

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.
4. The School Improvement Service, with increasing frequency, refers Heads for support to the district rep. or ring the rep. and ask them to contact the Headteacher, which helps the LA action it's responsibilities
5. 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 at area level.
6. When required Heads Count reps meet with LA officers on behalf of all Heads to facilitate communication about concerning issues, this allows a 2 way communication process and another interface between Headteachers and the LA .
7. The steering group meet 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. Governor Services receive minutes from our meetings and when staffing allows send a rep to our meetings and Governor Services support the steering committee which provides valuable two way communication, as governing bodies have a duty of care for the well-being of Head teachers. Heads Count

produce a newsletter to keep Head teachers informed about our work, which has been well received.

8. District reps. facilitate termly network meetings for Heads to provide a safe and confidential outlet for matters of concern, which are usually stress related. In response to this we also organise an annual conference

9. Annually the steering group plan and deliver a well-being conference which is open to all serving Head teachers and acting Head teachers. This year 90 delegates attended, it was very well received. In the feedback 100% of attendees said they came because of the focus on their well-being, the speaker and the opportunity to network. This year in our feedback we asked about early retirement , of the 34 who responded to this question , 21 (62%) said they planned to retire/leave education in the next 5 years, most within 1-2 years. Many commented that events like the well-being conference supports their emotional resilience to the challenging role of headship. Below are some quotes from the conference

- *“Great to have a focus on our well-being and chance to talk to other heads ”*
- *“ Great, can’t wait until next time*
- *“Some fab strategies to apply. The quiet calm moment in time we all need”*
- *“Really enjoyed the conference-good to talk to other heads. Helped me to feel that I’m not alone and doing ok”*
- *“This is such an important day in my year”*
- *Comment given to Heads Count Rep. - For the heads I support they are reassured that we are all there for them. They have commented 'it's just nice to have someone I can call'.*

10. Each area rep. did begin to log calls at the request of School Forum, but as reported last year, a tally log doesn’t reflect the depth and scale of the work, e.g. there might 6 calls in 1 week that are quick to address, then the following week there maybe 1 call of great length and complexity that results in many return calls/visits/meetings. The same applies to face to face meetings, some are brief and resolve issues, some are prolonged and complex.

11. 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. The daily costs is much less than LLE work

Activity	£
7 Area Link reps. £150 x 35 ½ days (less than half the cost of most HT consultation days)	36,750
Admin support- Chair of steering group	1,200
Total	37,950

12. 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

13. 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.

14. 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. This year we are seeking the same allocation as last year, which we reduced from the 2013. As a group hard data about our impact is difficult to collect,

15. With the agreement of the Schools Forum, in previous years an annual allocation of £37,950 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 2016/17 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Schools Forum:

- 1) Note the contents of the report;
- 2) Agree to make an allocation to Heads Count of £37,950 in 2016/17 from the DSG underspend

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