

Pecyn Dogfennau Cyhoeddus



The following reports are Information Items for the Education Scrutiny Committee.

1. Monitro'r Gyllideb 2019/20
2. Deddf Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol (ADY) a Diwygio
3. Ymgynghoriad - Trefniadau Derbyn Arfaethedig 2021/22.



INFORMATION REPORT FOR EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: BUDGET MONITORING 2019/20

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the projected 2019-20 outturn position for the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning (LL), based on the most recent information available.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report identifies projected under / overspends currently forecast for 2019-20 (full details attached in Appendix 1), together with an update with regards to any issues relating to the progress of the 2019/20 savings targets.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that Members are fully informed with regards to the 2019-20 projected revenue spend position for Education & Lifelong Learning.
- 4.2 The Council Budget is based on the achievement of both expenditure and income targets. In order to ensure that these are met and that the Council's financial integrity is maintained Directors are required to review income and expenditure trends.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The report deals with the budget monitoring information for Education and Lifelong Learning (LL). The revenue position for the Directorate is summarised in Appendix 1, with a breakdown split across 3 areas, Schools Related, Education related and Lifelong Learning (LL) related respectively. To advise the Directorates original budget for 2019-20 has been increased by an amount of £191k following management responsibility for the Safeguarding Team transferring into Education from Social Services.
- 5.2 The projected outturn position is based on actual income and expenditure details to the end of October 2019, together with data used to forecast income and expenditure. Account is also taken of the outturn position for previous years and information available following discussions with Managers.

5.3 A net overspend of £207k is currently forecast, details with regards to each of the service areas are outlined below. Members are advised that the projected outturn position for Corporate Services is an underspend of **£1,806k**, consequently overall the projected outturn position for Education and Corporate Services is an underspend of **£1,599k**. To advise Members, Cabinet on 13th November 2019 agreed to support the funding of £228k in relation to split site formula funding arrangements for YG Cwm Rhymni. It was agreed that this cost would be met from the projected in year underspend, consequently the revised projected outturn position is an underspend of £1,371k. The details with regards to the Corporate Services position will be reported to Policy & Resources Committee in January 2020.

5.4 The main variances in excess of £40k relate to the following:

	£'000 (Under / (Over))
Relief Supply Cover (SRB's / Maternity)	(50)
Early Years (Rising 3's)	(43)
Management & Support Services	(42)
Education Welfare Service	50
Safeguarding	66
Language Support Primary	45
EOTAS, Addn Support & Out of County	(657)
Early Years Central Team	205
School Improvement	(59)
Music Service	89
Net Other (Details in Appendix 1)	189
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Total	(207)

5.4.1 Due to the unpredictability of sickness in our Special Resource Bases and maternity absences across all school sectors, the relief supply cover spend on school based staff is always very closely monitored. Whilst it is very difficult to be able to forecast an outturn position, current data identifies a predicted overspend of £50k for the year.

5.4.2 The spend on Early Years – Rising 3's is very much demand led, as it is driven by the number of age 3 pupils who access nursery provision in the term following their 3rd birthday. This can vary from year to year, with spend based on the birth rate and parental choice with regards to accessing this “early” provision. Current spend and projections indicate an increase in uptake in 2019-20, consequently based on recent trends the current projection is an overspend of £43k.

5.4.3 Whilst Management & Support Service costs are showing a projected overspend of £42k, this is made up of a number of variances within this budget line, the most significant are as follows:

	£'000 (Under / (Over))
Vacant Properties (Pontllanfraith & Cwmcarn)	(48)
Income Target – P&S (MTFP 2019-20)	(29)
Net Other (Inc. staff cost variances)	35
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Total	(42)

The spend on vacant properties relates predominately to costs associated with security, key holding responsibilities and call outs on the Pontllanfraith and Cwmcarn former school sites. There is no specific budget provision within the Directorate to support such costs.

Current projections indicate that the additional income target (£29k) identified as part of the MTFP savings targets for 2019-20 will not be achieved against this budget line in 2019-20.

In 2019-20, in year staff vacancies, some of which form part of MTFP savings proposals for future years are contributing towards an in year saving and also funding, on a one off basis, the part year cost of a “new” post essential to support the Authority’s 21st Century Strategy.

- 5.4.4 The underspend in the Education Welfare Service relates to a recent restructure, which is contributing £28k to on-going savings for the Directorate, plus a one-off in year vacancy gap saving. Similarly the variance within the Language Support Team links largely to an in year vacancy (£33k), which is part of savings proposals for future year savings.
- 5.4.5 The significant cost pressure within the Directorate continues to be in relation to the EOTAS (Education Other Than at School) provision. The provision accommodates learners who are unable to attend and learn in a mainstream school setting. In reviewing the continuum of additional support provided to pupils, our alternative EOTAS provision and Out of County Placements, the projected overspend against this budget heading, for our most vulnerable learners, is currently estimated at £657k. A review of demand, costs and structures is on-going. This area of service has been a significant budget pressure in recent years and this was recognised as part of the Authority’s Budget Strategy for 2019-20 with budgetary growth of £800k. Despite this budgetary growth the current projection indicates an on-going budgetary pressure. In 2018-19, this area of the budget reported an overspend of £1.2m.
- 5.4.6 The projected underspend against the Early Years Central Team is due to the success of the team in accessing specific grant funding to support staff related costs. This grant funding relates to a number of Welsh Government grants (Flying Start / Early Implementer Childcare / Childcare & Healthy Schools), it is contributing towards the costs of staff that are covering specific vacancies. At this point the continuation of some of this grant funding remains uncertain for future years.
- 5.4.7 The variance in school improvement spend, relates to targeted English & Mathematics support (in Secondary Schools) which ended at the end of academic year 2018-19.
- 5.4.8 The variance against the Music Service budget relates primarily to vacant posts, which form part of future MTFP savings proposals.

