

SCHOOL ADMISSION FORUM

6 JULY 2011

SECONDARY SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

SUMMARY

This report informs Members of the latest situation regarding the number of school places vacant for this September and the number of Kingston children currently without a place for September 2011.

ACTION FOR THE FORUM

The Forum is asked to note this report and offer any views.

BACKGROUND

1. The initial offers for secondary schools for September 2011 were made to parents on 1 March 2011 and they were given two weeks in which to reply to the LA to accept or decline the place offered.
2. Following the initial allocation, waiting lists have been maintained for all over-subscribed schools, and further offers of places at these schools have been made as parents refuse initial offers for a more preferred school.
3. Parental appeals for places at community secondary schools are being heard during the last week of June, and those for places at voluntary-aided and foundation schools have either been heard or will be heard shortly.

SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

4. Eight of the ten secondary schools are currently full for Year 7 admissions and have waiting lists.
5. There is still movement on the waiting lists, and as places are being refused, further offers are continuing to be made for Community, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools.
6. On 1 March 2011, out of 1473 RBK applicants, 63% of parents received an offer of a place at their first preferred secondary school. 97% of parents have received an offer of one of their preferred schools. For September 2010, the figures were 60% and 95% respectively.
7. On 1 March 2011, 55 Kingston pupils did not receive an offer for any of the secondary schools which they named as their preference (the figure was 80 in 2010). 26 out of the 55 were initially offered a place at their nearest Kingston school with a vacancy.

Appendix A

8. Subsequently, as further vacancies became available, any pupils without an initial offer were made offers of places at schools with vacancies. This has included making 5 offers for girls at Raynes Park High School in Merton.
9. There are currently 99 vacancies at Kingston schools, however these are at boys' schools. There are places available for girls in schools in neighbouring LAs. Kingston and its neighbours are working together to offer places at local schools for applicants as a part of the wider collaborative arrangements in addition to co-ordinated admissions.
10. As at 24 June 2011, there are 6 children (2 girls and 4 boys) Kingston children without a known destination of a school in September 2011 and all of these children have been offered alternative places at schools with vacancies. In comparison, on 24 June 2010 there were 4 children (3 girls and 1 boy) without a known destination for September 2010.

Background papers held by Hatija Bhatia (tel: 020 8547 5284)

Email: Hatija.Bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

LA booklet for parents on secondary school admissions for Sept 2011

SCHOOL ADMISSION FORUM

6 JULY 2011

PRIMARY SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

SUMMARY

This report informs Members of the latest situation regarding the primary admissions for September 2011 and the number of Kingston children currently without a Reception place for September

ACTION FOR THE FORUM

The Forum is asked to note this report and offer any views.

BACKGROUND

1. This year was the first year for cross borough primary coordination where each applicant applied via their Home LA for a school place whether this was for a school inside or outside their Home LA. Each LA coordinated its residents' applications so that any applicant who was eligible for more than one offer received the single highest preference offer.
2. By the allocation date of 4 April 2011, a total of 1871 applications were received from RBK residents. Of these, 82% were offered their highest preference and 95%(1773) were offered one of their preferences. There were 5% (98) RBK residents without a preference offer of which 75 received an allocated offer. In total, 1848 residents received an offer and 23 residents were without an initial offer which represents 1.2% of total applicants.
3. Last year, there was no cross borough co-ordination, so it is difficult to make a meaningful comparison. In 2010, a total of 1632 Kingston children made an application for a Kingston school and 94 were not offered a Kingston school place on allocation day. 83% of RBK residents were offered their highest preference and 94% were offered a preference. 6% (94) were not offered a preference.
4. Following this year's initial allocation, out of 29 infant and primary schools offering Reception places, waiting lists have been maintained for 26 over-subscribed schools, and further offers of places at these schools have been made as parents refused initial offers for a more preferred school.

PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

5. As a part of the primary expansion strategy, a total of 330 extra Reception places have been added across 12 schools in response to the increased demand for places. 7 schools are being permanently expanded to add 195 places and a further 5 schools are being temporarily expanded to create 135 extra places. This increased the capacity of Reception places in 12 Kingston schools from 1575 to 1905.
6. The schools being permanently expanded to add capacity for Reception places are Alexandra Infant, Burlington Infant and Nursery, Ellingham Primary, Fern Hill Primary, Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery, Latchmere and St Matthew's C of E Primary Schools.
7. The schools which are being temporarily expanded to create 135 extra places are Coombe Hill Infant, Castle Hill Primary, Maple Infant, St. Joseph's Catholic Primary and Tolworth Infant and Nursery Schools.
8. Governing Bodies and senior leadership teams at all primary schools are working closely with the LA and are committed to ensure that there are sufficient places for all RBK school age children in the community.
9. As at 24 June, there are 31 children without a known destination and 35 potential places available. Therefore at the present time, the current capacity is able to meet the known demand to date.
10. The LA is in contact with parents without a current offer of a school place advising them of schools with vacancies and offering advice on making further applications where applicable. We will continue to monitor children who are currently without a school place for September.
11. Appeals for community primary, junior and infant schools will be heard during the last week of June. Appeals for VA and Foundation schools have either been heard or are awaiting hearings.

Background papers held by Hatija Bhatia (tel: 020 8547 5284)
Email: Hatija.Bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

LA booklet for parents on primary school admissions for Sept 11

SCHOOL ADMISSION FORUM

6 JULY 2011

CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND APPEALS CODES

Members will be aware that the draft School Admissions and Appeals Codes are currently under consultation until 19 August. The full consultation documents and the responses can be accessed at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

A full set of consultation documents were sent to members on 22 June together with a summary of key points, and members were requested to consider their responses to questions 1 to 10 on the response form (Appendix C2) in advance of the meeting. There will be a discussion at the meeting to inform a collective response from the Forum on the School Admissions Code.

Attached papers are:

Appendix C1: DfE Consultation summary

Appendix C2: DfE Response Form

Consultation

Launch Date: 27 May 2011
Respond by 12 weeks from Launch date

Consultation on the Changes to the Admissions Framework

In the White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching', Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education, announced a review of the school admissions system to make it simpler, fairer and more transparent, building on the principle of placing trust back in schools and head teachers.

The Department would welcome views on the draft School Admissions Code and draft School Admission Appeals Code, which are at the centre of proposed changes to the admissions system.

Consultation on the Changes to the Admissions Framework

A Consultation

To Schools, Governing Bodies, Local Authorities, Parents, Faith Groups, other Key Stakeholders

Issued 27 May 2011

Contact Details

If your enquiry is related to the content of the consultation, you can contact the PCU telephone help line on: 0370 000 2288.

Enquiries

To If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Consultation Unit by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288.

1 Impact Assessment

Our initial assessment of the proposed changes concludes that they do not impose any new information obligations, nor do they impose any new administrative or policy burdens of £5 million (equivalent annual cost) or more on the maintained schools sector. We consider there to be no discernible impact on schools in the private sector arising from these proposals. We would welcome any information to inform our assessment, which will be published before the School Admissions Code and School Admission Appeals Code (the Codes) are laid before Parliament.

The school admissions framework is intended to ensure that the system is administered fairly on behalf of all children, and in doing so to help to advance equity of treatment in considering disability, ethnicity, gender and ability.

In constructing this consultation document and the draft Codes, we have considered the implications for disability equality, gender equality and race equality, and this has shaped our policy proposals. Following this consultation we will publish a full analysis that reflects the responses we receive about equity of treatment in admissions; in particular, we shall consider carefully any implications around sexual orientation, religion or belief.

2 Changes to Regulations

The outcome of this consultation will require some changes to the regulations that, along with the Codes, govern the admission and appeals process. We propose to issue another consultation following this one focussing solely on those regulations, inviting comments on any proposed changes.

3 Summary

The Department intends to remove many of the unnecessary and costly prescriptive burdens on schools and local authorities. This consultation seeks views on the changes to simplify the Codes.

The Codes have evolved over a number of years, with successive versions adding additional regulation in response to specific policy issues. As a result they are now overly complex, repetitive and, for many in the system, confusing. The current Codes represent over 130 pages of densely worded text, with more than 660 mandatory requirements.

The draft Codes are around a third of their original size and are much clearer in terms of what admission authorities must and must not do. They have been written from an assumption that all schools and admission authorities seek to comply with the Codes.

