Supporting information for schools staff

Dealing with duplicate payments in the council's Oracle system

One of the tasks of the council's Accounts Payable Team is to identify and report instances of duplicate invoice processing resulting in overpayments. In these cases, an invoice has initially been submitted correctly via the Simplified Loader process, then resubmitted with a slightly different invoice number.

Preventing further cases

To help prevent further cases occuring it is important to:

- firstly, check whether an invoice has already been submitted before
- ensure that the invoice number is entered exactly as stated on the invoice, with no additional numbers of characters.

The Weekly Schools Report

The vast majority of invoices are processed correctly through Oracle. However, a small volume of cases require intervention from the council's Accounts Payable Team and potentially re-entry by a school.

The weekly report was designed at the request of multiple schools, so that they can track invoice status themselves rather than enquiring via the council's payments team for schools. It is provided in view only mode for information purposes, with no direct action needed by schools.

 Using the report to check invoice status

- Find the invoice you need to check, by searching the report by invoice number, ensuring that there are no filters on any of the columns of the report by checking **Row A**. If there are, ensure all columns are showing all data
- Click **Ctrl+F**, to open a search field and enter the relevant invoice number
- If column F shows *Validated*, this invoice is being processed for payment based on payment terms of invoice and supplier – no further action is required by Accounts Payable or yourselves
- If column F shows *Needs Validation,* this means the school payments team is looking into this invoice. They are doing this in the order that invoices were entered. No further action from yourself is currently required.
- If column F shows *Not Validated*, it is likely that something is missing from the distribution line when entered into the loader. For these cases, the Schools Payments Team is investigating the invoice and may contact you with a query or a request for you to re-enter the invoice.

Why does the report have more invoices listed weekly?

The report is cumulative and will include all historical invoices, so you only need to check the latest report. You can check on invoices that were previously categorised as *Needs Validations* or *Not Validated,* to check if your invoice has been progressed.

Why does the report not tell me why the invoice hasn't processed?

There are multiple reasons why an invoice may not have been processed, such as supplier detail error, a user entry error, or a technical issue.

It is not possible to provide a report for these cases as it is not feasible to investigate each individual invoice to understand why it has not been processed. However, records are regularly monitored to identify common trends to establish whether they can be addressed by training or technical fixes.

Council contact points for Simplified Loader payment upload queries

The Schools Payments Team are processing invoices in the order they are uploaded to Simplified Loader. To ensure that the team can process the payments in the quickest way possible, only emergency queries related to payments loaded onto the Simplified Loader can be dealt with.

Please ensure that you direct your query via the correct route:

- **emergency queries related to payments loaded onto the Simplified Loader** – send a brief explanation of why your query is an emergency via email to: **SchoolsPaymentEnquiries@birmingham.gov.uk.**

- **technical issues accessing the simplified loader -** raise a service ticket at by completing an online form on the **support arrangements** web page.

- **supplier details not shown or listed incorrectly -** contact the Data Validation Team at **vendordata@birmingham.gov.uk.**