5.5 Progress Made Against the 2019/20 Revenue Budget Savings Targets

- 5.5.1 The 2019/20 revenue budget settlement for Education and Lifelong Learning included a specific savings target of £3,354k (including Schools). Excluding specific direct savings against the Schools formula budget, the target for the Directorate was circa £1,007k. Managers have progressed implementation of the targets set and whilst there are a few concerns linked to a £29k income target (detailed in the Report); an increased pressure in year against the budget for Rising 3’s provision, the budget was reduced as part of the 2019-20 savings; a short term pressure linked to a school improvement initiative and a £50k staff related saving linked to the Library Service staffing model there are currently no significant issues causing concern. The impact of all these budget pressures has been referenced in the narrative of this report and the projected outturn position for 2019-20.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The projected outturn position is based on actual income and expenditure details to the end of October 2019, together with data used to forecast future income and expenditure. Account is also taken of the outturn position for previous years and information available following discussions with Managers.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- 7.1 The report identifies how the Directorate intends using the allocated resources to ensure that key strategies are achieved. The content of this report is in accordance with the budget and medium term financial strategy, considered and approved by Council on 21st February 2019.

- 7.2 Effective financial planning and financial controls contribute to the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. In particular as follows:

A healthier Wales, supporting vulnerable learners can improve their well-being and educational achievement.

A more equal Wales, a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background is; and

A Wales of cohesive communities, improving quality of life with attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 Effective financial management is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) have been completed for all the savings proposals in 2019/20 that were anticipated to have a public impact.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 In summary, based on information currently available there is a projected revenue overspend for Education & Lifelong Learning of £207k. This overspend position is significantly impacted by the current projected spend position for our most vulnerable learners (EOTAS / Additional Support / Out of County).

- 10.2 In 2019/20 there are; a number of one off savings which have assisted with regards to reducing the projected overspend position, most notably in year staff vacancies (including some linked to future savings proposals) and additional grant income linked to staff.

- 10.3 Overall the current projected outturn position for Education & Corporate Services is an underspend of **£1,371k**.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 In 2019-20 the Directorate will continue with the strategy of prudent vacancy management.
- 11.2 Where staff reductions are required as a consequence of savings proposals the Council will firstly try to achieve this through “natural wastage” and not filling vacancies. However where this is not possible then every opportunity will be taken to find alternative employment through the Council’s redeployment policy. The Council will also utilise other policies as appropriate e.g. voluntary severance.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Local Government Act 1972.

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Appendix 1: Projected Revenue Outturn Figures 2019-20.

EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING	Original Estimate 2019-20 £	Revised Estimate 2019-20 £	Estimated Outturn 2019-20 £	Variance Under (Over) 2019-20 £
<u>SUMMARY</u>				
SCHOOLS RELATED	110,835,264	110,835,264	110,859,817	(24,553)
EDUCATION	15,343,426	15,534,293	15,794,121	(259,828)
LIFELONG LEARNING	4,026,904	4,026,904	3,949,772	77,132
TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE (Revenue)	130,205,594	130,396,461	130,603,710	(207,249)

EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING	Original Estimate 2019-20 £	Revised Estimate 2019-20 £	Estimated Outturn 2019-20 £	Variance Under (Over) 2019-20 £
<u>SCHOOLS RELATED</u>				
Individual Schools Budget	106,956,137	106,956,137	106,956,137	0
Post 16 Initiative (Grant Income)	(3,792,288)	(3,792,288)	(3,792,288)	0
Earmarked Formula Funding (inc. Joint Use Sites)	202,728	202,728	186,008	16,720
Schools LMS Contingencies	112,311	112,311	112,311	0
Other Direct School Related				
Learning Support Staff Registration Fee	20,163	20,163	18,495	1,668
PFI Funding Gap	332,103	332,103	332,103	0
PFI Building Maintenance	49,388	49,388	49,388	0
Key Stage 2 Funding (Former Grant)	1,499,420	1,499,420	1,465,813	33,607
Secondary Additional Funding	1,084,898	1,084,898	1,084,898	0
School Meal Admin. Utility & Telephone	423,563	423,563	420,455	3,108
Relief Supply Cover (SRB's & Maternity)	490,420	490,420	540,850	(50,430)
Police Checks	60,825	60,825	64,808	(3,983)
Copyright and Licensing (Schools)	71,128	71,128	70,093	1,035
	4,031,908	4,031,908	4,046,903	(14,995)
Early Years (Rising 3's)	836,649	836,649	879,349	(42,700)
Education Improvement Grant - Match Funding	631,964	631,964	631,964	0
Early Retirement Pension Costs of School Based Staff	1,855,855	1,855,855	1,826,866	28,989
Home to School / College Transport			12,567	(12,567)
<u>EXPENDITURE TO DIRECTORATE SUMMARY</u>	110,835,264	110,835,264	110,859,817	(24,553)

EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING	Original Estimate 2019-20 £	Revised Estimate 2019-20 £	Estimated Outturn 2019-20 £	Variance Under (Over) 2019-20 £
EDUCATION				
Management & Support Service Costs	1,068,194	1,068,194	1,109,874	(41,680)
Social Inclusion				
Psychological Service	478,670	478,670	470,566	8,104
Behaviour Support	179,856	179,856	164,884	14,972
Education Welfare Service	368,657	368,657	319,119	49,538
Youth Offending Team	52,906	52,906	54,858	(1,952)
Safeguarding	0	190,867	124,389	66,478
School Based Counselling	286,393	286,393	280,641	5,752
	1,366,482	1,557,349	1,414,457	142,892
Additional Learning Needs				
ALN Advisory Support Service	241,787	241,787	240,790	997
Learning Support	0	0	(6,905)	6,905
Professional/Statementing	99,649	99,649	118,305	(18,656)
Language Support Primary	443,881	443,881	398,618	45,263
Specialist Resources	43,378	43,378	43,379	(1)
ALN Improvement Initiative	357,865	357,865	357,865	0
Childrens Centre	32,300	32,300	30,143	2,157
SNAP Cymru	43,266	43,266	43,266	0
Outreach Trinity Fields	52,457	52,457	52,457	0
Speech Therapy	58,415	58,415	58,415	0
SENCOM (Sensory Service)	709,512	709,512	709,512	0
Autism	203,737	203,737	203,737	0
	2,286,247	2,286,247	2,249,582	36,665
Learning Pathways Partnership & EOTAS				
14 - 19 Initiative (Transport Costs)	154,013	154,013	130,000	24,013
	154,013	154,013	130,000	24,013
EOTAS, Additional Support & Out of County Provision	8,492,899	8,492,899	9,150,307	(657,408)
Early Years Provision & Support				
Early Years Central Team	370,840	370,840	165,840	205,000
	370,840	370,840	165,840	205,000

EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING	Original Estimate 2019-20 £	Revised Estimate 2019-20 £	Estimated Outturn 2019-20 £	Variance Under (Over) 2019-20 £
LEI Service Provision				
SACRE	2,570	2,570	2,570	0
Outdoor Education Advisor SLA	30,278	30,278	30,278	0
School Improvement	0	0	59,133	(59,133)
Music Service	511,322	511,322	421,498	89,824
WJEC & Subscriptions	39,561	39,561	39,561	0
	583,731	583,731	553,040	30,691
Education Achievement Service (EAS) & Regional Grant Match Funding				
Contribution to EAS Joint Working	1,021,020	1,021,020	1,021,021	(1)
	1,021,020	1,021,020	1,021,021	(1)
EXPENDITURE TO DIRECTORATE SUMMARY	15,343,426	15,534,293	15,794,121	(259,828)
LIFELONG LEARNING				
Adult Education	101,600	101,600	80,485	21,115
Youth Service	1,337,096	1,337,096	1,311,495	25,601
Library Service	2,496,123	2,496,123	2,466,032	30,091
LLL Insurance & Non Operational Property/Land	92,085	92,085	91,760	325
EXPENDITURE TO SERVICE SUMMARY	4,026,904	4,026,904	3,949,772	77,132



INFORMATION REPORT FOR EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) ACT AND REFORM

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members regarding the current status of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) and implications.
- 1.2 To update Members regarding the progress of the Local Authority (LA) in relation to the implementation of the Act.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) was given Royal assent in January 2018.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Act is to create the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision by creating a unified process for children and young people 0-25. This will focus on a person-centred approach to identifying needs early, putting in place effective support and monitoring, and adapting interventions to ensure they deliver desired outcomes. The aim is to ensure improved outcomes through a simpler and less adversarial system.
- 2.3 The Act will be supported by secondary legislation and an Additional Learning Needs Code (statutory guidance and mandatory requirements). The Code has been through a period of consultation and is yet to be finalised.
- 2.4 Preparation for the Act has been supported by the Welsh Government through the appointment of regional transformation leads and funding to support regional planning.
- 2.5 The process of introduction of the Act has also been subject of consultation and the original time line has now been extended to September 2021 for a phased implementation over a three year period.
- 2.6 Local authorities (LAs) have a responsibility to ensure that the Act is implemented and to work effectively with other agencies such as Health and Social Services.
- 2.7 Three new statutory roles will be introduced as a part of the Act in January 2021, Additional Learning Co-ordinators (ALNCos) for every maintained school and PRU; an Early Years Lead Additional Needs Officer (EYALNO) for every local authority and a Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) for every Health Board in Wales.

- 2.8 The Act has made enforced changes to the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Part 6) in relation to Children who are Looked After (CLA).
- 2.9 In preparation the LAs across the South East Wales consortia region (SEWC) are working together to ensure that there is a coherent and collaborative approach to the implementation of the Act and associated guidance (ALN Code) through the development of a regional implementation plan.
- 2.10 The region and the LA have identified a number of requirements of the Act which may impact upon successful implementation and compliance.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny committee note the current situation regarding the ALN Act and associated regulations and guidance. It is further recommended that scrutiny committee note the progress of the LA in implementing the Act and support the actions of the LA in moving forward

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the LA to ensure that the Act is implemented and to ensure effective working relationships with other agencies, supported by the regional ALN transformation lead. The LA must be able to meet the requirements of the Act and associated mandatory ALN Code.

5. REPORT

5.1 Background Information

- 5.2 The vision of the Welsh Government (WG) is to deliver a fully inclusive education system where:
- needs are identified early and all learners supported to reach their potential
 - professionals to be skilled and confident in identifying needs and deploying strategies to help learners overcome their barriers to learning.
- 5.3 LAs will be responsible for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) from 0 to 25, ensuring they can access suitable education and/or training, including compulsory education and specialist post-16 education or training where necessary this includes children who are electively home educated
- 5.4 A regional approach is considered a key guiding principle and therefore WG are supporting key practitioners being freed up to drive change. There is recognition that cluster arrangements will support sustainability and that there is a clear need to ensure join up between the ALN reform and the National Mission so that the enabling objectives can be addressed.
- 5.5 An essential element of the regional approach is the work with key partners (Health, Social Care and Third Sector).
- 5.6 The ALN Code is currently in draft form but it is clear that this will impose requirements on the governing bodies of maintained schools in Wales and FEIs in Wales, and on local authorities in Wales, in respect of decisions about whether a child or young person has ALN, the preparation, content, form, review and revision of individual development plans (IDPs and ceasing to maintain IDP). The Code is intended to describe and explain the duties and processes.
- 5.7 The ALN Act and draft Code make clear that each area of need for a child cannot be seen in

isolation and an holistic approach is advocated where all of a young person's needs are met, accompanied by a single unified plan, the individual development plan (IDP). Therefore planning to meet children's education, health and social care needs have to be considered as a whole with agencies planning together.

