



GST Newsletter

Issue 14, June 2025

Introduction

As we approach the end of another academic year, the Governor Support Team (GST) would like to take this opportunity to thank all governors, trustees, local academy members, associate members, clerks and governance professionals for your continued support and commitment to the education of children and young people in Westmorland and Furness. This year seems to have gone far too quickly, but we hope governors can take a well-earned summer break, when it arrives.

If you would like to refer back to any information in previous newsletters, please visit the [GST website](#).

Action

Chair, headteacher, clerk/governance professional details and LA governor

As part of our responsibilities within the LA, we may occasionally need to contact chairs and clerks/governance professionals directly, including around complaints or safeguarding.

To maintain accurate and up-to-date records of these roles, we will be sending out an annual request in the autumn term, asking for updated details. We kindly ask that clerks/governance professionals keep an eye out for this request and ensure responses are submitted by the deadline of 31 January 2026.

News/Updates

As well as the Department for Education (DfE) [School Governance](#) update, below are further items which may be of interest:

ALL SCHOOLS

Report reveals soaring school costs

Parents now face over £1,000 a year in essential costs for a primary pupil and £2,300 at secondary according to [new analysis](#) from Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG). These figures have increased by 16% and 30% respectively since 2022.

Rising food, tech, and subject costs are noted as pushing up school expenses, causing some children to miss trips, fall behind on homework, or face uniform penalties. The government is hoping that the new proposed laws around uniform could save up to an estimated £73 million per year for working families and break down barriers as part of the government's Plan for change.



The report also calls for expansion of free school meal (FSM) provision and an end to the two-child benefit cap to combat growing child poverty.

Please see the [National Governance Association's \(NGA\) toolkit on poverty](#) to support governance conversations around ensuring pupils are included in all aspects of school life, irrespective of socioeconomic status.

Induction for early career teachers (England)

Updated [guidance](#) for appropriate bodies, headteachers, school staff and governing bodies to reflect changes brought about by the introduction of the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF) from September 2025.

Updates to training and support for early career teachers

From September 2025, the DfE will use the term Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE) to replace Early Career Framework (ECF) - based training and induction. ECTE training programmes will be based on an updated framework called the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF). This is part of a package of updates made to improve training and support for early career teachers. See DfE guidance on [ECTE support](#) and [induction for early career teachers](#).

School estate management standards

DfE has produced [standards](#) which set out practices and processes required to effectively manage the school estate.

The [Estate management: competency framework and relevant training](#), which provides guidance on the functions, skills, knowledge and training needed to manage the school estate, has also been updated.

Regional improvement for standards and excellence (RISE)

Information about the eligibility criteria for targeted intervention, the national priorities for the universal service, funding and RISE advisers, has been [updated](#) with the second cohort of RISE advisers.

A press release from Bridget Phillipson ([Government takes leaps forwards in driving up school standards](#)), announces additional RISE advisers to drive up standards.

Special Educational Needs and disability (SEND) duties: guidance for school governing boards

The SEND duties: guidance for school governing boards has been added to the 'Safeguarding, SEND and pupil wellbeing' section of the [Academy Trusts – governance collection](#) and [Local-authority-maintained schools: governance collection](#).

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

English Baccalaureate: eligible qualifications

DfE have updated their workbook, as of April 2025, with details of the [qualifications that count towards the English Baccalaureate \(EBacc\)](#).

Government brings exam records into 21st century

The DfE has [announced](#), ahead of the national rollout, a pilot for pupils in the Greater Manchester and West Midlands will receive their GCSE results via the Education Record app this Summer.

This is part of the overhaul of public sector technology so schools and colleges can focus on what they do best, teaching the next generation. The government estimates the change will save schools up to £30 million per year once fully implemented.

Destinations of key stage 4 and 5 students: 2023

Data on students going into apprenticeship, education and employment destinations, and on 16 to 18 students progressing to higher education or training has added '[Longer-term destinations: 2022 to 2023](#)' of pupils who finished key stage 4 in 2017 to 2018.

