

NOTICE OF MEETING

Children, Young People & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 30 September 2015, 7.30 pm

**Council Chamber, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell,
RG12 1AQ**

To: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

Councillor Mrs Birch (Chairman), Councillor Brossard (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Ms Hayes, Mrs McCracken, Skinner, Virgo and Mrs Temperton

Church Representatives (Voting in respect of Education matters only)

Two Vacancies

Parent Governor Representatives (Voting in respect of Education matters only)

Mr R Briscoe and Mrs L Wellsted

Teachers' Representatives (Non-Voting)

Miss V Richardson

Children's Social Care Representative (Non-Voting)

Ms C Barrett

cc: Substitute Members of the Panel

Councillors Allen, Mrs Ingham, Ms Merry, Peacey and Porter

ALISON SANDERS

Director of Corporate Services

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Children, Young People & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Wednesday 30 September 2015, 7.30 pm
Council Chamber, Easthampstead House, Town Square,
Bracknell, RG12 1AQ

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AGENDA

A pre-meeting for Panel Members will be held at 7pm in the 4th Floor Meeting Room 1, Easthampstead House.

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute members.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 10 June 2015. The actions arising from the previous Panel meeting are appended to the minutes.

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3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Members are requested to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interest, including the existence and nature of the Party Whip, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or an affected interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Any other items, which pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman decides are urgent.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive submissions from members of the public which have been submitted in advance in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

6. CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY PANEL

To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 24 June 2015.

9 - 16

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

7. QUARTERLY SERVICE REPORT

To consider the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the Quarterly Service Report for the first quarter of 2015/16 (April to June 2015) relating to Children, Young People and Learning giving particular attention to outcomes of Ofsted school inspections, social worker salary bandings and free school places.

Please bring the previously circulated Quarterly Service Report to the meeting. Copies are available on request and attached to this agenda if viewed online.

Panel members are asked to give advance notice to the Overview and Scrutiny Team of any questions relating to the QSR where possible.

8. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

The 2014/15 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer service is attached for consideration.

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OVERVIEW AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

9. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

A report in respect of Elective Home Education is attached for consideration.

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10. SUBSTANCE MISUSE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT - EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

To consider the Executive response to the report of the review of substance misuse previously undertaken by a working group of the Panel.

57 - 66

11. WORKING GROUP UPDATE REPORT

To receive an update in respect of the working group of the Panel reviewing child sexual exploitation.

67 - 68

HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT

12. EXECUTIVE KEY AND NON-KEY DECISIONS

To consider scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

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INFORMATION ITEMS

13. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

The above Annual Report is attached primarily for information.

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14. CONSULTATIONS ON CHANGES TO ANNUAL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS 2017/18 AND SCHOOL DESIGNATED AREAS

To note details of the above consultations.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be held at 7.30pm on 11 January 2016 . There will be a pre-meeting for members at 7.00pm.

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
10 JUNE 2015
7.30 - 9.05 PM**



Present:

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Mrs McCracken, Virgo and Mrs Temperton
Ms C Barrett, Children's Social Care Representative
Mrs L Wellsted, Parent Governor Representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Brossard, Ms Hayes and Skinner
Mr R Briscoe, Parent Governor Representative
Miss V Richardson, Teachers' Representative

Executive Member:

Councillor Dr Barnard

Also Present:

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)
Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care
Dr Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People & Learning
Christine McInnes, Chief Officer: Learning & Achievement
Councillor Sarah Peacey

63. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Birch be elected Chairman of the Panel for the municipal year 2015/16.

COUNCILLOR MRS BIRCH IN THE CHAIR

64. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Brossard be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the municipal year 2015/16.

65. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

The Panel noted the presence of the following substitute member:

Councillor Allen for Councillor Ms Hayes

66. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 4 March 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

67. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indication that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

68. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

69. Public Participation

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

70. Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel

The Panel received the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP) held on 25 March 2015.

71. Director's Introductory Briefing and Service Plan 2015/16

The Director of Children, Young People and Learning gave an introductory briefing covering the Department's role and functions and the Service Plan for the period April to September 2015. The short duration Service Plan was a roll forward from the previous annual plan, with a new Service Plan due to be developed for October 2015 incorporating the manifesto policies set out during the recent elections.

The Director's presentation detailed the clear responsibilities of each of the three branches into which the Department was organised: Children's Social Care; Learning and Achievement; and Strategy, Resources and Early Intervention. A summary of the services which each branch provided was included, together with details of the performance indicators used to assist in measuring how those services were delivered. Particular reference was made to the Children and Young People's Plan: Creating Opportunities – A Joint Strategic Plan for Children, Young People and Families in Bracknell Forest 2014 – 2017 published in April 2014. This Plan was developed by the Children and Young People's Partnership comprising the Council's key partners and stakeholders including the Local Safeguarding Children Board and was informed by local and national research and significant consultation and engagement with children and young people.

