School Business Services

SBS Financial Planner

Service Level Agreement

December 2024

Contents

About School Business Services

School Business Services (SBS) have been working with MATs and schools for over 15 years, providing education-specific finance and data expertise through services and software. Our professional services include short- and long-term cover for finance and data staff at all levels, along with management accounting, internal scrutiny and timetabling.

This map illustrates our school and MAT customer distribution, supplying Financial Planning solutions to over 2,000 schools and 200 MATs nationally.

We already work with several of the largest MATs in the country (directly or via IRIS who white label the software as IFP (IRIS Financial Planner) and therefore have the knowledge and experience to ensure that moving to a new budget planning system and continuing to grow is smooth and trouble-free. Each year we successfully migrate hundreds of schools over to our software from a range of other budgeting systems.

We are proudly part of Supporting Education Group (SEG), working with over 16,000 schools nationally, with a combined turnover of £200m and 1,400 staff.

Our full suite of MAT services and software includes Finance, Internal Scrutiny, MIS, Data Protection, HR, Payroll, HR Information Systems, Staffing and Supply, Compliance, Health & Safety, Mental Health & Wellbeing, National Professional Qualifications, Staffing, Apprenticeships, Tuition, Learning Resources and Clerking.

Our Commitment to Quality

"School Business Services' excellent reputation has been built on listening to our customers, understanding their requirements, and ensuring we deliver exactly what they need.

Delivering first-class service is rooted in our company culture; we celebrate positive customer feedback, and on the rare occasion things don't go to plan, we put things right straight away and learn how we can improve.

I personally commit to ensuring that our customers receive the highest quality service and choose to stay with us year after year".

Leyla Tovey, Managing Director

SBS Financial Planner

About SBS Financial Planner

SBS Financial Planner is a cloud-based budgeting system, built to meet the complex needs of MATs and schools. We have worked in partnership with CFOs and some of the largest MATs in the country to develop a MAT-focussed product which understands and respects the funding and operating models of trusts.

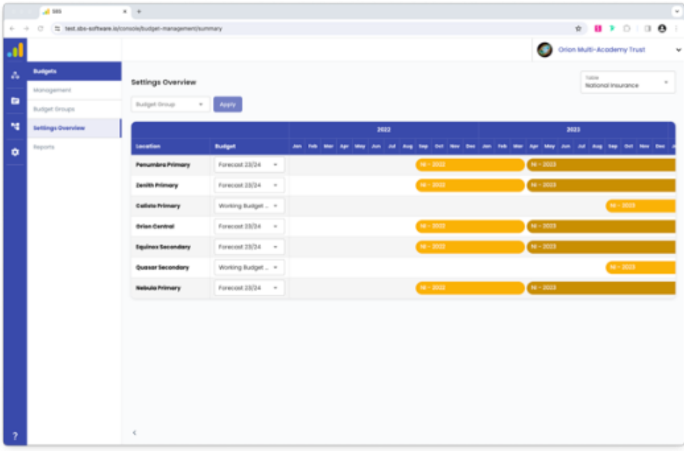
We are confident that by using SBS Financial Planner, your Trust will benefit from more accurate financial forecasting and time savings for staff.

System Functionality

SBS Financial Planner has been built and continues to be developed specifically for the education sector and its evolving needs. Our development team works closely with our Senior Finance consultants to ensure we are early-to-market with developments to deliver on latest initiatives and information, such as pay scales, national insurance, funding rates and ESFA report formats.

Annual budget setting: MAT and individual academies can create and compare unlimited scenarios with varying settings and assumptions ranging from pupil numbers to revenue to staffing structures, etc. There is a full reporting suite available to professionally present the information. Once approved, selected budget scenarios can be locked to prevent further amendments, then monitored against through the year.

