

SCHOOLS FORUM

11TH MARCH, 2008

SCHOOLS FORUMS (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 2008

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To bring to the Forum's attention new Regulations issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families regarding the composition of Schools Forums.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Forum is asked to consider the information given in Paragraphs 4 to 7 following, and to indicate what action they wish to take on the issues raised.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Forum will be aware from previous correspondence that new Regulations regarding the composition of Schools Forums have been implemented. The Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations came into force on 11th February, 2008.
- 3.2 The Regulations provide for:-
- (a) Changes to the non-schools membership of Forums to include representatives of 14 - 19 Partnerships and of private, voluntary and independent early years providers with a consequential change to the ratio of schools to non-schools Members;
 - (b) Representation of Head Teacher Members by other senior school staff;
 - (c) Substitutes for school Members of the Forum;
 - (d) Clarification on representation of faith bodies.

4.0 Non-Schools Members on Schools Forum

- 4.1 The Regulations require that, where an authority has already decided that its Schools Forum should include non-school Members, those Members must now include representation from the Local Authority 14 - 19 Partnership and from private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers of the free entitlement to early years education.

- 4.2 Representation from the Partnership is being sought and the Forum already has representation from PVI, Ms. Kim Delaney.
- 4.3 Current Regulations state that non-schools Members may not make up more than 1/5th of the Schools Forum membership. With the implementation of the new Regulations, non-schools Members are now allowed to make up 1/3rd of the total membership of the Forum.
- 4.4 There are currently 4 non-schools Members (C. of E. Diocese, Catholic Diocese, Staff Side representative and PVI representative) out of a total of 24. With the addition of a 14 - 19 Partnership representative, the non-schools Members would still equate to 1/5th of the total membership of the Forum.
- 4.5 The DCSF stresses that the 1/3rd referred to in the new Regulations is a maximum ratio, not a recommendation and that each Forum should comprise schools and non-schools Members in a way that works locally.
- 5.0 **Representation of Head Teachers by senior schools staff**
- 5.1 The new Regulations add an option for Head Teachers to be represented by senior members of staff (a Principal, Deputy Head Teacher, Bursar, or other person responsible for the financial management of the school). It is intended to give more flexibility to the pool of people available to represent Head Teachers on the Schools Forum. However, representing schools on the Schools Forum is an important role which needs continuity and understanding of the issues. It is recognised that not all senior staff will have the ability to undertake the tasks but it is considered that there are many members of staff who do have the skills and it would be an appropriate development opportunity for those members of staff.
- 6.0 **Substitutes for schools Members**
- 6.1 This is a new Regulation which requires Local Authorities to consult the Forum on arrangements for substitutes who may attend and vote at meetings on behalf of schools Members. The way in which this is done is entirely at the discretion of the Forum. Ideas put forward are a named substitute per schools Member or one substitute per group. In this case, the substitute might attend meetings as an observer or at least receive papers and agendas for the meetings as a matter of course. The idea behind this Regulation is to try to bring some continuity to Forum attendance as the business of the Forum is complex and requires some background knowledge of the issues both nationally and locally.
- 7.0 **Representatives of faith bodies**
- 7.1 The Regulations require that, where a Local Authority has schools of faiths other than Church of England or Roman Catholic Church, they should consider having representatives of the faith bodies as Members or observers in the Schools Forum, as they already must with the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses. The DCSF stresses that this is a matter for local discretion and will probably depend on the proportion of pupils represented by those bodies.