This assumption is backed by the Chief Schools Adjudicator in his evidence to the Education Select Committee on 2 February 2011, that "*most of the disagreements are resolved locally ... and continue to be resolved locally*", and that "*the vast majority of admissions authorities ... if they are breaching the rules, don't mean to be doing so.*" His 2009/10 annual report shows that he received fewer than 400 complaints during the last admissions round, yet there are more than 6,000 admission authorities, of which only 152 are local authorities.

These changes are not about weakening the admissions system but removing many of the unnecessary burdens for schools and local authorities to allow them to focus on setting clearer, fairer admission arrangements. This Government believes that this system will be simpler for parents to navigate and more transparent.

4 What are the Drafting Changes?

In line with the feedback we received during the review of the admissions framework we have removed duplicate and unnecessary material as well as confusing elements that led to admission authorities interpreting the Codes in different ways. This includes all of the sections that referred to what an admission authority 'should' or 'should not' do.

We want admission authorities to be clearer about their admission arrangements, consult with their local communities and partners, and address any objections that are found to be unlawful. Admission authorities must be accountable to those affected by those arrangements.

There are, however, a number of key safeguards being retained and reinforced, over and above recourse to the Schools Adjudicators. These key principles are that:

- All relevant requirements must be in a single place - the Code - allowing those reading the Code to understand the full set of requirements. There will still be regulations, as they are a key part of the legislative framework, but which confirm the Code rather than add another layer of prescriptive requirements. This should ensure that anyone can understand the basic requirements of the Admissions Code without requiring a solicitor to interpret it;
- All admission arrangements must be clear, fair, objective and easily understood by parents;
- Subject to Royal Assent of the Education Bill, the Schools Adjudicator will have the power to hear objections to admission arrangements of all state-funded schools, including those of Academies. As now, the Adjudicator will be able to make binding decisions on all objections referred to him as well as having the discretion to consider any wider issues in admission arrangements;
- All admission authorities will still have to convene independent appeal panels to hear parental appeals against a decision not to offer a place at a preferred school;
- All schools and admissions authorities must participate in the locally agreed Fair Access Protocols to ensure that children who are struggling to find a school place, especially the most vulnerable, can do so quickly.

5 General Aims

We have sought to remove all duplication and sections of the Codes that were open to (mis)interpretation, so it is clearer what admission authorities must and must not do within the new Codes as well as making them easier to read and understand.

One of the aims of reviewing the Codes was to reduce the burdens and bureaucracy that schools face by removing unnecessary prescription and elements that drove cost into the process.

The revised Codes should ensure that all school places are offered in a fair and lawful way and that school admission appeals are heard in a fair and lawful way.

Question 1: Do you agree that the new Codes achieve these aims?

We welcome any views you have on the overall aims of the Codes.

6 Key policy changes for consultation

This consultation seeks views on a small number of key policy changes, all of which intend to deal with issues which can create unfairness in the system or which frustrate and confuse parents who seek to ensure that their child gets into a suitable school as quickly as possible.

Changes to the Admissions Code

The removal of the requirement on local authorities to coordinate in year admissions.

Some local authorities are facing a real challenge in managing the large and growing numbers of applications for a school place outside the normal admission rounds.

This means that increasingly large numbers of parents are facing delays in getting their children into a school. Instead, we propose to move to a position where a parent, applying for a school place outside of the normal admissions round, would still make initial contact with their local authority. They are responsible for the composite prospectus and also have a statutory duty to provide information to parents on schools and admissions in their area. The local authority would be able to provide suitable application forms and advise on which schools in their area were over-subscribed. Parents would then apply directly to the schools and those schools would process the forms, notifying the local authority of both the application and the

outcome. Parents will continue to have a right of appeal against a decision not to offer a place.

We believe that this will ensure that parents looking to find a place outside the normal admissions round are able to do so as quickly as possible, without delays from overly bureaucratic processes, and that fewer children will miss education for any lengthy period.

Changes to the Published Admission Number (PAN)

All schools must have a published admission number (PAN) for each age group in which pupils are or would normally be admitted to the school. The PAN forms part of the admission arrangements for the school. The current Admissions Code and associated regulations set out requirements in relation to PAN, including: restrictions on admitting above PAN, changing PAN and consultation. This area of policy is a prime example of over-regulation which stifles the ambitions of schools in being able to offer parents more places.

