

## Schools Forum

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Services for Schools and Academies from BSP for 2016-17</b>
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### Summary

This paper updates Schools Forum on likely service offerings for schools and academies from Business Services Plus for 2016-2017. This is a high level overview of the services that will be offered and any potential changes that will occur; final confirmation of these offerings will be shared with schools and academies at the Support Services Forums in late February 2016.

### Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to comment on:

- The proposed changes to services
- The average price increases which will be in the region of 2%-3% across the services
- The current situation with the charging mechanism

### Background

The purpose of this paper is to raise awareness of any proposed changes to services for academic year 2016-2017.

The majority of services offered by Business Services Plus (BSP) **will not change** in terms of their content. The actual service packages will remain as described in the current schools/academies brochures, with the only change being the price for 2016-17. The likely price increase will be around 2% in most cases, possibly 3% on others. A number of services will be offering schools a choice of one year and three deals. Three year deals will be offered on the basis of guaranteeing prices in Years 2 and 3 at Year 1 prices. Three year deals allow schools to budget for the future as well as enabling us as a supplier to plan and secure appropriate resources for service delivery. Discounted bundle prices will also be offered where relevant: for example where a school or academy buys back all HR services from BSP, the intention is to offer a discount on these services.

Services that may have some changes are as outlined below:

## 1) HR Safeguarding

In 2015-16 a new safeguarding package was launched. Schools had the option of buying a flat fee annual package and paying a lower administration fee or just paying the current administration fee of £15 per check on a “pay as used” (PAU) basis. The rationale behind having the package rather than remaining with the administration fee as PAU was that more and more time is being spent supporting and advising schools with complex disclosure cases and this has not been funded in the past. As the nature of Disclosure and Barring Service checks will change in the future with the advent of the Update system fewer checks will be undertaken but schools will need advice with regards to how to interpret information produced by the Update system.

In order to future proof support, the proposal for 2016-17 is that schools/academies will be able to choose from a 1 or 3 year package or choose to continue as is the case now and purchase DBS checks on a PAU basis.

### Schools

<b>Packages</b>	<b>Fee for small Schools less than 40 employees</b>	<b>Fee for Large Schools more than 40 employees</b>	<b>Admin fee</b>
<b>1 Year</b>	£50	£100	£14.50
<b>3 Year</b>	£150	£300	£14.50
<b>PAU</b>	£15	£15	

### Academies

<b>Packages</b>	<b>Fee for small Academies less than 40 employees</b>	<b>Fee for Large Academies more than 40 employees</b>	<b>Admin fee</b>
<b>1 Year</b>	£75	£125	£15
<b>3 Year</b>	£225	£375	£15
<b>PAU</b>	£15.50	£15.50	

These options were shared with schools at the November Support Services Forums. The proposed packages were well received and perceived as a reasonable change to the current offering.

## 2) SIMS Support

The three year agreement that BCC have with Capita for the support of SIMS and FMS comes to end on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016. The Bucks SIMS Support Team will continue to support SIMS and FMS but we wanted to give schools the opportunity to see other products on the market. A MIS Supplier Day was arranged on Friday 23 October 2015 to which all providers of Schools Management Information Systems on the Department for Education’s IMLS Framework were invited. The suppliers were allocated an hour slot which they presented to schools regarding their product. The suppliers had a stand which schools could visit to ask further questions or view their product. Schools were emailed in September about the event which was also advertised in the Bulletin. The outcome of the day seemed to suggest that schools are content to remain with using SIMS as their MIS tool, so BCC will look to renew the contract with Capita.

The contract is offered on a 3 year or 5 year deal, with the latter having the lowest percentage increase in price to schools as shown below:

Average Percentage Increase for 3 years	Average Percentage Increase for 5 years
7.6%	4.9%

In order to keep the price increase to schools to around 2% per annum, the 5 year deal is the optimum choice. The packages offered will be as before and a 3 year option for support packages will also be available.

### 3) ICT Curriculum Support Service

A new ICT Curriculum support package for schools was developed during the course of last academic year and was launched in summer term 2015. This will appear as a new product in the service catalogue for schools to order through the new e commerce system. This service includes:

- 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> line software and hardware support provided.
- Mixture of remote & On-site resolution of issues and service requests.
- Server software updates, patches and hotfixes
- Management of user accounts staff & students.
- Application packaging, where the school have evidence of licence agreement and activity is achievable within a standard service request SLA.
- Data & permission management.
- User creation\maintenance

Price is based on the number of machines that a school has requiring support.

### 4) Payroll

Many schools have bought back a 3 year payroll service which will be ending in 2016. Another 3 year payroll service will be offered, operating in the same way as before with Year 1 prices being guaranteed in Years 2 and 3. There will some enhancements to the service; the SIMS to SAP export pilot being a key feature, rolling out from Autumn 2016. This will be available to schools and academies that purchase payroll and SIMs support from BCC. Other new features will include:

- Automated Schools Contracts
- Named responders - December 2015
  - Schools and Academies allocated to individual team members to answer all payroll queries.
  - “Payroll clinics” will be offered from Q1 2016
- To offer discounts for multiple service bundles. e.g. Payroll and Pensions
- Addressing the late notification fee

The enhancements are provided free of charge to the existing payroll service. The likely price increase for the payroll service should not exceed more than 2%.

