

Schools Financial Services

FAQ's: Finance Information Group 10 June 2020

Budget Planning Software

1. When is a new Cost Centre Allocation Check (CCAC) useful?

A new CCAC would be useful if using the new function of working copies in budget monitoring. Please read the Version 12 release notes and the budget monitoring manual for 2020/21.

2. I wish to tidy up my BPS by deleting old scenarios. What is the best way to do this?

Firstly, ensure that you have printed any reports that you may require. If you are unable to delete individual scenarios, they may be linked to budget forecasts which need to be deleted first. If you are unable to delete, please rename the scenario(s) to 'Please Delete' and email SFS requesting deletion.

3. Currently TCPs have been delayed so it will put out the payroll reconciliations leaving it difficult to monitor actual differences, what are your recommendations?

This happens a lot where TCPs do not go through. You should know the expected TCP award for Support staff. BPS Employee Scenario should reflect the expected TCP awards from April, however if they have not been implemented with payroll yet then you will see differences on your payroll reconciliation. Use this difference and multiply by the number of months not yet paid, that amount can then be used in your budget monitoring by entering it into the yellow "adjustment" box.

4. Is the BPS Term Time Only employee change working correctly? I have some variations between payroll reports SPS/Capita but BPS does not match?

If your BPS doesn't yet match your payroll report this could be because the payroll provider has not yet implemented the changes. SPS are anticipating updating the changes in time for the July pay run. If you are a customer with Capita or anyone else, you will need to find out when they are implementing it from.

If your payroll provider has implemented the changes and it still doesn't match, then it could be because BPS hasn't been updated with all the relevant information it needs.

- Some additional information regarding the individuals joining date and actual working weeks will need be added into Employee Scenarios as part of the Budget Setting process – please refer to the Budget Setting Guidance.

- 5. Previously we had access to BPS Next Year in March, however this year we only had access to BPS Next Year after the Easter holidays. This was not sufficient time given finance governors tend to meet around 13 May in order for FGB meetings and 3 year plan submission to take place prior to half term. Next year please can BPS Next Year be opened in March?**

In previous years, the Next Year menu of the BPS was opened in early March each year ready for the subsequent years budget setting. However, over time the key information provided by Kent County Council in respect of support staff increases as well as any changes to terms and conditions were being provided later and later in March.

This was reducing the time that Schools Financial Services had to update the BPS as well as write procedure notes for users in order that they could apply these changes within the system. As a result, we suspended use of the software until such time that any changes required could be tested as well as clear and concise guidance could be produced.

After 2018-19 Budget Setting, the decision was made that instead of suspending the use of BPS in March/April 2020, we would instead delay the opening on the Next Year menu until after 1 April 2020 and only open once we had the necessary amendments made.

We communicated this approach at the October 2019 Finance Information Groups (FIGs) to give all schools sufficient time to put plans in place which may have involved re-organising FGB meetings around this new deadline. We also provided an update at the March 2020 FIGs re-confirming this approach which included new information in relation to a change to the new Term Time Only calculation which needed to be applied for 2020-21 Budget Setting.

- 6. Why does BPS use KR2-11 for the Teachers Pay Bands when these are already used for Support Staff?**

At present, BPS only has the facility to hold one table style for pay bands. Due to the existing Kent Range running from KR2 to KR15, the pay band tables created must hold this information within them. Therefore, when creating the new Teacher Pay Band table it has to have KR2-KR15 appearing. However, when using the job roles "KR2-KR15" does not appear anywhere and as such these are just a cosmetic quirk with the system.

- 7. Will the update transfer existing teachers from spot salaries to the new system?**

In relation to the new Teacher Pay Band job roles, as the functionality works completely differently to a job role based on a pay scale structure, the original job role needs to be ended and the new job role ending "(Pay Bands)" needs to be started from the next day.

BPS Budget Monitoring

- 1. How soon should we start monitoring?**

It is recommended you start monitoring as soon as possible, ideally complete June Budget Monitoring in July.

2. Is Year End included in monitoring?

No, March will be Closedown. However, it can be useful to complete a March monitoring to assist with ensuring you have all your year-end adjustments.

3. How many times a year should monitoring be presented to the headteacher?

As per the Model Finance Policy, the recommendation is 11 times (monthly). We advise you check your Finance Policy for clarification for your school. Please see covering email for further explanation on monitoring reporting.

4. How do we monitor 11 times a year, the July monitoring and August monitoring won't be done in September, surely we just monitor in September when we return which will cover July and August?

It is good practice to monitor on a monthly basis, however we do appreciate this is not always achievable. Please see covering email for further explanation on monitoring reporting.

5. When must monitoring be submitted as a return?

There are two statutory monitoring returns, the September 6 month monitoring and the December 9 month monitoring. Please visit Kelsi for the 2020/21 [Financial Returns Timetable](#).

6. How can I monitor if I don't know my budget has been agreed?

SFS Returns Team will only contact you if there is an error with your budget eg incorrect rollover b/f in budget compared to actual rollover. Therefore, if it has been agreed by FGB then you should proceed with monitoring.

If the budget has a deficit in any of the three years, then you will be contacted by a member of the School Support Team. They will advise you of what is required. It may be monitoring or a Revised three-year plan.

Your budget should have been agreed by the FGB by 31 May. If it has not and you are waiting for the meeting, then you can still monitor in BPS without submitting your budget to the LA.

7. Is it appropriate for monitoring reports to be emailed to the Finance Committee for challenge and questions?

The six times per year monitoring reports are part of the supporting papers therefore need to be emailed to governors for FGB and Committee Meetings at least seven clear days in advance - the challenge and questions need to be recorded in the minutes. If governors submit questions they can be copied to the clerk for inclusion in the minutes and the response can be recorded at the meeting.