Core budget assumptions: The trust can review and update the core budget settings for each budget scenario of each academy from within the Console area of the software. The Console shows the core settings and assumptions of each academy including budget start date, teacher and support salary scales, inflationary settings, superannuation rates and National Insurance tables. If any need updating, users with the required access credentials can update the information in one place and roll the changes out to specific budgets.

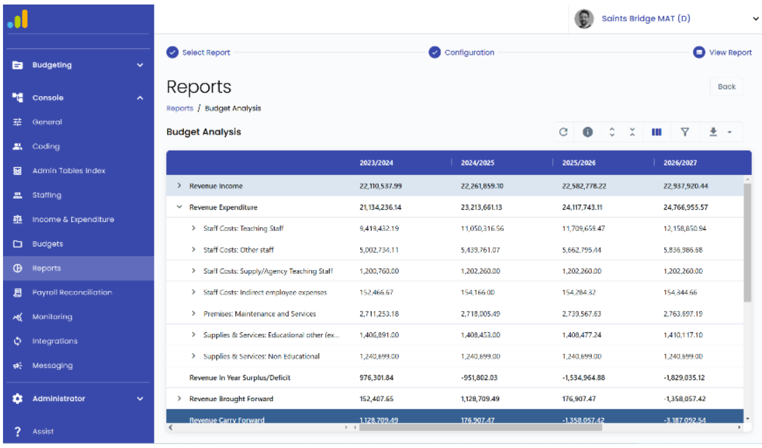


5-year financial planning & modelling: During the budget setting process the academies and MAT will not only be able to set and view consistent assumptions by scenario, but for up to 5-years. The Trust can apply various models of GAG Pool or Top Slice assumptions when modelling budgets.

Monthly payroll reconciliation: Payroll files can be imported at MAT level or school level. Reconciliations can be performed centrally or by school.

Monthly budget monitoring & reforecasting: In addition to the standard financial modelling, SBS Financial Planner includes a comprehensive monitoring module, allowing individual schools and MATs to incorporate actual year-to-date income and spend, alongside, and against budget and commitments, to view and remodel forecasted outturns.

Reporting functionality: Our existing MAT customers use SBS Financial Planner for monthly and annual budget reporting, monitoring KPIs and key metrics, academy benchmarking and cluster analysis. We have a comprehensive suite of reports offering real insight into academy and MAT financial data. Tag and Cluster analysis provides even greater bespoke reporting power.



Customisable Terminology: MATs can tailor terminology to match other systems and roll out preferences across the software including reports, menu items and field names for all users.

User Administration: There is no limit to the number of users an academy or trust can have on SBS Financial Planner. There are varying access rights available. Trust staff using the system will log in centrally, then easily navigate between the academies they are assigned access to.

Each user can have bespoke access to the software, with each function being specified non accessible, view only or fully accessible.

Integrated Finance Systems: We are committed to ensuring trusts can opt for best-in-class software solutions, without having to sacrifice process, productivity, and functionality. For this reason, we have developed and continue to develop integrations with the leading education business software:
Our integrations allow Trusts to manage the flow of data between SBS Financial Planner and leading Finance Systems, by Trust or Individual school level, with a simple one click action:

System	Upload Budget from SBS FP	Download Actuals	Download Commitments
IRIS Financials	✓	✓	✓
Sage Intaact	✓	✓	✓
Xero	✓	✓	✓
iplicit	Coming Soon	Coming Soon	Coming Soon

Ongoing Development

We are committed to continual product development. Our agile approach allows us to move quickly and adapt the software to the ever-changing education environment. In 2023 and 2024 we committed £400k to further develop the software, focusing on functionality and user experience.

Software upgrades generally occur on a monthly basis with users informed in advance via the development roadmap, then again, a week before deployment via a message on the software home screen. All deployments are conducted outside of business hours to minimise impact on users. Following deployment, all users will receive confirmation of completion and details of what has been included.

We listen to customers' feedback and implement changes which we feel will be of benefit to schools and MATs. All development releases and routine maintenance processes are free and performed outside of business hours to minimise impact to schools and users. Furthermore, they are transparent and require no installations and, therefore, no time or effort from users.

