

SCHOOLS FINANCIAL SERVICES

JULY 2023 NEWSLETTER

BPS Ver 14.2 Demos

In This Issue

BPS is having a new version applied later in the year - Version 14.2. This much awaited update, sees the visual aspects of BPS change considerably in order to provide a better and more user friendly experience.

Although the majority of processes will still be done the same way they may visually look different. Because of this, we are holding a few demos for BPS customers to attend. These demos are being held on the following dates:

- 17 July 10am - 10:30am
- 18 July 1:30pm - 2pm
- 5 September 1:30pm - 2pm
- 6 September 10am - 10:30am

SFS Data Collection

Data collection forms were sent out to all schools on 21 June, this is to help ensure the data we hold on record is up to date, and allows us to keep you updated with important information.

We would like to thank all those who have responded already, for those yet to respond we kindly ask for this to be completed by the 14 July.

- BPS Ver 14.2 Demos
- Cyber Security
- SFS Data Collection
- Management Information Systems (MIS) and Financial Accounting Systems (FAS)
- Laser Customer Data Collection
- 3 Year Plan
- Kent Benchmarking

Cyber Security

Cyber security incidents have been on the rise recently. The ESFA would like to remind educational settings of the importance of good cyber security hygiene.

Cyber criminals may seek to access systems used by schools to gain access to sensitive data. For extra protection:

- ensure that all staff are following password policies
- stay vigilant against [phishing emails](#)
- familiarise yourself with the Department of Education's [Cyber Standards](#) and [NCSC's infographic](#)

The [ESFA cyber crime and cyber security guidance](#) on GOV.UK has also been updated.



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Management Information Systems (MIS) and Financial Accounting Systems (FAS)

On the 16 June guidance to help schools decide who they want to supply their MIS and FAS from April 2024 was sent out to all maintained schools via the E-Bulletin.

Up until now, maintained schools have been provided with SIMS and FMS through a Local Authority (LA) contract. Schools have paid for this through de-delegation, as agreed by the Schools Funding Forum. However, the LA contract ends on 31 March 2024, and ESS (the supplier of SIMS) are moving away from LA contracts to direct contracts with schools. Going forward schools will hold their own contracts with MIS and FAS suppliers.

There is no 'right answer' when it comes to choosing who you wish to use, as it will depend on the needs and size of your school, and your own preferences. We strongly recommend you read the guidance pack as published on [16 June](#) and share this with key MIS & FAS users and decision makers in your school. There are still some demos available for you to attend, these are on:

Bromcom:

[Wednesday 5 July 2pm to 4pm](#)

ESS

[Monday 3 July 3pm to 5pm](#)

[Tuesday 4 July 10am to 12pm](#)

Schools are asked to complete this [short form](#) by end of July 2023, this will enable us to get a clear indication of each schools likely intention going forward.



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3 Year Plan

All schools should now have received their Three-Year plan feedback, if your school has a SFS contract officer, your feedback would have been sent to them. This feedback is intended to assist you when carrying out your budget monitoring and Three-Year Plan re-casts.

Please remember that we do not know the intricate workings of each individual school, therefore the comments sheet that you complete as part of your Three-Year Plan submission is important to give us an understanding of why your Year 1 figures are different to your previous year figures and the changes in years going forward. We are aware that some schools use this comments sheet to inform their Governors of changes and therefore may use information and specific narrative that we may not be fully aware of.

If you have any improvement suggestions, we are always open to discussion.

Kent Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the process of comparing your school's spending with similar schools and schools with similar challenges. It allows your school to look at spend in different areas such as staffing, supplies and services; buildings and land; as well as against the individual Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) codes. It helps you inform your school development process.

Benchmarking helps you to consider how to use your resources to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for your pupils. This can help you consider whether:

- your resource allocations are working for you
- you can improve outcomes by doing things differently

Benchmarking is only a guide. You should consider local knowledge about your school when assessing the data.

Kent benchmarking is a one page summary showing an individual school's data compared to just Kent maintained schools. There are three types of benchmarking available on KELSI, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, within each benchmarking option there are dropdown menus available to customise the schools you benchmark against. These files can be found here on [Kelsi](#).

