

# BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** Schools Funding Network

**DATE:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013

**RECIPIENT:** Schools Forum

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## THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

### SUMMARY:

1. Schools Funding Network (SFN) provides fundraising expertise to schools and aims to help professionalise this area of school life. Its main service is a fundraising platform which provides schools with their own set of fundraising pages, allowing interaction with major donors along with individual campaigns.
2. The organisation has been set up following grant awards from two charitable foundations, with a national newspaper, The Guardian, acting as the media partner. A further grant has enabled the service to be offered to local authorities signing up their schools at a much-reduced rate.
3. This paper seeks to establish the views of Schools Forum as to the likely benefits to schools of using the Schools Funding Network.

### BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

4. SFN is the leading fundraising organisation for schools in the UK. It is run by Nick Ryan, who led the fundraising division at the SSAT from 2005 to 2012. He and his team raised approximately £60m of non-statutory funds and unlocked over £750m from government for schools. As a result of this work, the team has thousands of contacts amongst donors and schools. The team is supported by a group of trustees with expertise in education, business, and all the various funding bodies.

#### 5. **Issues in schools fundraising**

Issues for schools include:

- It can be difficult to support a school if not already connected to the school community
- £740m of Gift Aid is being lost every year
- The gap between better connected and resourced schools and their counterparts is growing
- Economies of scale are being missed
- It is very difficult for schools to keep up with trends and developments in fundraising
- Big funders are out of the reach of individual and small clusters of schools

6. There are also issues for major donors and other potential supporters of schools:

- It is difficult to place support in schools unless already connected
- The poor quality of applications is often mentioned by funders
- Feedback to donors and supporters is often absent
- There are difficulties in building strategic giving programmes
- Funders struggle to find out where support is really needed

## 7. **The Service**

The Schools Funding Network service uses its expertise and scale to overcome the issues above. On becoming a member of SFN, individual schools receive:

- A password with username for the fundraising platform
- A user guide to the fundraising platform
- A fundraising guide
- A guide to Gift Aid
- The Gift Aid application form
- A guide to on-line donations
- A regular newsletter

## 8. **Costs**

Economies of scale are achieved when multiple schools sign-up. SFN are therefore offering the service through local authorities at £2,500+VAT per 100 schools and academies, as opposed to £250 per individual school.

## 9. **Conclusion**

Schools Funding Network provides primary and secondary schools with all the tools and resource needed for successful fundraising. In addition, the growing number of member schools means increased economies of scale can be built in, with more major donors being drawn in. There are already offers of support available to new member schools, such as £150 of e-books, as well as more targeted offerings.

SFN have started speaking to local authorities and county councils, with the first now signing up their schools.

## **Appendices/Supporting Information:**

SFN Presentation to Schools Forum

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