Careers guidance and access for education and training providers

The '[Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#)' has been updated to reflect changes in legislation. The format has also changed.

Educate to employ – Shaping Cumbria's Future Conference, 3rd July 2026, 09:00 for 09:30 – 16:00 at Keswick Pencil Factory

With the recent release of the revised [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) and the new [statutory guidelines on Careers](#) education emphasising importance of role of Senior Leadership Team and Governor guidance, the Educate to Employ – Shaping Cumbria's Future conference will give school leaders a chance to consider:

- How work-related learning can underpin school improvement models and raise attainment
- How the new requirements for work experience can raise the aspirations of the most vulnerable students in Cumbria
- How schools can work with employers to support the life chances of every student via place-based change approaches

The workshop will be led by Peter Gaul, the CEO of Belonging Schools Ltd. He is an ex-Headteacher, who worked in Merseyside for more than thirty years. He is currently supporting the Careers Education Company and DfE pilot into work experience to be published in the summer of 2025. He is passionate about inclusive and equitable schools and communities and how we create them.

Our agenda has been carefully designed to maximise outcomes for your school. While you attend the leadership session with Peter and possibly your Headteacher, the Careers Leads and SENDCOs from your school will take part in a dedicated workshop focusing on the updated Gatsby Benchmarks.

At the end of your workshop, you will have the option to leave either before or after the networking lunch. Alternatively, you are welcome to stay and take part in the employer engagement workshops, where schools and employers will be co-designing activities to support delivery of the Modern Work Experience Guarantee.

The conference starts at 09.30 (refreshments from 09.00 and lunch will be available at 12.15). To reserve your place please click this [link](#) and we hope to see you on the 3 July 2026.

SEND

DfE launch PE and school sport inclusion programme

The government has launched the [Inclusion 2028 programme](#), with the intention to improve access to PE and school sports for pupils with SEND.

More support for neurodivergent children in mainstream schools

DfE have announced [more support for neurodivergent children in mainstream schools](#). Backed by £9.5 million in government funding, the Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme – which supports neurodiverse students by training teachers to identify and better meet their needs and improves parental engagement – will be extended for another year across a further 1,200 schools.

Earlier support for speech and language for 20,000 children

DfE has [announced](#) that up to 20,000 more young children, including those with SEND, will have their needs identified and supported earlier, breaking down barriers to opportunity.

Backed by £3.4 million this year, the Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) programme deploys specialist teams across primary schools and early years settings, helping to identify and respond to speech and language needs, particularly for children with SEND.

Pupil attendance in schools

[Data](#) on the levels of attendance and overall, authorised and unauthorised absence in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Updated data covering the period 9 September 2024 to 2 May 2025 has been added.

You may also be interested in the NGAs latest webinar, [Let's talk about attendance - who's really accessing education?](#). This webinar looks at a more nuanced understanding of attendance data to strengthen strategic oversight.

GovernorHub has published an [article](#), Improving attendance: what every governor and trustee should ask, featuring an interview with Jayne Lowe OBE, a DfE advisor on behaviour and attendance and a MAT trustee, about how boards can have truly effective conversations about improving attendance. The article considers:

- How often attendance should appear on board agendas
- What attendance data should be shared by leaders
- What a 'support first' approach looks like
- Examples of great attendance practice in schools and trusts
- Questions, monitoring activities and challenge
- Sharing effective practice across schools
- How to embed attendance strategies into the school culture and values
- Clear policies on term-time holidays
- DfE expectations for the governing board.

Pupil mental health can have a significant impact on attendance. DfEs press release announces expanding mental health support, [Almost million more pupils get access to mental health support](#), states school mental health support rollout to reach up to 900,000 more pupils this year.

A summary of the delivery of commitments are outlined in the [Transforming children and young people's mental health provision green paper](#). DfE has added '[Transforming children and young people's mental health implementation programme: 2025 data](#)'.