We want all schools that are popular with parents to be free to increase their PAN, and thereby offer more parents more options for a place, whilst ensuring clarity in schools' locally-set policies. In deciding the appropriate mechanism to achieve this, we want to achieve the right balance between giving schools the light-touch regulation consistent with other reforms, and ensuring that local authorities can get on with their strategic role in planning schools places for their areas. We have therefore made the following changes in the Code in relation to PAN: schools will no longer have to get the approval of the local authority where they want to admit pupils in-year above PAN; this will allow for greater flexibility. There will be a requirement to notify the local authority of a change to PAN and to make reference to it on the school website. In line with our plans to de-regulate the system we shall enable anyone who feels local proposals to increase PAN are unreasonable to refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator.

We shall be consulting with the Ministerial Advisory Group, which includes representations from schools, local authorities and voluntary and community groups on the potential such de-regulation has to address the issues parents face when trying to find a place for their child.

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposals to allow all popular and successful schools to increase their Published Admission Number?

We welcome your views on what sort of criteria the Schools Adjudicator must take into account when he considers objections to an admission authority's plans to increase PAN.

Random allocation

Since 2007 the School Admissions Code has allowed random allocation (often referred to as 'lotteries') as a permitted oversubscription criterion. It is most commonly used as a tiebreaker in individual schools, to choose between two otherwise equal applications. While it may be effective in certain limited situations we propose that it should not become the principal route for awarding school places across an entire local authority. Therefore we are proposing restricting the use of random allocation as an oversubscription criterion to individual schools.

Infant class size exceptions

Currently, there is a statutory limit for infant school class sizes of 30 children per school teacher. There are several exceptions to this, to ensure that vulnerable children - such as those with special educational needs admitted outside the admissions round - are not disadvantaged. The limit of 30 will not change, but based on discussions with key stakeholders, we are proposing to add two new categories to the list of exceptions: twins (and other multiple birth children) and service children. Schools will now be able to admit children from these groups above the class size limit of 30 without falling foul of the regulations. This will avoid cases such as those where twins have ended up going to different schools or children of service personnel are disadvantaged by their need to relocate - often at short notice. We are also consulting on removing the requirement on admission authorities to take correcting measures to get back to 30 at the end of the year in which the excepted pupils enter the class. This will give schools more flexibility as to how they manage the class going forward and avoid having to take potentially expensive measures for one or two children.

Reduction in consultation requirements where no changes to admission arrangements are proposed

Admission authorities currently must consult publicly on their proposed admission arrangements every three years, even if they are not proposing to make any changes to those arrangements. This can be costly and bureaucratic. We propose that admission authorities should only be required to consult on their admission arrangements once every 7 years if no changes are proposed to their admission arrangements. Clearly any admission authority which seeks to make changes to their admission arrangements must consult on those changes before they are determined, other than an increase to the PAN.

Giving admissions priority to children attracting the Pupil Premium

Children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) – in the future, attracting the Pupil Premium – come from some of our most vulnerable groups and their parents often lack the resources to help them access our more successful schools. It is one of this Government's priorities to break the cycle of deprivation. So we wish to give a permissive approach to those schools who believe that children attracting the Pupil Premium would thrive in their educational care. In the White Paper "The Importance of Teaching" we stated our intention that we would give this permissive approach to Academies and Free Schools.

Question 3:

Do you agree that Academies and Free Schools should be able to give priority to children attracting the Pupil Premium in their admission arrangements?

We welcome views and ideas on how best to balance the drive to raise attainment for some of our most vulnerable groups and yet maintain the drive to reduce the burden on our schools.

Children of school staff

Currently, admission authorities cannot give any priority to the children of members of their staff unless there is a demonstrable skill shortage. Given the importance that this Government places on the need to put our trust in schools, we believe that this restriction leads to some schools losing out on potentially very valuable members of staff as they seek to balance work and life as a parent. Therefore, we propose to allow children of staff at the school to be included as an oversubscription criterion. If admission authorities wish to use this permissive criterion, then it would be for them to define what they mean by 'staff' and whether it was to cover teaching or non-teaching staff, including those undertaking tasks such as catering and cleaning.

Changes to objections to the Schools Adjudicator

The Schools Adjudicator provides a valued service which plays a vital role in giving parents and others the confidence that the admissions system is fair and transparent. We wish to strengthen that role in a manner that is consistent with our overall policy drive to place trust in our schools. Therefore, we are proposing to make a small but important number of changes to the role and functions of the Schools Adjudicator.

