

HEADS COUNT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Schools Forum with an overview of the work of the Heads Count organisation and to request that an annual allocation of £37,950 is made to the group from the Dedicated Schools Grant underspend continues in line with previous years.

Information and Advice

2. Heads Count is a Nottinghamshire initiative that over the years has gained national recognition for its pastoral work with Head teachers, from all phases of education and at all career points. Heads Count is an organisation that offers support for Head teacher health and wellbeing from other Head teachers.
3. It is managed by a steering group of serving Head Teachers and over the past few years has been actively and financially supported by the Director of Education and then Corporate Director, Children Families and Cultural Services. Each of the seven districts in Nottinghamshire has an area link representative, who is responsible for the co-ordination of pastoral support and in reality delivering the vast majority of the support required personally and organising district well-being networks and area Head teacher meetings. In many districts it has been due to the Heads Count Representative that Area Head teacher meetings have been revived/ attendance increased, facilitating communication between Head teachers and the local authority.
4. The steering group meets twice a term to discuss issues from each district, not individuals; we then communicate the common issues/requests directly to the Service Directors so they have peer led intelligence from across Nottinghamshire. A representative from Governor Services attends the steering group meetings, which provides valuable two way communication, as governing bodies have a duty of care for the well-being of Head teachers. Heads Count has recently launched a termly newsletter to keep Head teachers informed about our work, which has been well received.
5. Annually the steering group plans and delivers a well-being conference which is open to all serving Head teachers and acting Head teachers. This is some of the feedback from last year's conference: -

“My well-being is definitely improved by having the opportunity to network with other Heads, ask them questions and reflect on their answers”

“Councillor Peck reiterated the message to Heads; “to take time to reflect, network and think” and I think it is important that the LA recognises the pressure of Headship

6. The Heads Count steering group uses its financial assistance to put money into school budgets to facilitate the equivalent of 35.5 days per year Head teacher time to enable the area link representative to undertake their role. It is also for administrative support, consultant time and conference organisation and administration costs.

Activity	£
7 Area Link reps. £150 x 35 days (less than half the cost of most HT consultation days and 4 weeks not covered by present constitution)	36,750
Admin support- Chair of steering group	1,200
Total	37,950

7. The services provided by Heads Count:

- ✓ Telephone advice
- ✓ Face to face support
- ✓ Is part of the induction offer to newly appointed Heads and Acting Heads
- ✓ Coaching and mentoring
- ✓ Networking opportunities
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Helps to attract Heads to Nottinghamshire
- ✓ Informs LA officers about current issues from Head teachers perspective across all districts and phases
- ✓ Provides a link with governor services
- ✓ Provides Chairs of governors a named area link for well-being support
- ✓ Celebrates success and retirements

8. As Heads Count is non –subscription all Heads at every stage of their career and every phase of education are covered, which equates to a cost of approximately £114 per Head in Nottinghamshire. The organisation aids the LA’s duty of care as an employer; clearly the cost to a school of the Head teacher being away from school can be devastating on many levels. We know from feedback given by supported colleagues that Heads Count support has frequently either supported Heads remaining in post or facilitated their return to work.

9. Without the financial input to provide cover so that area reps can undertake their role, the steering group co-ordination wouldn’t exist and therefore Heads Count would disappear. These costs have remained static for the last 3 years; no increase is being sought for this financial year. As a group hard data about our impact is difficult to collect, however, quotes like this one is typical of the feedback we receive from Heads we work with;

“I would have quit without Heads Count, thank you”

10. With the agreement of the Schools Forum, in previous years an annual allocation of £40,000 has been made to Heads Count from the underspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant. It is requested that the Schools Forum agree to the continuation of this allocation for the 2014/15 financial year, but at a slightly reduced rate of £37,950

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Schools Forum:

- 1) Notes the contents of the report;
- 2) Agrees to make an allocation to Heads Count of £37,950 in 2014/15 from the DSG underspend.

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