- 5.8 The ALN Code will impose mandatory requirements on LAs in respect of:
- information and advice services
 - independent advocacy services
 - the preparation, content, form, review and revision of individual development plans (IDPs)
 - ceasing to maintain IDPs.
- 5.9 IDPs will replace statements of special educational needs (SEN) and individual education plans (IEPs) for learners currently supported through Early Years Action/School Action or Early Years Action Plus/School Action Plus. Where required, the school will decide whether the child or young person has additional learning needs (ALN) and, if so, put an IDP in place. Schools can refer such decisions to the local authority if:
- determining the extent and nature of the young person's ALN, or the additional learning provision (ALP) that they require, is beyond the school's capability
 - it would not be reasonable for the school itself to secure the required provision.
- 5.10 The ALN Code will also impose mandatory requirements on the governing body of a maintained school in Wales in respect of decisions about ALN, the preparation, content, form, review and revision of IDPs, and ceasing to maintain IDPs.
- 5.11 These duties will also apply to further education institutions (FEIs) who can refer a young person's requirement for ALP back to the LA if the provision required is beyond the capability of the institution to provide, or if the provision cannot be secured by the FEI.
- 5.12 Regionally Caerphilly LA are currently leading on the development of a matrix that will ensure clarity and consistency regarding thresholds for the developments of IDPs, and link to provision mapping in schools.
- 5.13 In relation to children looked after (CLA) and working with Social Services, it will be essential that departments work together to plan changes and transitions particularly where children have an ALN and therefore an IDP that would form part of the Personal Education Plan (PEP). Initial indications are the LA will be required to maintain the IDP for CLA who are identified with an ALN.
- 5.14 In relation to children educated outside of a maintained school e.g. EOTAS or EHE initial indications are that where there is an identified ALN the IDP must be maintained by the LA.
- 5.15 Local authorities and further education institutions (FEIs) can request that the health service considers whether there's a relevant treatment or service likely to be of benefit in addressing the learner's ALN. If there is, the health service must secure it.
- 5.16 LAs must provide information for children to ensure they have information about the new system, ensure there is clear information available regarding rights of appeal, and make arrangements for dispute resolution.

5.17 Presently feedback from WG indicates that there are predicted to be savings associated with a more effective system; however, there is likely to be an increased cost over the three year implementation. (2021 – 2024).

5.18 Regional working

5.19 The SEWC region has an implementation plan with four key areas of work (early years, schools, post 16 and collaboration) which includes the links between the ALN Act and Curriculum reform, the revised Excellence in Teaching and Leadership Framework and professional standards. There is therefore an essential link with the consortia (EAS).

5.20 The region is also developing the cluster approach to address one of the key areas linked to supporting schools. A school readiness survey has been developed in order to support planning, delivery and self evaluation, regional and cluster ALNCo's have been appointed to support the completion of the readiness surveys and the development and implementation of a training plan.

5.21 The WG has provided the region with extra resource, to enable current ALNCo's to undertake the accredited National Middle Leadership qualification, in collaboration with the EAS. Key priorities have identified across SEWC schools following completion and evaluation of the readiness survey across schools.

5.22 Each LA has identified a lead for one of the strategic priorities who is responsible for overseeing developments. Information is reviewed against the priorities on a monthly basis and the implementation plan is updated accordingly.

5.23 The current plan shows the following areas of work that are completed or underway:

- A regional training plan (7 modules) has been developed and is being delivered for early years settings
- Additional training has been identified for staff in early years settings
- PCP approaches are being embedded across settings
- Excellent transition practices and planning are being identified
- Responsibilities for the Early Years Additional Learning Needs lead officers (EYALNO) have been identified
- An early year's readiness survey has been developed and is being shared with all settings once they have completed the training modules.
- A multiagency group has been established to support planning across the priorities – lead links for health and social care have been identified
- A Health readiness survey has been devised
- PCP training has been delivered to colleagues from health
- Schools readiness surveys have been completed for 100% schools and areas for development identified in cluster action plans.
- Regional ALNCOs are in place
- Cluster Lead ALNCOs are in place and have undertaken specific professional learning in change management to support their role
- Excellent mainstream practice is being identified and shared
- A professional learning offer has been developed for ALNCOs and aspiring ALNCOs
- PCP practice is being embedded across schools
- PC reviews are taking place in many schools
- Training has been provided to Governors
- A Post 16 multi-agency steering group meets monthly to influence developments in the further education sector.(Coleg Gwent and Coleg Cymoedd)
- An ALN training offer has been developed for post 16 staff including ASD awareness; supporting HI pupils; and effective transition
- An enhanced transition (post 16 and post 19) pilot programme is being trialled with 1 secondary school, a PRU and a resource base

• The Special Schools cluster are identifying possible learner destinations and assisting

- the colleges in developing universal and additional provision.
- Planning for regional implementation of revised documents (IDPs/statements / reports) is underway
- The development of a matrix to identify criteria for school-based and LA-based IDPs is underway
- Parental engagement sessions have been delivered by SNAP this term
- Regional ALNCo forums are in place
- The SEWC ALN web-site is in development and will be ready in mid-December 19. All resources, information, processes etc. will be available on the web-site including good practice films and input from other partners including Health and SNAP

5.24 In relation to the above Caerphilly officers are:

- leading on the early years priority
- leading on the development of new reports and statements which have been shared across the region
- leading on developments within the statutory officers group
- leading on developing a matrix to identify IDP thresholds
- contributing to the educational psychology and partnership groups (Gwent Consortia Meeting (GCM) chaired by the DECLO and the Social Care ALN Leads group)

5.25 Activity and progress across Caerphilly

5.26 The LA has a readiness survey which is used to set targets, evaluate progress and identify next steps. The LA readiness survey is reviewed termly and an action plan is in place to ensure that areas for development are identified with timescales for completion. As an example a steering group has been established to take forward a plan to:

- ensure that there are clear timescales for the change to new documentation
- oversee the development of termly consultation forums with parents and children
- oversee the development of relevant literature for children and parents / carers
- review school readiness surveys
- track progress in relation to specific groups (EHE and CLA)

Officers in Caerphilly also support:

- a local SENCO forum with a focus on ALN
- provide targeted support to schools

5.27 Progress across the regional plan is good with the 5 inclusions leads working collaboratively with the transformation lead to take forward the targeted areas. Locally Caerphilly has adopted a proactive approach and is focusing on developing key processes and procedures to support schools.

