

Forum Attendance

Key Messages

Forum members are asked to:

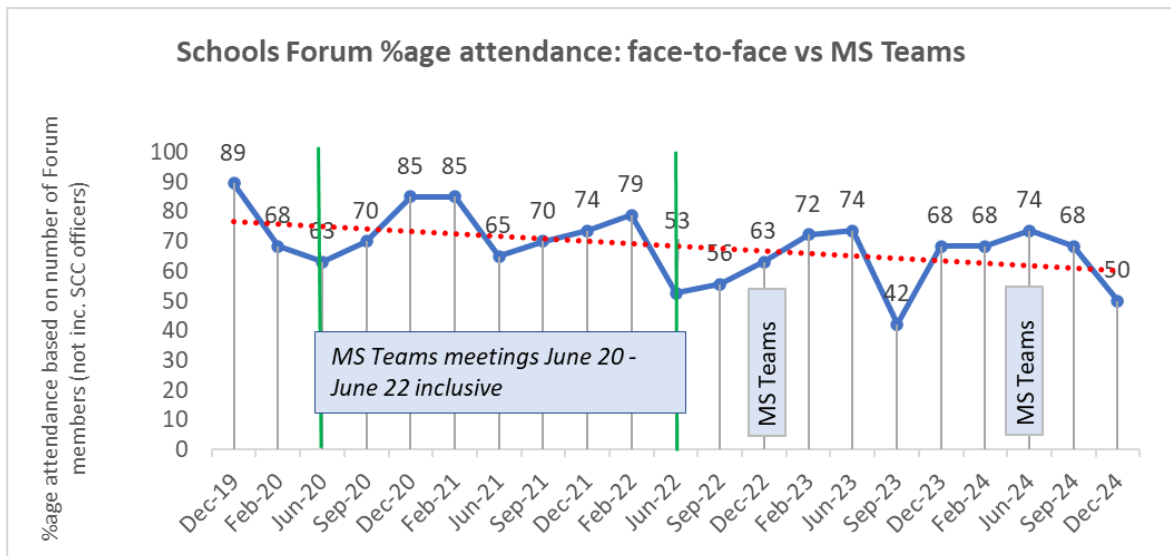
- Note the analysis below and consider how Forum attendance may be improved.

1. Introduction/background

- 1.1. The Forum plays a vital role in reviewing and influencing financial decisions that impact school budgets, resources and strategic priorities. Active participation enables informed discussions, fair allocation of funds and transparency in decision-making, ultimately supporting the best outcomes for pupils across the local authority.
- 1.2. Over the last five years, the overall trend shows a decline in Forum members' attendance at meetings.
- 1.3. This report analyses the attendance, comparing pre- and post-Covid, and online versus face-to-face meetings, to help us understand the reasons for the change.

2. Analysis

- 2.1. Analysis has been undertaken to compare Forum attendance from pre-Covid up to the present date to understand if the attendance was impacted upon when meeting face-face versus online.
- 2.2. The chart below shows attendance as a percentage of current membership at the time of the meeting. The dotted red line shows the overall trend.



2.3. There is no clear pattern. However, the February meeting is often more well attended whilst the June meeting often has the lowest attendance, which indicates in part that attendance may be due to agenda items. Attendance rates were higher during Covid when meetings were online, but this may have been due to circumstances and may have been affected by changes to membership. However, the overall attendance trend is in decline.

3. Steps Taken to Date

3.1. Forum members were consulted on their meeting preferences in November 2023, and whilst just over half (57%) said they would be more likely to attend if the meeting was held online, 85.7% agreed that meetings were more engaging when held face-to face. In conclusion, 78.6% said they thought it was a good idea to have some meetings face-to-face and some online, depending on agenda items. (The June 2025 meeting is currently scheduled to be held online.)

3.2. At the June meeting of the Education Funding Forum, it was noted that the Constitution and Membership document had been updated to include a paragraph at section 4.2 as follows:

‘Any member is who absent from three consecutive meetings without a valid reason/prior agreement, will be considered to have stepped down from their role as Forum representative...’

As a result of the changes to the Constitution wording, an academy member has recently stepped down due to not being able to commit to attending on a regular basis.

4. Recommendations

Forum members are asked to:

- Note the above and give consideration to any barriers to attendance.
- Consider making arrangements for a colleague to deputise if they are unable to attend meetings on a regular basis.
- Discuss any other options to help improve attendance.