Safeguarding - Technology

Real-Time Filtering in a World of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative AI creates content in real time, this may limit the traditional static filtering systems in schools.

This [article](#) from South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) highlights why static keyword filters and outdated blocklists may no longer be enough to protect students from harmful or inappropriate material. It explains the concept of real-time filtering, how AI-driven content complicates safeguarding online, and why schools and colleges must review and adapt their filtering and monitoring systems.

You may be interested in the [Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson's](#) speech on the use of EdTech to improve opportunity in education at the Education World Forum.

Connect the classroom

[Connect the classroom](#) is a government-funded programme to improve internet speed in schools. This is done by upgrading Wi-Fi access points and network switches.

Schools currently receiving targeted intervention through the RISE programme will be eligible for connect the classroom.

Online safeguarding becoming more challenging for schools

According to a safeguarding [survey](#) carried out by Times Educational Supplement, more than a third of school staff think their safeguarding training is “inadequate”, and only 48% say they have received specific training on managing online safeguarding incidents. As a board, as part of monitoring, do you know/have you asked:

- When did staff last receive safeguarding training?
- Are all staff aware of what to do if they have any concerns re pupils' welfare?
- How do pupils learn about staying safe online?
- Is the Safeguarding Link Governor meeting regularly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, do all board members see/receive updates following these meetings?

Safeguarding - General

Plans for a new Child Protection Authority (CPA)

At the beginning of April, the Home Office updated its [plan](#) to tackle [child sexual abuse](#) and establish a CPA in England in response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

The new CPA aims to prioritise vulnerable children, streamline the system, and improve support for child and youth victims of abuse through evidence-based practices.

A consultation will be launched to create a roadmap for the CPA, with a clear program and timetable of activity to follow.

Working together to safeguard children

[Working together to safeguard children](#) (statutory guidance) has added a [illustrated guide](#) and [animated video](#) and details of a toolkit for children, young people and their families, and practitioners working with them.

National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Blog on safeguarding

This [blog](#) from the NSPCC considers safe wraparound care provision for primary aged children, particularly with the roll-out of new breakfast clubs nationally. The blog also considers the safeguarding responsibilities of governors and schools when using external providers for wraparound care.

Protective security and preparedness for education settings

[Protective security and preparedness for education settings](#) guidance has been updated to help schools and other education settings strengthen their preparedness for terrorism and major incidents. It sets out simple, cost-effective steps to safeguard learners, staff, and volunteers through practical planning and a strong security and safeguarding culture.

Updates include defining ‘volunteers’ and ‘educational settings’, outlining the responsibilities for security and incident leads, considering the vulnerabilities of a setting’s location and building when responses are needed, how events are promoted, how plans and in event information is communicated and the provision of post-incident welfare.

Regional Prevent education co-ordinators (RPECs) – Virtual Training

[RPECs](#) deliver virtual training sessions about to help education providers with the Prevent duty.

There is a specific session designed for school governors to understand their responsibilities and the importance of the Prevent duty, with dates available through to June 2026.

NGA, Safeguarding pupils against extreme views and behaviours; the governance role Webinar

The influences our children and young people are exposed to today are more varied and extreme than ever. This [webinar](#) (16 July 2025, 12:30 to 13:15) helps those governing to understand the impact that extreme views expressed online can have on some pupil behaviours and what questions to ask and data to monitor to meet your safeguarding and Public Sector Equality Duties.

Period product scheme in schools and colleges

DfE have updated the [Period product scheme in schools and colleges guidance](#), to reflect that the scheme will continue to run for the academic year 2025 to 2026.

Finance

Schools budget support grant (SBSG)

[Guidance](#) for schools and local authorities on the SBSG for financial year 2025 to 2026.

Teachers Pay Award Press Release

DfE announce [Teachers to benefit from pay boost](#) in England set to receive a 4% pay award from September 2025.

Teachers' pension scheme employer contribution grant for maintained schools and academies with 16 to 19 provision

[Guidance](#) for maintained schools and academies with 16 to 19 provision on the teachers' pension scheme employer contribution grant.

