

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

In response to some of last year's queries received on the HFL Education contract renewals, we have prepared some further information in table form which should answer some general queries we received.

Price increase information:

What price increases have been applied to the hourly rate or licence?		
Bookkeeping Service	Price held to last year's price £59 per hour on contract and £71 as PAYU	0%
Diamond (incl. Bookkeeping) Service	The average inflation figure applied only to the monitoring and budget hours, as bookkeeping was price held lowering the overall increase for this service.	3.39%
Gold Service	The average inflation figure applied to monitoring was The average inflation applied to budgeting was	3.39% 4.23%
Diamond and Gold previously capped services.	The average inflation figure varies by school as all schools have been moved to a new flat rate. (This 3 year agreement has ended, and schools are on a final two-step move to standard published pricing)	Varies
Silver Service	The average inflation figure applied to silver hours was The average inflation figure applied to training and workshops was	2.94% 3.73%
Bronze Service	**Final costs for licences have yet to be provided by the supplier and an indicative figure has been provided on the HFL contracts.** Access Budget Licence estimated at Arbor Main Account Licence estimated at Arbor Fund/Additional Licence estimated at	 5.0% 5.0% 5.0%

Financial Services Service Level Agreement and Choices Clarification

What does the BRONZE SERVICE include?		
Systems Helpdesk	Is required – as part of the agreement from the suppliers to reduce the price of licences. The service prepares the software with information from HCC and in conjunction with the software suppliers in addition to providing full bulletin guidance throughout the year.	3.51%
Arbor Finance Accounts software licence	Is required for all HCC maintained schools (FMS schools purchase via ESS)	5.0% estimated
Access Education Budget software licence	Is required for all HCC maintained schools	5.0% estimated
Arbor Finance Additional software licence (the school must hold a main account licence)	Can be used if you have a Fund Account or Governors' account with a reasonable level of transactions. Otherwise for very low numbers of transactions they could be managed in another way but must be recorded and audited.	5.0% estimated
NB: Cancellation on licences should have been received by 15 th December 2024 last year for 2025-26 financial year as they have been purchased externally from the providers (date noted on the 2024-25 Service Level Agreement). Cancellation will be due on Friday 12 th December 2025 for the financial year 2026-27.		

How can I contact Financial Services about my contract?	Please direct all contract enquiries via fs.contracts@hfleducation.org	We will direct your enquiry to the correct person
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What do the BOOKKEEPING, DIAMOND, GOLD, SILVER and BUDGET SERVICES contain?		
Bookkeeping Service (Digital service)	This NEW standalone bookkeeping service is now available to all schools who hold an Arbor Finance licence. Schools are able to add this to their contract or to request PAYU if circumstances change in school. You can add this service on the options sheet provided and return it to us at fs.contracts@hfleducation.org	We will direct your enquiry to the correct person
Diamond (incl. bookkeeping) Service (Digital service)	The hours used and forecast in your Diamond service this year plus any known changes were reviewed in December 2024 and contract hours adjusted accordingly. The bookkeeping charges have not increased this year; therefore, the Diamond contract is able to take advantage of this as well as preferential rates for monitoring and budgeting. This is the best value and most comprehensive finance package you can buy.	The service has not changed (just the name, slightly, to take advantage of the lower bookkeeping price) fs.contracts@hfleducation.org
Gold Service – what is included as standard and which options are recommended? (Digital service)	The hours used and forecast in your Gold service this year plus any known changes were reviewed in December 2024 and contract hours adjusted accordingly. The Gold standard service elements included are shown on page 3-4 of the SLA . We highly recommend the school buys the additional elements noted on the sheet to avoid additional strain on school-based resources and the Finance Business Partner (FBP) needing to work on a PAYU basis (at a higher cost) to be able to complete the monitoring accurately. If you would like to discuss, add or change your options, please contact fs.contracts@hfleducation.org	Please make contact ASAP , we will direct your enquiry to the right person

Silver Service (Digital service)	This service has changed this year from 2 health checks to a Quality Assurance (QA) of 2 monitors completed by the school, one in P3 and one in P7. The aim of this is to ensure the school is ready to accurately complete its termly reforecast to HCC. See notes about mandatory attendance on workshops to ensure you are prepared for Year End.	If you would like to discuss, add or change your options, please contact fs.contracts@hfileducation.org
Budget Finalisation and Budget Preparation NB: Budget costs shown are for May 2025 for finalisation, and for March 2026 for preparation	Hours used have been reviewed in December 2024 and forecast into year end. If the services have been purchased, the contract year starts in May 2025 with the finalisation of budgets for 2025-26 started and prepared in March 2025 (last contract year). The year ends in March 2026 with the new budget for 2026-27 being prepared with the software being updated for the new financial year and school budget share being checked, funding being calculated in addition to staff changes being updated.	If you would like to discuss, add or change your options, please contact fs.contracts@hfileducation.org
Budget Uploading to Arbor and Profiling	Hours used have been reviewed in December 2024 and forecast into year end. This service (if purchased) includes loading the budget to Arbor/FMS accounts software and profiling in the correct months across the year to allow more accurate budget monitoring.	Please make contact ASAP , we will direct your enquiry to the right person fs.contracts@hfileducation.org
Budget Updates to Access Education software, bulletins and staff updates	Hours used have been reviewed in December 2024 and forecast into year end. Maintenance of the Budget software is completed across the year related to HFL bulletins, mid-year updates, staffing changes and change to major income streams such as funding.	Please make contact ASAP , we will direct your enquiry to the right person fs.contracts@hfileducation.org

What FUND ACCOUNT SERVICES do you offer?		
Arbor Finance Additional software licence (the school must hold a main Arbor account licence)	This can be used if you have a Fund Account or Governors' account with a reasonable number of transactions. Otherwise for very low numbers of transactions they could be managed in another way but must be recorded and audited.	Has always been shown as a separate cost. You can request this as an option.
Fund Account Bookkeeping Service	An option for any school using Arbor and holding a main account Arbor Licence and using the additional Arbor licence. Each year of accounts will be required if you are behind on completion of your Fund Account.	There is a flat rate of £310 per annum for standard low usage accounts*. You can request this as an option.
Fund Account Audit	An audit is required annually on your Fund Account. We offer a face to face audit for a minimum of 3 hours at a cost of £227. To be able to complete this, your bookkeeping has to be up to date. Each year not completed will be charged for.	The cost of £227* is shown separately on your HFL contract if you purchased this last year. You can choose this as an option to add to your contract.
*On discussion, if it is identified that you have a very high number of transactions, the Service Delivery Managers will provide a new quote for the completion of the work. The majority of schools will meet the standard price noted above.		

How can I contact Financial Services about my contract?	<p>Please direct all contract enquiries via our helpdesk fs.contracts@hfleducation.org</p> <p>It is helpful to the team if you can make contact with us as early as possible. Too many changes and enquiries left to the deadline date, means we cannot process them all in time before HFL need to issue the final contracts for budget setting purposes.</p>	We will direct your enquiry to the correct person
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