their original vote. Dependent upon the views of the member's further information may be presented within the meeting or may be deferred for receipt of additional information.</p> <p>If a vote remains tied the status quo is maintained, this is also referenced in the Constitution &amp; Guidance 2018 – reviewed in September 2019).</p>
21. Is the operational & good practice guide used to regularly	Yes	This is one of a number of documents hosted on the Schools Forum website, used to inform the Constitution & Guidance and member induction. Additionally, all members receive a copy of the

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review the forum's adherence to good practice?		documents noted with the Constitution & Guidance as they are appointed onto Forum and annually as noted in the Constitution & Guidance.

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