Governors need to have a (virtual) meeting if it is not possible to meet in person.

8. Can we monitor April and May salaries in BPS?

Yes, you can perform Payroll Reconciliations in BPS April to March.

Submitted Budget and FMS6 Questions**1. How do I know when my budget has been agreed by Kent?**

See answer to number 6.

2. Do we need to wait for approval by Kent of our budget before we can fix it in FMS?

No, you do not need to wait. As long as it has been agreed by the FGB, you can fix the budget in FMS6.

3. If I fix the budget can I change it later if KCC don't agree our budget?

Yes, you can change it later. You would follow the same process as you did when you put the original budget on.

4. Do we fix the budget in FMS6 after the feedback is given or can we do this before?

You can fix the budget on FMS6 before you receive the feedback.

Financial Risk Register**1. Where can I find the template?**

The template can be found on Kelsi. Please follow: <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/school-finance/financial-support-and-planning/schools-financial-risk-register>

2. When should the Financial Risk Register be completed?

The Financial Risk Register should be treated as a live document, and therefore can be updated at any point during the year. It should, however, be presented to Governors shortly after completion of the School Improvement Plan.

3. Where is the Financial Risk Register mandated?

In the Governors Terms of Reference.

4. Who is responsible for the Financial Risk Register?

That is down to the school to determine and should be aligned with a job description of someone in the school. The headteacher will be ultimately responsible and governors should ensure its completion, however, as it is a financial risk register, it might be good if the headteacher and finance officer complete jointly.

5. Who should approve the Financial Risk Register?

It should be approved at FGB level.

6. Should a new Financial Risk Register be started when a new School Improvement Plan is introduced?

To ensure a clear audit trail for compliance the school should keep a record of the exact Risk Register that is agreed annually by FGB. It was suggested that schools keep a Risk Register for each year, maybe having tabs for each year on one spreadsheet.

7. How are risk scores/likelihood decided?

In discussion with the headteacher and governors. The document must go to Full Governing Body for review and they may request changes are made.

8. Is this just duplicating the School Financial Value Standard?

There will be a potential overlap, but the risk register is about identifying risks in school whereas the SFVS is a self-assessment questionnaire.

9. Should only financial risks be included in the risk register?

You may include risks that would affect the reputational standing of the school as well as financial risks.

10. Would it be sensible to do a mid-year review to reflect the COVID-19 situation?

Yes, this is a sensible suggestion. As a working document, reviews can take place at any point during the year.

Governance

1. We operate a Circle model, is it appropriate to delegate financial authority to monitoring pairs?

No this is not acceptable. You can only delegate to a committee not a monitoring pair.

2. Is there a standard template of things that need to be covered by governors at each meeting?

The [Financial Cycle](#) should be used to guide governors as to what they need to discuss and when.

3. Is there a list of dates throughout the year where certain finance items eg benchmarking etc are shown?

Please refer to answer 2.

4. How many times a year should we meet under a Circle model?

We recommend six plus a business meeting. You need sufficient meetings to complete governor business eg six finance reports. This information can be found in your Terms of Reference.

5. When will SFS be providing a new Model Finance Policy?

The Model Finance Policy was last updated to reflect the change in GDPR. We review it annually and if changes are required it will be updated and schools notified.

6. Who approves staff pay increments and how much detail does this get reported to the governors?

Headteacher will make recommendations to the governors who then approve. Please refer to your Pay Policy for further information.

7. Do the Pay Committee agree everyone's pay increments?

The Pay Committee agree upon recommendations made by the headteacher but not the headteacher's pay award.

8. Does each member of staff get talked about individually by the Pay Committee?

Please refer to your Pay Policy.

9. When are we required to undertake benchmarking and report to governors?

It is recommended that benchmarking takes place during the autumn term.

10. Is it acceptable to add email strings from governors as an addendum to minutes to show that challenge has been raised and answered?

You can include as an addendum, but it needs to be included in the actual minutes. You must ensure that everyone is there for the challenge and that the meeting is quorate. No decisions should be made by email.

11. Should school finance staff have access to the Governor Hub?

No, the Governor Hub is for governors and clerks.

12. GDPR hasn't been mentioned, how do we get annual reports from DPO for governors? The only reports available on GDPRIS are not clear.

You need to specify what report/s and when you require them. It depends on the contract with the DPO. Is the DPO internal to school or external?

Compliance**1. Have schools already been notified that they are due a compliance this financial year?**

No notifications have been sent for 2020/21 - the programme is currently on hold for this year due to COVID-19. This is the same for follow-up compliance visits.

2. Will Compliance be sending out guidance when working with finances in COVID-19 and any exceptions to current regulations?

No, any financial controls stand as they usually do. Any specific queries please call the helpdesk on 03000 415 415 or send an email to schoolsfinancialservices@theeducationpeople.org

3. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and working from home, I have discrepancies between the date that paperwork is produced and the date when it is signed by the headteacher. Will we be penalised by Compliance?

From a compliance viewpoint, signing at the earliest opportunity is the best you can do. The date should be the date the work was done. The headteacher will sign and date it at their earliest opportunity as well.

- 4. Will the Year End rollovers be reviewed due to not being able to get works completed in year? This is also the same with the sports funding - can rollover be increased?**

At this moment in time there are no changes to BCM. We will of course let you know if this changes. If you have any particular concerns, please send an email to SFS.

Training Webinars

- 1. Will upcoming FMS6 training be chargeable?**

These are free to Kent maintained schools - academies will be charged to join FMS6 webinars.

- 2. When are the Budget Monitoring courses?**

The details of these are on CPD Online. The dates are 2 and 16 July 2020.