We follow a strict development process which has and continues to serve us well. This process ensures consistency, accuracy and maintains the high levels we have set:

- Identify development item
- Subject matter expert participation
- Finalise specification
- Develop and write code
- Functional UAT testing
- Performance UAT testing
- Regression testing
- Implement
- Production testing

Reliability: We remain ever mindful of ensuring that our software is reliable in terms of uptime and optimised for performance. We embrace accountability for this and as a result we publish our performance statistics from within the software: *https://stats.uptimerobot.com/MvWrvcxN27/797109868*

In the unlikely event of a system failure or inadvertent deletion of data and to ensure customer business continuity, system backups are taken every 24 hours, overnight. Should a restoration of a backup be required, this can be completed on the next working day.

System Security: The software is hosted in the UK using Microsoft Azure. Dual-layer or 2 factor authentication is available per user and requires activation and set up by each user by scanning a unique QR code using their selected authentication app.

Bespoke Requirements: Should customers require bespoke changes to the system, we will arrange a meeting for you with your assigned Account Manager, Customer Support Team Leader, and the Product Owner. This allows us to fully understand the requirements and determine if the request requires code or configuration changes.

All code change requests will go via the Product Manager to determine a build time and delivery window. If we deem this to be a significant improvement in general to the software which more than 35% of customers will benefit from, then this work may be deemed 'general development' and therefore free of charge. If less than 35% and we can deliver the requirement, we will quote for the development work with a proposed delivery date.

If the work relates to configuration changes, the Service Desk Supervisor will determine the number of days required and quote this at a daily rate.

Implementation and Support

The implementation and support teams work closely, supervised by the same person. This ensures continuity of service and familiarity for your staff.

Marcus Peedell (MP) – Customer Support Team Leader (SaaS)

Marcus is responsible for day-to-day team management, ensuring quality delivery of Service desk, implementation, and training as well as acting as an escalation point for customer enquiries and support priorities.

Simone Gray (SG) - Onboarding Consultant

Simone is responsible for ensuring new customers transition to SBS Financial Planner smoothly and are 100% satisfied with the implementation and training experience. Simone will be the designated project lead for your implementation.

Richard Page (RP) – Director of Operations and Digital

Richard has been with SBS for over 10 years, initially working to develop SBS software before growing his remit to oversee operational effectiveness of professional services delivery.
Richard is part of the Senior Leadership team at SBS and is the designated escalation point for any concerns in software and service.

Implementation: We are vastly experienced in on-boarding MATs to SBS Financial Planner. After each implementation project our team debrief to continuously improve the process in terms of experience for the customer and efficiency for us. To date, our largest MAT implementation is 55 schools, which was completed in 3 months and on time. This proved our greatest learning curve, afterward we further digitalised the process and started taking a greater role in data interrogation and extraction from existing suppliers.

Our personalised MAT implementation process begins with an introduction call and consultation. The consultation process is designed to fully understand the operating principles and reporting requirements. The Onboarding team will already be prepared with academy details, but will cover the following areas to help us determine integrations and system structure:

- Trust Terminology
- Chart of Accounts
- Regional reporting requirements
- Bespoke reporting requirements (trustees, board, etc.)
- Academy benchmarking criteria
- Salary scales and allowances
- Regional superannuation contributions
- Trust-wide vs academy control requirements
- Payroll provider(s)
- Maternity Pay policies

The process of onboarding new academies joining your Trust is well-established and straightforward. Prior to formally joining the trust may decide to run financial due diligence and see the overall budgetary impact of the academy joining the trust. We will provide a complimentary planner for due diligence scenario planning, only when an academy officially joins the trust will a pro-rated annual subscription fee be applied. At this point the implementation team will consult with the trust and the incoming academy to align them to the trusts budgeting system and processes. The existing budget and staffing database will be implemented but in line with the reporting requirements of the trust.