- Currently, all objections to the Schools Adjudicator about the

determined admission arrangements of any maintained school must be made by 31 July, although later referrals can be considered at the Schools Adjudicator's discretion. As the current deadline comes at the start of the summer holidays, it can be difficult for schools to respond to requests for information from the Schools Adjudicator in time. We believe that this timetable can delay the local implementation of decisions and put pressure on the local authority to amend local prospectuses, potentially giving parents incorrect information about schools. To enable more time for admission authorities to respond, we propose to change the deadline for objections to be referred to the Schools Adjudicator to 30 June.

- Secondly, we currently specify in regulations a lengthy list of who can object to admission arrangements. We do not believe that this is consistent with local accountability and so we will change the regulations to make it possible for anyone to object to the admission arrangements of a state funded school.

7 The Admissions Code: Questions on the key policy changes

7.1 In year Co-ordination

Question 4: Do you support the proposal to remove the requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in year applications?

Use of Random Allocation

Question 5: Do you support the proposed change to the use of random allocation?

Infant Class size exceptions

Question 6: Do you support proposals to add twins (and multiple births) and children of service personnel to the list of excepted pupils?

Reduction in Consultation

Question 7: Do you agree with the proposal that admission authorities who are making no change to their arrangements year on year should only be required to consult once every seven years, rather than once every three years?

Allowing priority to children of staff

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposal to allow schools to

give priority to applications for children of staff in their over-subscription criteria?

Changes to objections to the Schools Adjudicator

Question 9: Do you agree that anyone should be able to raise an objection about the admission arrangements they consider unfair or unlawful, of any school?

Question 10: Do you agree that the deadline for objections to the Schools Adjudicator should be moved to 30 June from 31 July?

CHANGES TO THE APPEALS CODE

Our aims in revising the Appeals Code have been to simplify and improve the admission appeals system, reduce cost and bureaucracy for schools in line with giving them more autonomy, whilst ensuring that the appeals system remains fair and objective.

Changes which will simplify and improve the Appeals Code and the appeals system

We have removed the requirement in the Appeals Code for appeal panels to refer unlawful admission arrangements to the Schools Adjudicator because, at the time of an appeal, the admission arrangements have already been used to allocate places. Instead, we will require panels to refer such arrangements to the local authority, and the admission authority if applicable, to prompt them to be reconsidered for arrangements for the next admissions round.

The current Appeals Code sets out a timetable for appeals, which admission authorities can find difficult and costly to adhere to. The revised Appeals Code will provide admission authorities with flexibility to set a timetable for exchanging information that takes into consideration their local circumstances, within an overall framework consisting of working days in which cases must be heard. As part of that framework we propose to introduce a requirement that admission authorities give parents at least 30 working days from receiving an offer to prepare and lodge an appeal. Currently, parents need only be given 10 days to do this. This can have the effect of parents lodging an appeal quickly rather than considering other options. This is backed up by the fact that almost 20 percent of appeals lodged are not taken forward. By giving parents more time to consider the offer made and talk to the local authority, we believe that fewer appeals will be lodged.

These changes, in combination, are designed to provide more clarity

for parents and a clearer timeline for admission authorities to plan and organise the appeals process.

The current Appeals Code requires appeal panels to follow a two stage process for hearing individual and multiple appeals (other than infant class size appeals). The two stage process lacks clarity and provides inadequate guidance on how to hear multiple appeals. The revised Appeals Code splits the two stages of this process into three: the lawfulness and correct application of the arrangements; whether prejudice will arise; and finally, the panel balancing the arguments. This is designed to clarify and separate the considerations and decisions a panel must take, both for multiple and individual appeals.

Changes which will reduce costs and bureaucracy for schools

We propose the removal of the requirement for all appeals in a multiple appeal for a school to be re-heard if a member of the panel withdraws. Instead, we will require postponing the remaining appeals until the third member returns or the admission authority appoints a third member. If the member is withdrawn before an appeal hearing is completed the appeal will have to be reheard. We consider this proportionate to the resource and time cost of having to re-hear large multiple appeals, but a reconstituted appeal panel may still decide to re-hear all appeals if it chooses to.