This grant provides additional funding to support the increase for employers centrally funded by DfE for financial year 2025 to 2026. Funding for future years will be determined at the next spending review.

Flexible working ambassadors programme

Government has extended the [Flexible working ambassadors programme](#) for a further year which supports teachers to plan lessons from home, job-share or work flexible hours.

College financial planning handbook and College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR)

[Guidance](#) for sixth-form and further education colleges on preparing and submitting their CFFR and supporting commentary has been updated with the [College financial planning handbook 2025](#).

OFSTED

Proposed changes to education Inspections

Chief Inspector, Sir Martyn Oliver, [updates](#) the Education Secretary on feedback received from the consultation about proposed changes to education inspections, including the Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson's [response](#).

Ofsted Academy

Find [Ofsted's training](#), learning and professional development publications, which includes training videos for further education and skills and early years inspectors.

School inspection data summary report (IDSR) guide

This [guide](#) provides an overview of the IDSR for primary and secondary schools, including schools with a sixth form and gives guidance on interpreting the data.

DfE have updated the IDSR for all applicable schools with:

- Revised destinations data for 2022/23
- Final key stage 2 data for 2024
- Final key stage 4 data for 2024
- Final 16 to 18 data for 2024
- Final 3-term absence data for 2023/24.

Big Listen action monitoring reports

Ofsted has added [Big Listen action monitoring report: April 2025](#) as part of its response to Dame Christine Gilbert's independent learning review.

Reminders

Volunteer week 2/8 June 2025

It was Volunteer week 2/8 June 2025. Running every year since 1984, the week provides an opportunity to thank volunteers and recognise the value of their time, passion and skills. The campaign highlights the diversity and unity of volunteer work across the UK.

Hopefully you all saw our earlier article re National School Governors' Awareness Day, Issue 13, showing our appreciation as a Local Authority (LA) and thanking everyone who volunteers to deliver effective governance, to ensure the best outcomes for all the children and young people in Westmorland and Furness.

We wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some resources that could be valuable in supporting the recruitment, induction, and retention of volunteers.

- Westmorland and Furness, [Recruitment Poster](#)
- Advertise your vacancies with [Governors for Schools](#) helps people with diverse skills and backgrounds get into school governance and develop their professional skills
- Volunteer Week, [Tips for engaging and recruiting volunteers](#)
- Governors for schools offers a webinar session about what the role entails called [Introduction to governance](#)
- NGA, [Role descriptions for governors and trustees](#)
- NGA, [Role description for governing board chairs](#)
- NGA, [the staff governor role](#)

- NGA, [the parent governor role](#)
- NGA, [glossary guide](#) for those new to school governance
- NGA, [Code of Conduct](#)
- Westmorland and Furness, watch out next term for dates for the following virtual sessions:
 - Introduction to governance
 - Governance recruitment, induction and retention
 - Governance succession planning

Celebrate National Thank a Teacher Day

School governors, trustees and governance professionals play a vital role in recognising the incredible work of teachers. This [National Thank a Teacher Day](#), show your appreciation, a message of thanks shared in an assembly, or simply acknowledging the challenges of the profession, small gestures can go a long way. Let's take the time to celebrate teachers' dedication and positive impact on pupils' lives, because every thank you matters.

Happening **Wednesday 18th June** – it's a great chance to shine a light on the amazing people in education.

Development/Training

External Reviews of Governance (ERG)

The [ERG](#) details how to arrange and what to expect from an effective review of governance for your school or academy trust, to help develop the performance of your board.

DfE have updated the ERGs for schools and academy trusts with minor changes ie formatting, style, terminology, updated links to latest governance and sector guidance.

GST Contact Details

The GST continues to offer advice, support, and guidance, specific to your boards needs and can be contacted as follows:

Jane Lees

Governor Support Assistant

Email:

- jane.lees@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
- GST.mailbox.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk

Telephone: **01228 226925**

Mobile: **07768 027 244**