5.28 Implications

5.29 The Act creates the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision by creating a unified process for children and young people 0-25. This means an extension of the age range for LA education services.

5.30 There are a number of statutory roles indicated by the WG which may have implications for the LA and for schools. There may be a need to redesign existing services and processes in order to ensure compliance with the Act and ALN code and this in turn will have workforce development implications and an associated cost.

5.31 Roles and responsibilities as indicated in the Act and draft Code suggest there are likely to be capacity issues in the education directorate linked to work within early years, statutory responsibilities, demand for educational psychologists, responsibilities linked to CLA, responsibilities linked to EOTAS and elective home education and post 16 provision.

- 5.32 There is no indication that additional funding will be available from WG to support with the development of statutory roles or the broader workforce development over and above the initial investment linked to the transformation.
- 5.33 Engagement between schools and LA and with other agencies will be crucial in order to ensure compliance with the Act and to ensure that where there are conflicting priorities, areas of responsibility are clear. This is also crucial in the context of the appeal process.
- 5.34 Next Steps**
- 5.35 The LA must be prepared to implement new systems and processes in line with the ALN Act and Code, following any implementation guidance. The current timeline for implementation has been changed and is now indicated to begin from September 2021 with new statutory roles in place from January 2021.
- 5.36 It is our intention that the LA and schools will continue to view September 2020 as a key deadline. That is whilst maintaining compliance with the existing systems (SEN Code of Practice) roles and responsibilities will be developed / aligned with WG expectations, processes and procedures will be aligned with the Act and draft Code, a person centred approach will be embedded across schools and education providers and working arrangements between agencies will be developed in order to align with the Act.
- 5.37 The SEWC region will continue to follow the priorities as identified through the implementation plan.
- 5.38 In relation to Caerphilly the focus is on:
- ensuring that the regional priorities are translated into practice locally
 - promoting joint working with other agencies
 - ensuring there is clear understanding of the implications of the Act across education providers
 - ensuring effective working relationships with parents and carers
 - developing services flexibly to meet needs
 - ensuring processes and procedures are developed in advance of implementation date(s)
 - ensuring any other developments within the LA (additional support delegation, funding of SRB's) are in line with the Act.
 - joint working with the EAS

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 In considering the recommendations the following assumptions have been made:
- The LA will ensure that the Act is implemented
 - The LA will consider how to develop services, systems and processes to comply with its duty to meet the requirements of the Act and associated Code.
 - The LA will continue to develop effective working relationships parents, carers, education providers and other agencies ensuring successful implementation of the Act
 - The LA will ensure the effective operation of the current SEN statutory system whilst preparing for the new ALN statutory framework.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

The report content contributes or impacts the Corporate Well-being Objectives as follows:

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all through offering appropriate provision for the most complex learners

Objective 6 – providing support at an early stage thus reducing the long term need for statutory services. Focusing on person centred approaches and partnership working.

The report also contributes to the Caerphilly Attainment Strategy as linked to Well Being Objective 1.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 The ALN Act contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act and more specifically for the principles noted below.

Collaboration – a fundamental principal of the Act focuses on improving collaboration and creating a unified system.

Long term – the Act focuses on meeting the needs of children from 0-25

Prevention – the focus of the Act on identification of need and ensuring appropriate provision to meet needs.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) process is adhered to at all times

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Indications from WG are that following the period of transformation there is no additional funding to support the responsibilities of LA's linked to the Act for example workforce development, increased age ranges, provision, placements or any support linked to appeals to The Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW). Until the ALN Code is finalised and further details are known, costs over the implementation period and how these can be funded, cannot be estimated. Cost pressures are likely to be linked to central teams and schools.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are a number of statutory roles indicated by WG as identified in 2.7 above, which have implications for the LA and for schools (5.30 / 5.31 above). The timeline indicates that these roles should be in place from January 2021.
- 11.2 In order to ensure compliance with the Act and ALN Code there will be a need to redesign existing services as there are likely to be capacity issues in the education directorate linked to work within early years, statutory responsibilities, demand for educational psychologists, responsibilities linked to CLA, responsibilities linked to EOTAS and elective home education and post 16 provision. This will have workforce development implications and an associated cost.

- 11.3 There is no indication that additional funding will be available from WG to support with the development of statutory roles or the broader workforce development over and above the initial investment linked to the transformation.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

13. STATUTORY POWER

Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Education Act 1996

Equality Act 2010

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Author: Sarah Ellis (Lead for Inclusion and ALN)

Consultees: Christina Harray, Interim Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services & Housing
Cllr Philippa Marsden Leader
Councillor Teresa Parry Chair of Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Carol Andrews, Vice Chair Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager -Education, Lifelong Learning & Schools
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Lisa Downey, Personnel Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Steve Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement and Acting Section 151 Officer
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager
Tracey Pead, ALN Transformation Lead (TCBC)
Debbie Harteveld, Managing Director EAS
Kath Bevan, Equity and Wellbeing Lead EAS
Statutory Officers
Principal Educational Psychologist(s)



INFORMATION REPORT FOR EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION – PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2021/22

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consult Members on the School Admission Arrangements for the academic year 2021/2022.
- 1.2 To provide Scrutiny Members with the opportunity to comment on the proposals as part of the consultation process, prior to recommendations being considered by Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Local Authority in its capacity as Admissions Authority is required to consult on their proposed Admission Arrangements. The consultation period for the 2021/22 Admission Arrangements will end on the 1st March, 2020.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Scrutiny Members are asked to consider the proposed Admission Arrangements and provide any relevant comments as part of the consultation process.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that the proposed Admission Arrangements are approved and that they can be implemented in readiness for Admissions in September 2021.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Members will recall that they are consulted annually regarding the proposed Admission Arrangements. There are no proposed changes to the Admission Arrangements for 2021/22 (attached).