The current Appeals Code requires admission authorities to accept evidence provided by parents at any stage of the appeal process, including on the day of the hearing. Late evidence can mean the panel has to adjourn the hearing to allow the admission authority to consider and respond to the evidence. The revised Appeals Code gives parents at least two opportunities to provide evidence, including a new requirement that parents can be requested to provide initial evidence when lodging an appeal. The increased time period for making an appeal will make it easier for parents to submit more complete evidence at this stage. Appeal panels will be able to decide what action would be appropriate when evidence is submitted late, and the Appeals Code will require admission authorities to inform parents that any information or evidence not received in advance of the hearing may not be considered at the appeal.

We propose to remove the requirement for admission authorities to advertise for lay appeal members every three years. Instead, we will require them to ensure that panel members retain their independence for the duration of their service.

We have relaxed the guidelines that advised admission authorities against hearing appeals in school premises. Admission authorities will have to hear appeals in appropriate venues, but without requiring a

costly venue hire, when the school itself could be a venue.

We propose to relax the requirements for admission authorities to provide training for appeal panel members. Currently this is required every two years and includes annual updates, but we believe that this is a costly over-prescription. All panel members will still have to be trained before serving on the panel, but thereafter it will be for individual members or panels and the admission authorities to agree when training is required. Where extra training is required, it would be for the admission authority to organise and fund.

8 The Appeals Code: Questions on the key policy changes

8.1 Operation and governance of appeals panels

Question 11: Do you agree with the less prescriptive requirements around the operation, governance and training of appeals panels?

We welcome any views you may have on how this less prescriptive approach may affect the operation of appeals panels and their impartial decision making.

Timetable for appeals

Question 12: Do you agree that the proposed appeals timetable will give more certainty to parents and reduce the number of appeals overall?

We welcome any views you may have on this proposed timetable.

Question 13: Do you agree that the proposed new timetable for lodging and hearing appeals will reduce costs and bureaucracy for admission authorities?

We welcome any views you may have on this proposed timetable and how we can further reduce the burden and costs on admission authorities.

Three stage process

Question 14: Do you agree that the new three stage process will provide a more effective process for appeals panels to consider multiple and individual appeals?

We welcome any views you may have on this proposed timetable and how we can further reduce the burden and costs on admission authorities.

9 Key changes in the Education Bill 2011 (Primary Legislation)

9.1 **The revised Admissions Code has been drafted with reference to provisions that are contained within the Education Bill. They are explained here, although not part of the formal Consultation on the Codes.**

Schools Adjudicator

1. The Schools Adjudicator is an important aspect of the school admissions framework. As now the Schools Adjudicator will consider all objections to admission arrangements for maintained schools. The Bill will extend the Schools Adjudicator's remit so that he will also be able to consider objections in respect of admission arrangements for Academies.

2. We believe it is crucial that we put our trust back in schools and teachers. According to the Chief Adjudicator, the vast majority of schools and admission authorities are compliant and seek to be compliant. It cannot be right that the Schools Adjudicator can impose admission arrangements unilaterally, so we intend to remove the Schools Adjudicator's ability to modify a school's arrangements in a determination. His ability to consider specific objections and his discretion to examine other aspects of admissions arrangements remains, as does the binding nature of his decisions. But the legal responsibility will remain with the admission authority to bring their admission arrangements into line with mandatory requirements in order to comply with the Schools Adjudicator's determination.

Local Authorities

Remove the requirements on local authorities in England to set up Admission Forums.

3. Admission Forums can be an administrative burden on local authorities and communities, imposed by the Education Act 2002. In the current economic climate we do not believe it is right that we should impose such duties, especially when the experiences of those are so mixed. So rather than impose across all areas a requirement to have a Forum, we shall remove that duty through the Bill and leave it to local partnerships to develop and grow. We already know of a number of areas where such partnerships want to continue to operate in a voluntary arrangement.

Remove the requirement for local authorities to report annually to the Schools Adjudicator on how fair access is working in their areas.

4. Whilst we will still require local authorities to produce an annual

report on admissions in their area, our working assumption is a report much like a report local authority officers might send to their scrutiny committee. We shall not require that to be sent to the Schools Adjudicator, but will require that the report be published locally to shift the focus on providing parents and communities with this information instead. The Code will still require local authorities to report on admission arrangements in their area (including how well they support children with SEN and those looked after children; how well Fair Access Protocols operate in their areas and any other matters that the local authority feels are relevant to their communities).