Training: The consultation and implementation process enables us to determine the best consultant(s) to deliver your training. Typically, training is delivered remotely over two sessions:

1. Introductory: System administration and budget modelling.
2. Progressive: Monitoring, Reforecasting and integrations.

After training, users will be fully competent in all areas of the software, including administration, scenario planning, budget monitoring, reporting, and integrations. We are aware that new staff will arrive after implementation and that some staff will pick it up quicker than others. This is why we offer free training to new members of the team and to those who may need a quick refresher from time to time.

User Support: The Service Desk is available Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm and can be contacted via email, ticketing portal or telephone. The Service Desk covers all user queries, ranging from service faults, service requests and other queries relating to the operation of the software. Listed below are the service levels:

Level	Definition	Response	Resolution
1	Organisation cannot function	30 mins	4 hours
2	Software issue relating to a module or functionality	2 hours	8 hours
3	Requests for general software advice and guidance	2 hours	8 hours
4	New academy onboarding to the system	4 hours	10 days

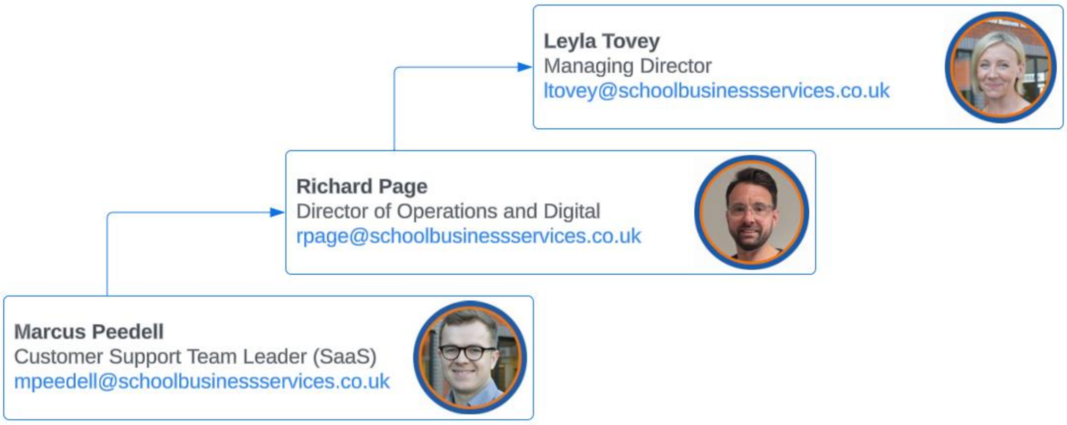
In addition to the Service Desk, we have developed SBS Assist, a training and CPD module within the software offering guidance via articles and video tutorials.

In 2024, the average response time to incidents was under 5 minutes with average resolution time under 20 minutes. There are no financial consequences for failing to deliver on SLAs.

After Sales Care

When you start using the software, there will be scheduled weekly calls from the Onboarding team to check in on progress and assist with any user queries. This weekly check-in will continue for 3 months. Additionally, your assigned Account Manager will hold regular account management meetings for the duration of the contract with designated Trust personnel to ascertain satisfaction, gather feedback and listen to any concerns or development requests.

Escalation process: In the unlikely event that you are unsatisfied with any element of your SBS Financial Planner experience, you may wish to escalate the issue:



Outstanding Service Provision:

In 2024…….

- 95% of our customer renewed their subscriptions
- 99% satisfaction rating
- 99.75% system availability/up-time
- 12 system upgrades, introducing new functionality
- 20 minutes average incident resolution time

"We switched to SBS last year and we are extremely pleased with it. The main benefit is the integration with IRIS saving significant time at budget monitoring periods. The support & training during the transfer was first class. Great look and feel, easy to use and works very well at school level as well as at consolidated level. "

Benedicte Yue, Finance Director,
River Learning Trust (28 school, Primary and Secondary)