

Meeting:	Harrow Admissions Forum
Date:	19 July 2006
Subject:	Admission Arrangements 2008-9
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Wingrove
Contact Officer:	Madeleine Hitchens
Portfolio Holder:	Janet Mote
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **For decision**

To review and agree changes to the Admission Arrangements for the 2008-9 academic year.

### **Reason for report**

The Admissions Forum has a role to consider the effectiveness of local admission arrangements and to assess how well they serve the interests of local parents and children.

### **Benefits**

The Forum can ensure the admission arrangements best meet the needs of Harrow families.

### **Cost of Proposals**

None

### **Risks**

Not reviewing admission arrangements to ensure they serve the needs of the local community could leave the authority vulnerable to challenge.

### **Implications if recommendations rejected**

N/A

## **Section 2: Report**

### Brief history

The Harrow Admissions Forum has a role to consider current admission arrangements and to assess how well they served the interest of local parents and children.

### Options considered

Areas the Forum may wish to review:

#### 1. Priority for Looked After Children

To bring Harrow fully in line with the Code of Practice on Admissions, it is recommended that Looked After Children be given top priority in the admission rules.

#### 2. Medical claims

To change the medical criterion so that parents can make a medical claim for a school that is not the closest to their home address, provided this is the most appropriate school and the claim is supported by evidence from a Consultant. (See report earlier on the agenda).

#### 3. Proposed reduction to Planned Admission Number for Cedars and Grange Schools.

In order to reduce surplus capacity in the Primary sector, to consider reducing the planned intake for Cedars and Grange School from 90 to 60.

#### 4. Co-ordinated admissions - offers from the waiting list

Forum Members are also asked to consider whether those parents who ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list for another school, after a school place has been allocated, are indicating they prefer this school to the school already allocated. If at a later date a place is offered from the waiting list, this new offer will supersede any previous offer, which will then be withdrawn under the co-ordinated admission arrangements.

## 5. Sibling link

To clarify that the sibling link only applies to children “who will be attending the school at the same time”. For example, if a family has been offered and accepted a place for an older child at a school that transfers at 11+, then the young child does not qualify for the sibling link as the older child will no longer be attending.

A theme that arose from the consultation on admission arrangements last year was about the introduction of Sixth Forms and the impact of these on the sibling link. The Forum decided not to recommend any change to the sibling criterion at present, but to review this in light of the development of sixth form provision in Harrow. Because funding decisions have still to be made by the Learning & Skills Council it is likely that sixth form arrangements will still be under the auspices of the Colleges for 2008.

## Consultation

Any proposed change to the admissions rules will form part of the annual consultation on admission arrangements which will take place in Autumn 2006 / Spring 2007.

## Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

## Legal Implications

The Education Act 2002 requires each LEA to establish an Admissions Forum, under the Education (Admission Forums) (England) regulations 2002, Section 1 (a) requires the Admissions Forum to consider how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interest of children and parents within the area of the local authority. The matters set out in the above report are all within the remit of the admission forum.

The Admissions Forum is required to consider how well the proposed changes serve the interest of parents and children within the area, and to arrive at an agreed consensus about the proposals. Once the admission authority has reached a consensus on the matters, the admission authority is required to promulgate its advice, which should then be published by the LEA and made available on the admission section of the LEA website and sent to all admission authorities within the area.

The legal implications of each of the proposed changes, is considered below.

(i) Looked after children

Guidance on the Educational attainment of looked after children is issued under section 52 of the Children Act 2004, (*Every Child Matters*) this guidance is issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, which means that the guidance must be followed unless there are exceptional reasons which justify departure. At 19.3 of the guidance, a duty is placed on local authority to ensure that looked after children have access to a suitable range of care and educational placement options, which maximises the Education opportunities and experiences available to them. The changes proposed to give looked after children priority is in keeping with the guidance.

(ii) Medical Claims

The legal implications of this, is considered further in the separate report.

(iii) Proposed reduction to Planned Admission Number for Cedars and Grange Schools

The school admission authority may consider these proposals, which will then need to be the subject of consultation.

(iv) Co-ordinated admissions

The proposals to co-ordinate the admission arrangement to bring them in line with other neighbouring authorities is within the remit of the broad remit of the admission authority.

(v) Offers from the waiting list

There are no specific legal implications from this proposal, save that the Admission Forum should be satisfied that the changes are clearly set out in any publication on the admission arrangements to be applied by the admission authority.

(vi) Sibling link

No specific separate legal implications arise as a result of this proposed change as the sibling link is a criterion, which may be applied by the LEA, in the event of over-subscription to a particular school, it is for the Forum to consider the proposal, in light of the duties of the Forum referred to above

## Equalities Impact

Harrow's oversubscription criteria have been developed in line with guidance in the School Admissions Code of Practice in order to be objective, clear, fair and compatible with admissions and equal opportunities legislation.

The proposed change responds to the needs of service users from Harrow's diverse communities.

## Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

N/A

## **Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents**

Background papers

Cabinet Report 14 April 2006 - Determination of Admission Arrangements for the 2006/2007 academic year