10 How to Respond

- 10.1 This questionnaire takes about 30 minutes to complete online. We encourage you to complete as many of the questions as possible giving as much detail in your response and any supporting evidence.

You can fill in the questionnaire by:

Completing the form online at www.education.gov.uk/consultations; or

Downloading a response form and e-mailing it to:
admissions.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk

or by downloading a response form which should be completed and sent to:

Consultation Unit,
Area 1C,
Castle View House,
East Lane,
Runcorn,
Cheshire,
WA7 2GJ

11 Additional Copies

- 11.1 Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from the Department for Education e-consultation website at:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

12 Plans for making results public

- 12.1 It is our stated intention to publish for information a revised set of Codes, taking account of any changes, by the end of September 2011. This is to allow admission authorities seeking to determine their arrangements for 2013, in line with this Code, the maximum possible time to consider the proposed Codes. We aim to bring the Codes into Force in early 2012, subject to the Passage of the Education Bill 2011

and Parliamentary process. We shall publish a full response to the consultation at the same time as publishing the Codes in September 2011.

Consultation on the Changes to the Admissions Framework

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 19 August 2011
Your comments must reach us by that date.

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk/consultations

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name

Organisation (if applicable)

Address:

Contact Details

If your enquiry is related to the content of the consultation, you can contact the PCU telephone help line on: 0370 000 2288.

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Consultation Unit by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288.

Please tick the box below that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Governor
<input type="checkbox"/> Governor	<input type="checkbox"/> National Representative Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Representative Group
<input type="checkbox"/> Headteacher/teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Faith Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> School
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		

Please Specify:

We have sought to remove all duplication and sections of the Codes that were open to misinterpretation, so it is clearer what admission authorities must and must not do within the new Codes as well as making them easier to read and understand.

One of the aims of reviewing the Codes was to reduce the burdens and bureaucracy that schools face by removing unnecessary prescription and elements that drove cost into the process.

The revised Codes should ensure that all school places can continue to be offered in a fair and lawful way, and that school admission appeals can be administered in a more effective way and at lower cost.

Q1) Do you agree that the new Codes achieve these aims?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q2) Do you agree with the proposals to allow all popular and successful schools to increase their Published Admission Number?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q3) Do you agree that Academies and Free Schools should be able to give priority to children attracting the Pupil Premium in their admission arrangements?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q4) Do you support the proposal to remove the requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in year applications?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Q5) Do you support the proposed change to the use of random allocation?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Q6) Do you support proposals to add twins (and multiple births) and children of service personnel to the list of excepted pupils?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

Q7) Do you agree with the proposal that admission authorities who are making no change to their arrangements year on year should only be required to consult once every seven years, rather than once every three years?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q8) Do you agree with the proposal to allow schools to give priority to applications for children of staff in their over-subscription criteria?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q9) Do you agree that anyone should be able to raise an objection about the admission arrangements they consider unfair or unlawful, of any school?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q10) Do you agree that the deadline for objections to the Schools Adjudicator should be moved to 30 June from 31 July?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q11) Do you agree with the less prescriptive requirements around the operation, governance and training of appeals panels?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q12) Do you agree that the proposed appeals timetable will give more certainty to parents and reduce the number of appeals overall?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q13 Do you agree that the proposed new timetable for lodging and hearing appeals will reduce costs and bureaucracy for admission authorities?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Q14 Do you agree that the new three stage process will provide a more effective process for appeals panels to consider multiple and individual appeals?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 438060 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 19 August 2011

Send by post to:
Consultation Unit
Area 1C
Castle View House
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GJ

Send by e-mail to: admissions.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk

SCHOOL ADMISSION FORUM

6 JULY 2011

REVIEW OF CHOICE ADVICE SERVICE

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the impact of the Choice Advice Service for those parents and carers who were supported in the process for making applications for their children to transfer from primary to secondary school in September 2011. The funding for this service has ceased and the current draft School Admissions Code does not contain any requirement for local authorities to continue to provide a Choice Advice service.

ACTION FOR THE FORUM

The Forum is asked to note this report and offer any views.