5.2 The consultation process commenced in November and will end on 1st March in accordance with the School Admissions Code. Consultees include all Headteachers, all Chairs of Governors and neighbouring local authorities. In addition, the Admission Arrangements are shared with the authority's Admission Forum, and of course, the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions in this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023

7.2 Service Improvement Plans

7.3 Admissions Development Plan.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that:

- **Long Term** - Forecasting of pupil numbers has been utilised to identify the demand for school places to ensure sufficient Educational places in our schools. This information has been used to ensure that there are adequate places in schools to accommodate catchment pupils.
- **Prevention** – By working closely with colleagues and other departments to ensure that there is adequate provision in schools to accommodate catchment pupils.
- **Integration** – These proposals will allow pupils to integrate within their local community. These proposals are also part of a strategy to promote Welsh Language and Culture.
- **Collaboration** – To work collaboratively with all relevant Stakeholders.
- **Involvement** – Through the consultation process the Council will ensure that there is full engagement with all relevant stakeholders e.g. schools and other Local Authorities.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Admission Arrangements for 2021/22 have been assessed and no negative impact has been identified. The arrangements note compliance with current Equalities, Human Rights and Welsh Language legislation.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 The Admission Forum meets annually to review all Admission Arrangements and procedures.

12.2 Other consultees are outlined below.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 The School Admissions Code (2013) and the School Admissions Appeals Code (2013).

Author: Emma Strathdee, Manager Admissions, Administration and Customer Services

Consultees: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Christina Harray, Interim Chief Executive
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services & Housing
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Communities
Councillor Barbara Jones, Cabinet Member for Education & Achievement
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair, Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair, Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Steve Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement Services
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager

Appendix 1 Admission Arrangements 2021-2022.

Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Corfforaethol

Directorate of Education and Corporate Services

Admission Arrangements for Academic Year September 2021 to July 2022



A greener place
Man gwyrddach



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Primary & Secondary Education Admission & Transfer Arrangements

In line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, subsequent legislative updates and Welsh Government's (WG's) Schools Admissions Code, these admission arrangements will aim to ensure that:

- Parent's preference for the schools of their choice is considered in the context of a legislative framework, which has regard to the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources;
- Admissions criteria are clear, fair and objective, for the benefit of all children including children with special educational needs or with disabilities;
- Local admission arrangements contribute to improving standards;
- The Local Authority (LA) consults with neighbouring Admission authorities and co-ordinates arrangements, including the rapid reintegration wherever reasonable of children who have been excluded from other schools;
- Parents have easy access to helpful admissions information;
- The LA's admission arrangements seek to achieve full compliance with all relevant legislation and guidance, including legislation on infant class sizes and equal opportunities (Equalities Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Welsh Language Act 1993) and take full account of the guidance in the Code issued by the Welsh Government;
- The Equality Act 2010 and Caerphilly County Borough Council's (CCBC) Strategic Equality Plan emphasises the legal general duty the Council and its partners have to:-
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
 - Promote equal opportunities.
 - Promote good relations and mutual respect.
- This Council will work actively against discrimination and seek to create equal access to its services for all, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, language, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

Choosing a School

The entry of children to schools is controlled and administered by an 'Admissions Authority'. In the case of Community Schools, this is the Caerphilly County Borough Council (the LA). In the case of the one Voluntary Aided School (St. Helen's Roman Catholic Primary School), the Admissions Authority is the Governing Body of the school. Within the County Borough, each school has an area that it traditionally serves called the "catchment area". In line with legislation, LA's must allow all parents the opportunity to express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend.

Pupils who reside within a defined catchment area of a school do not have an automatic right to attend that school. A written application must be made and the placements will be allocated in accordance with the LA's admissions procedure.

Parents may exercise their right to express a preference at the following times:

- on admission to an infant school or the infant department of a primary school. Nursery admissions are dealt with in Section 1.2.
- on transfer from infant to junior school or infant school to junior department of a primary school.
- on transfer from junior or primary to secondary school.
- when parents wish to transfer their child from one school to another.

Parents may also express a preference for their child to attend a Voluntary Aided School or a Foundation School.

The LA (in the case of Community Schools) and the School Governing Body (in the case of Voluntary Aided Schools) must comply with any preference, which is expressed, provided there is room within the school. However the decision to admit pupils, must take account of:-

- the overall provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources.
- whether it is a co-educational or single sex school.
- Section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (and subsequent legislative updates and WGs schools Admissions Code), which also allows an admission authority to refuse to comply with parental preference for a period of two years following a second or subsequent exclusion.
- where to admit would be incompatible with the duty to meet Infant class size limit of 30 because the admission would require measures to be taken to comply with those limits which would cause prejudice to efficient education or efficient use of resources.

The local catchment areas for schools providing primary education are normally grouped together to form a linked catchment area for each maintained secondary school.

Admission or attendance of pupils at the feeder junior / primary school does not provide automatic entry to the chosen secondary school. All parents are required to complete admission forms at the appropriate time.

All schools within the LA aim to provide their pupils with an educational opportunity, which is best suited to each individual child. Some pupils will, however, have learning needs requiring special educational provision. In some instances parents will already be receiving specialist support and guidance regarding the choice of school for their child.

All parents, however, are encouraged to discuss possible areas of concern with their local Headteacher who may then seek specialist advice.

Welsh Medium Schools

All of the above arrangements apply equally to Welsh Medium schools within the Authority. Admission to Welsh medium primary schools is not dependant upon the parents or pupils being fluent Welsh speakers.

There are currently 11 Welsh medium primary schools within the LA whose catchment areas cover the entire LA's boundary and are not restricted to the catchment areas of the local English medium school. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni will provide Welsh medium secondary education to all CCBC resident pupils, subject to parental preference.