## 5) LGPS

A discrete service covering LGPS administration is proposed to be available for Academies (for schools this service will be outlined separately but will be free of charge). The service will include:

- a. Updating member details to LGPS
- b. 50/50 scheme checks, opt ins/opt out
- c. Leaver forms, retirement process
- d. Support and guidance to Members and Employers
- e. Payment and reporting of contributions monthly
- f. Compiling and reconciliation of the Annual Contribution Summary (SUP52) and Annual Contribution Posting for submission to LGPS by 30th April
- g. Assist with the Employers discretionary policy
- h. BSP will act as the primary contact point for queries from LGPS

The pricing structure will be the same as Teacher Pension Service; a fixed annual fee plus £1 per member per month. Discounts will be available for multiple service bundles e.g. LGPS and TPP pension services.

## 6) Property Services

The current provision of the STAR package will remain the same. It is likely that the price increase for this will be around 2 - 3%.

The current Buyback package is under review, particularly in light of the feedback provided by schools. Further details should be available by February 2016.

## 7) HR Resourcing

The annual package of 3 adverts with subsequent adverts being available to purchase at a discounted rate will remain available to purchase. An annual package of 10 adverts is being developed as an option for schools and academies to choose in response to the growing demand for recruitment support, particularly with regard to the recruitment of teachers.

## 8) ICT – PSN Broadband

Another category of broadband package may be available between the current Silver and Gold offering. There is a significant difference between Silver and Gold in terms of broadband capacity, and as more of our primary schools are requiring more bandwidth than the current Silver offering, it is an option that is being explored. More details should be available in the spring term.

## Charging mechanisms for services

There was a proposal to change the charging arrangements for schools and academies from April 2015 onwards that was presented at the Schools Forum in December 2015. The proposal was to:

- move to selling services from April to March in line with the financial year
- that this process began from April 2015 with next brochure for services to schools
- Billing for annual packages would take place once a year – this would suit both schools and academies. The annual bill would be processed in the May of the financial year
- Billing for PAU services continues as is the case now, on a monthly basis

After discussion at the Schools Forum, the outcome of this proposal was that there should be flexibility in how schools and academies are billed for their services and also in how they can buy their services. This information was used to influence the development of the new e commerce system that has now replaced Traded Services. Schools will be able to have quotes posted into their account under a “My documents” area which will enable them to buy these bespoke offerings through the system and therefore be billed for this service along with standard packages. This means that schools can order standard packages, bespoke packages and PAU services through the same system and be billed through the same channel. There will be a record of services ordered or a shopping history in each school’s account area. This will give greater consistency to how bills are issued and can be tracked by both schools and BSP.

With regards to the timing of buyback, this has been explored and discussed with service areas and schools alike. The main reason for wanting to change the billing cycle was the split payments and the fact that billing took place through different times of the year through different channels, which was seen as difficult and confusing for schools to track and audit and also for us as suppliers.

Senior leaders from BSP had agreed in principle that we could move to a financial year basis. However, based on discussions with service areas and schools there are a number of factors that need to be considered:

- Many educational services are related to cohorts of students based on academic year – these services would be very difficult to sell on a financial year basis
- This would mean that some services would sold on an academic year basis and others on a financial year basis which could be confusing for schools
- If services are sold on a financial year basis schools would have a much shorter buying period and budgets would have to be set earlier in again a shorter time frame. Governors would have to approve budgets and expenditure much earlier and in a shorter time frame than presently. The compressed time for budget planning and setting, governor approval and buying will happen every year, and this would all occur at the same time as End of Year activities
- Chequebook schools receive their funding in 12 equal instalments – billing these schools early on in a buying cycle that is based on the financial year will cause a cash flow problem
- Initially changing to a financial year from an academic year to pay for services in one instalment may cause difficulties. In order to be pay for services in an one off payment based on a financial year going forward will mean that schools will have to take money out of their previous budget and have to carry this forward
- These changes may mean that schools may not feel they can buy the services that they need
- It is not the intention of BSP to cause schools unnecessary anxiety through changing the billing cycle and the timing of billing if this will mean schools going into budgetary deficit or difficulties

These factors were shared with schools at the November Support Services Forums. The feedback received by schools was that if billing was clearly itemised with the correct 7/12s and 5/12s amounts for each service ordered and the correct ledger codes (where applicable) through one channel, there would be less imperative to change the billing cycle from academic to financial year and remove the split payments. The 7/12 and 5/12 payment splits does have the advantage of spreading payments for all types of schools and provides consistency for all service areas, from BSP and BCC as a whole.

The schools attending the November forums (around 120 schools) were content to see if the new e commerce system improved the consistency and monitoring of billing during the next year and remain with the current buying and billing cycle for another year.

More work needs to be done to see if educational services can be moved to being billed on a financial year basis – all services from BSP can be sold on this basis . Dual systems of billing – one for BSP services, one for BCC educational services is not an ideal situation, as it is the aim of BCC to be customer focused and not to make ordering and paying for services more confusing or difficult for schools.

A final consideration which has been raised at the Support Service Forums and discussed at the Support Services Schools Focus group is the notion of rolling contracts or offering services on a longer basis than 1 year. This would make any transition in the buying cycle from an academic to a financial year basis less disruptive for all concerned. A number of BSP services will be offering a 3 year deal for the reasons stated at the outset of this paper, regardless of whether or not the charging mechanism changes in the next buying cycle (2017-18) or further into the future.