BACKGROUND

1. Section 42 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on all Local Authorities(LAs) to commission an independent Choice Advice Service for parents who find it hardest to engage with and navigate the admissions process to make informed decisions about which schools will best meet their child's needs.
2. In addition to the advice and information provided by local authority admissions teams to parents, the aim of the Choice Advice service is to engage with and provide targeted support to families who are most likely to need extra help with making applications for transfer to secondary school. The Choice Advice Service is aimed at targeting these families with practical and timely support to make informed decisions about their applications for secondary schools within prescribed deadlines.

REVIEW OF CHOICE ADVICE SERVICE DURING 2010 2011

3. Kingston's Choice Advice Service is provided by the Family Support team who work across the borough and have pre-existing links with schools in the four clusters. The team was provided with information, training and support from the School Admissions service before they contacted primary schools in their cluster to identify the link contact at the school, explain the process for referral and ask schools to identify families who may need this additional support.
4. Where reasons for requesting support were provided, the majority of families requiring support had English as a second language and required help to access information to fully understand the process. Other reasons given for requiring support included learning difficulties, housing, family breakdown issues or physical impairment.

5. For secondary admissions in September 2011, a total 78 referrals were received initially (compared with 132 for September 2010) and out of these, 39 families(compared to 45 in 2010) have been supported to make an application for secondary school.
6. From the initial numbers identified, many decided they did not require support. The majority of those who received support, had telephone and one to one contact. Other forms of support included help with completing an application and a couple of visits to secondary school open events with parents.
7. Out of the 39 families who were supported, 4 of the children were assessed and placed under the statutory process of Special Educational Needs.
8. Of the remaining 35, 100% received a preference offer and this compares favourably with 97% of all Kingston resident applicants receiving a preference offer.

SERVICE DELIVERY WITHOUT CHOICE ADVICE

9. Members will be aware from the previous report in February that the Government announced cuts in grant funding which include the funding it has provided to LAs for the Choice Advice service.
10. The draft School Admissions Code which is currently under consultation has removed the statutory requirement to have an independent Choice Advice service. However, the requirement on LAs to provide advice and assistance to parents when choosing a school remains. This was highlighted in the Government's 'Schools White Paper – The Importance of Teaching' which specifies that the duty on LAs in relation to Admissions is to ensure fair access to all schools for every child.
11. The LA and primary schools will continue to work collaboratively to support parents who require extra support when applying for their child's secondary school. This support has been in place before and during the presence of a Choice Advice service in Kingston.
12. The Council will continue to provide transfer to secondary school meetings held each year during the Autumn term that all parents can access at different times and across 4 locations in the borough. In addition, primary schools continue to support their parents directly and families will continue to receive support from the School Admissions team either on the telephone or by a face to face meeting in Council offices.

Background papers held by Hatija Bhatia (tel: 020 8547 5284)
Email: Hatija.Bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

DfES School Admissions Code
Draft Consultation on the School Admissions Code
Children's and Young People's Plan 2009-13

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

6 JULY 2011

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Update on consultations for admission arrangements for 2012

Following the report presented to the Forum in February 2011, a total of 10 primary schools consulted out of a total of 14 Admission authority schools and a total of 5 out of 6 secondary admission authority schools consulted for September 2012.

The schools that consulted are:

Primary Schools:

- Christ Church CE New Malden Primary School
- Christ Church CE Primary School (Surbiton)
- Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School
- St Agatha's Catholic Primary School
- St John's CE Primary School
- St Luke's CE Primary School
- St Mary's CE Primary School
- St Matthew's CE Primary School
- St Paul's CE Junior School
- St Paul's CE Primary School

Secondary Schools:

- The Holy Cross School
- The Hollyfield School
- Richard Challoner School
- The Tiffin Girls' School
- Tiffin School

As a result of close working with schools both at a pre-consultation stage and thereafter, it has been possible to discuss and revise any proposed arrangements that may contravene the School Admissions Code.

2. Fair Access

Since September 2010 to date, a total of 3 placements have been made at 3 schools. Last year there were a total of 5 placements made across 4 schools.

As Fair Access forms a part of the current consultation on the School Admissions Code, at its last meeting in June, the Fair Access Panel agreed to defer a review of the current protocols until the new Code comes out in early 2012 and can inform

Appendix E

necessary changes. At that stage, once revised protocols are developed , a revised draft will be presented to the Forum for ratification.

**Background Papers held by Hatija Bhatia (tel.: 0208 547 5284
email: Hatija.Bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk)**