Admission Limit

All maintained schools will admit pupils up to their admissions number.

A child will normally be offered admission to the school of the parents' preference unless applications exceed the admission number, when this occurs all applications for that school will be assessed against the oversubscription criteria.

The normal ages for admission to CCBC schools are:-

- Age 3/4 in Nursery
- Age 4/5 in Infant and Primary Schools
- Age 7/8 in Junior Schools;

- Age 11/12 in Secondary Schools.

The LA's policy is to provide all 3/4 year old children in the Caerphilly County Borough an entitlement to a funded part-time nursery place at their local infant or primary school.

Oversubscription Criteria (these apply to all admissions to oversubscribed schools)

1. Looked After Children (children in public care) and those who were previously Looked After Children.
2. Those children who live in the school's catchment area on or before the published closing date.
3. Children with siblings (brothers and sisters) living in the same household attending the school in September 2021. The sibling must be of statutory school age. A sibling is a child who is the brother/sister, half brother/sister (children who share on common parent/carer), step brother/sister where two children are related by marriage. This definition also includes adopted or fostered children living at the same address.
5. After taking account of the above categories, priority will be based on the closeness to the school measured by the LA's G.I.S (Geographical Information System) database. Distance is measured from the nearest entrance or gate of the home to the nearest gate or entrance of the school. If the LA has the situation where any home addresses calculate the same distance then a trundle wheel will be used to establish the nearest address. When considering whether a child lives in a school's catchment area, the address considered is that of the parent or legal guardian, irrespective of a family's domestic arrangements i.e. the address of another relative or childminder etc. must not be given. In certain cases it may be necessary to provide evidence relating to the child(ren) in question, to show the home address of the child(ren).

Children of UK service personnel will be treated as in catchment if their application form is accompanied by an official Ministry of Defence (MOD) letter declaring a definite return date and confirmation of the new address.

Pupils from outside the school's catchment area will be admitted in accordance with parental preference if the Admission Number of the school, class or unit has not been reached and, if selection is necessary, the criteria shown above will be used.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the week then the home address will be determined as the address where a child lives for the majority of the week (e.g. 3 out of the 5 school days). Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes.

Multiple Birth Children (e.g. twins or triplets)

If when applying the oversubscription criteria the last child to be admitted is one of a multiple birth e.g. twin or triplet then the LA will also admit the other sibling(s).

Waiting Lists

Following the allocation of places during the normal admission round any pupil that is refused admission to an oversubscribed school will remain on a waiting list for placement until the 30th September of that school year. Placements will then be allocated according to the Authority's oversubscription criteria.

After the 30th September parents will need to make a new application for admission to their preferred school.

Primary Education

Every child is required by law to receive full time education from the beginning of the school term after his/her fifth birthday. In CCBC, however, all children are able to start school full time at the beginning of the school year (September) in which they become five i.e. between the 1st September and the 31st August. Parents are able to defer the start of a child until the term following their fifth birthday.

All children are able to attend school on a part time basis in the September following their third birthday. Children between the ages of 3/4-11 are recognised as pupils receiving primary education. In Caerphilly County Borough, primary education is provided either in separate infant or junior schools, or in primary schools with one complete 3/4 -11 age range.

Reduction of Infant Class Sizes

Choosing a school for the first time for a young child is especially important, both for parents and for children themselves. In accordance, with Infant Class Size Legislation, infant classes at a maintained school should contain no more than 30 pupils where a teaching session is managed by a single qualified teacher (or where the session is managed by more than one qualified teacher, no more than 30 pupils for every teacher).

Admission to an Early Years Placement at a Nursery School

Children born between the 1st September and the 31st March or Good Friday depending on which date falls the latest maybe entitled to an Early Years placement (term after their 3rd birthday) at their local Primary/Infant school dependent on availability.

Where a school has reached their Admission Number in their current nursery and where the in catchment pupils exceed 70%, only pupils who reside within the schools catchment area will be admitted into an Early Years placement.

Please note that admission into an Early Years place in either the Spring or Summer term does not entitle your child to continue education in the nursery year at the school. An application for admission into the nursery year at the school will need to be made at the relevant time.

Admission to Nursery Year

The number of places available in a nursery year is set by the LA and the decision whether to admit your child will be taken in accordance with the LA's guidelines, which follow.

Pupils who are admitted to a nursery year, will not have an “automatic” right to continued education within that school. A formal application must be made for entry into the reception year at the appropriate time. Applications for admissions should be made before **18th December 2020. For any assistance, please contact the School Admissions Team on 01443 864870, or alternatively by email to schooladmissions@caerphilly.gov.uk**

Admission to an Infant School or Infant Department within a Primary School

Pupils who attain the age of five during the school year may be admitted to an infant school/department, at the commencement of the school year in September.

Pupils admitted to a separate infant school will not have an 'automatic' right to continued education at the feeder Junior School which serves the same catchment area. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate such pupils, a formal application must be made for transfer to the Junior school at the appropriate time.

Applications for admissions should be made before **18th September 2020**. For any assistance, please contact the School Admissions Team on 01443 864870, or alternatively by email to schooladmissions@caerphilly.gov.uk

Transfer to Junior Schools

Children enter or transfer to a Junior School on the first day of the Autumn term following their seventh birthday. In Primary Schools the infant and junior sections are simply departments of the same school and children progress through the school from the infants to juniors without having to transfer elsewhere.

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate such pupils, a formal application must be made for transfer to the Junior school at the appropriate time.

Applications for admissions should be made before **18th September 2020**. For any assistance, please contact the School Admissions Team on 01443 864870, or alternatively by email to schooladmissions@caerphilly.gov.uk

Changing Schools: Primary Education

Changing schools during primary education is a significant step for your child to take. In the case of moving the family home, such a decision may well be a necessity and you will need to contact your local school or the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning for assistance. If, however, you would like your child to transfer from one school to another, please contact your present Headteacher first. Should you still wish to proceed with these transfer arrangements, please visit the Caerphilly.gov website, search for School Admissions and click to 'Apply for a place at school'.

If there is a suitable vacancy, your child will be admitted to the school. Parents should note, however, that classes may include more than one age group and the Headteacher will have the task of locating your child in the most appropriate class.

Admission to Secondary Schools

Children normally transfer from primary school to secondary school at the beginning of the school year following their eleventh birthday. **If your child was born between 1st September 2009 and 31st August 2010 she/he will transfer to secondary school in September 2021.** Headteachers of primary schools will be able to inform parents of the secondary school which their children should normally attend. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate pupils, an application must be made for transfer to secondary schools at the appropriate time. Applications for admissions should be made before 23rd October, 2020.

Changing Secondary School

Changing secondary schools is a significant step for your child to take. In the case of moving the family home, such a decision may well be a necessity and you will need to contact your local school or the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning for assistance. If however, you would like your child to transfer from one secondary school to another, please contact your present Headteacher first. Should you still wish to proceed with these transfer arrangements; you must contact the Directorate of Education and Corporate Services for advice in making your application, which will then be required in writing. In considering your request for transfer, the LA will review the number of pupils in the year group relevant to your child. If the child is in years 10 or 11, the range of subject options chosen may also be a factor. If that particular year has not reached the school's admissions number, then your child will be admitted to the school. Parents should note, however, that curriculum option choices may vary from school to school.

Applying for a Place

When you apply for a place at a particular school, you must complete the relevant application form, which is available at the school. You must apply by the closing dates shown below for admission in September 2021. The LA will inform you whether or not it is possible for your child to attend your preferred school. Each school produces a prospectus, which contains relevant information including school aims and educational beliefs, the organisation of the school and curriculum opportunities, including out of school activities. This school prospectus is available from the Headteacher.

Timetable for admissions to schools September 2021

Admission to Secondary School

Admission Forms distributed to parents	14 th September, 2020
Forms returned to LA	23 rd October, 2020
Parents notified of outcome	1 st March, 2021

Admission to Primary School

Admission Forms distributed to parents	9 th November, 2020
Forms returned to LA	18 th December, 2020
Parents notified of outcome	16 th April, 2021

Admission to Nursery

Admission Forms distributed to parents	Available from September, 2020
Forms returned to LA	26 th February, 2021
Parents notified of outcome	3 rd May, 2021

Late Applications

Any applications that are received after the closing date for admission will be refused if the school is oversubscribed unless the family has just moved into the catchment area and the application is received before the offer of places are made. If the application is received after the places have been offered and documented evidence is provided to demonstrate that the family have moved into the catchment area of the school the pupil will be given higher priority on the waiting list. Places will then be allocated using the Authority's oversubscription criteria.

Withdrawing Offers of Places

The offer of a school place will be withdrawn on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application being received (e.g. falsely claiming to reside within a catchment area of a school).

What Happens if your Child is Refused a Place?

In the vast majority of cases children are offered places at their parents' first choice of school. If, however, your child is unable to gain admission, you will need to decide whether you are willing to accept a place offered at a different school, or whether you wish to continue with your first application. If you choose the latter course, you may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. This Independent Appeal Panel will judge whether the school is full and, should that be the case, whether the parent's application is so strong that the child should still be offered a place. Before you appeal, please consider the LA's admissions criteria (outlined previously on page 5). It should be noted that Nursery age pupils have no right of appeal.

Registering your Appeal

You may make a formal appeal against the LA's decision, but this must be received within 28 calendar days of you being notified of the decision not to admit your child to your chosen school. You should forward this appeal in writing, to the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning. The LA will refer the appeal to the Council's Legal Department who will arrange for the appeal to be heard by an Independent Appeal Panel and will set a time and place for the hearing. The Panel will afford parents an opportunity of appearing and making their representations (oral and/or written). Parents are advised that agencies such as SNAP & ACE are available to provide assistance in making appeals.

Parents are able to seek admission to an alternative school while they are pursuing an appeal.

Parents, however, are advised that: -

1. they may elect not to attend the appeal meeting and, instead, allow the appeal to be considered on a written statement;
2. the appeal will be decided on the information available if, having failed to give a reasonable explanation, they do not appear;
3. they will be given at least fourteen days (from the date of posting) written notice of the meeting of the Appeal Panel;
3. they are welcome to be accompanied by a friend, or represented by a solicitor, but that, in the latter case, the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning should be informed at least seven days before the hearing. Please note that a separate Appeal Panel hears appeals against decisions of the Governing Body of a Voluntary Aided or Foundation School. Guidance on such an appeal should, therefore, be sought from the school concerned. Please note that limitations will be placed on the powers of the appeal panel to allow appeals against the refusal to admit a child to a school where infant class size legislation applies. The LA will not consider a second admission application unless there is a significant change in circumstances (which will need to be evidenced).

Sixth Form Admissions

The admission of Sixth Form pupils to Community Schools is determined by individual schools. Therefore applications should be made directly to the school.

Disability Discrimination

The Council has in place an Accessibility Strategy, which details how the Council will meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and preceding Disability Discrimination legislation.

The Strategy covers all aspects of accessibility including access to premises, curriculum and written information. The strategy contains the Council's plans to improve physical access to school premises across the borough to minimise the barriers to disabled pupils accessing education. In a number of cases due to the topography of a school site, it may not be deemed accessible for a child with a physical disability. In such cases parents/guardians will be provided with the details of the nearest accessible school which is able to meet the child's needs.

Admissions forms are screened by Education in order to highlight any children with medical condition/physical disability. Parents will be contacted at the earliest opportunity to discuss the child's needs and a suitable school placement will be considered.

The School and Officers of the Council work closely with parents to ensure that detailed assessments are in place to support the inclusion of pupils, where possible within their chosen school.

Usage of Accommodation

The LA continually reviews the usage of accommodation at all Infant, Junior and Primary schools and subsequently updates the Capacity and Admission Number to reflect this review.