Arising from answers to questions the Panel noted:

- With reference to school places, there continued to be an issue in Ascot Heath where there were insufficient places at the Junior School to take all those wishing to transfer from the Infant School. Earlier attempts to resolve the situation had been unsuccessful and it was suggested that each of the Governing Bodies should be pressed further to reconsider the options in consultation with the Council, parents and the local community.
- Further explanation would be circulated regarding the performance indicators NI112 (Under 18 conception rate), L158 (Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 60% of pupils achieve level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2) and NI092 (Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest). Further information concerning L207 and L208 (Analysis of schools

performance data to track pupil progress to plan and implement appropriate interventions) would be included in the updated Service Plan.

- Regarding NI052, although take up of school lunches appeared low, it was above target and was often related to pupils opting for a packed lunch in order to undertake other activities rather than a reflection on the quality of the food.
- The key action to review the structure and design of Children's Social Care in the light of new legislation including the Children and Families Act 2014 had been completed and reported to the Executive. This would be an appropriate item for the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel.

The Panel noted the report and presentation.

72. Quarterly Service Report

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the Quarterly Service Report (QSR) for the fourth quarter of 2014/15 (January to March 2015) relating to Children Young People and Learning. The QSR began by reflecting on a busy year with many successful achievements and, focusing on Quarter 4, set out some the main events and statistical highlights for each of the three branches of the department.

The Panel took particular note of the following:

- There had been no Ofsted inspection of the Local Authority since October 2011 (although Local Government Association and peer reviews had been carried out). The next review was due to take place before October 2015.
- The outcomes for Ofsted inspections in schools had generally continued on an upward trajectory. From the detailed note circulated at the meeting it was pleasing to see that Ranelagh School had retained its outstanding outcome, while Wildmoor Heath and Sandy Lane had both made positive progress. Reports on inspections at St Michael's Sandhurst and Harmans Water were imminent.
- Headteacher recruitment for April/September 2015 had been very successful with nine appointments made and just two vacancies remaining to be filled. A note containing details of all teacher recruitment was circulated, which confirmed that Bracknell Forest was an attractive place to live and work, with good fields of strong applicants for most positions.
- A campaign to recruit more foster carers had been launched – the target was to find at least 10 new foster carers.
- There was a substantial ongoing workload to convert all Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements to Education, Health and Care Plans by April 2018 to comply with statutory requirements, making a significant demand on capacity.
- Performance on NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) prevention was strong, with the February 2015 figure of 3.77% (132) down from 4.2% (144) in the previous year.
- The Chief Officer: Children's Social Care summarised the work of the four divisions (each with its own Head of Service) comprising the Children's Social Care Branch.
- Given the national shortage of qualified and experienced social workers, recruitment and retention of staff was a real issue for Bracknell Forest. A Programme Board had been established to develop proposals to recruit and retain, market premium payments had been put in place, most management posts were now held by permanent staff and good succession processes had

been established. This had helped stabilise the situation and reduce the number of vacancies but more work remained to be done.

- The number of Looked After Children had reduced from 114 to 104, with Bracknell Forest figures lower than the average for the South East and much lower than the national average. A table illustrated the breakdown of the placements for the children, showing the majority in foster care or agency foster care. Further tables gave a résumé of the wards from which the Looked After Children originated and details of where care had been provided by one or more social workers.
- The Education Welfare Service had successfully negotiated a contract to provide services to schools in Hampshire but this would not affect its ability to serve Bracknell Forest needs.
- A new policy and procedures for Elective Home Education was being trialled over the summer term, with a view to introducing a final version for the new academic year. With 60 children in the Borough now educated in this way, the Panel requested that further information about this be provided at a future meeting.
- It appeared that unauthorised absences of pupils from school on account of holidays had declined.

The Panel received responses to their questions and comments and thanked the officers for their interesting reports and presentations.

73. Update on the Implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014

The Panel received a report from the Director of Children, Young People & Learning with an update on the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 which had come into effect in September 2014. This new legislation was transforming the way that services in relation to children and young people, especially those with special educational needs or disability (SEND), were delivered.

The report summarised the key requirements of the Act under heading for each Part, with a résumé of progress over the first year, as follows:

- Part 1: Adoption and Contact
- Part 2: Family Justice
- Part 3: Children and young people in England with special educational needs or disabilities
- Part 4: Childcare
- Part 5: Welfare of Children
- Part 6: The Children's Commissioner
- Parts 7, 8 and 9: Employment

The Panel noted that the most major changes were around special educational needs whereby the separate arrangements for children in schools and young people in post-16 institutions and training up to their 25th birthday were brought together and the integrated Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan would replace the Statement of Educational Needs. Bracknell Forest was one of only a third of local authorities to bring in new ways of working by the 1st September deadline. The substantial task of the transfer of all children and young people who currently had a Statement of Special Educational Needs to an EHC Plan would continue until April 2018.

The Panel noted the report and answers to a number of questions on matters of detail.

74. Next Review Topic/Working Group

Consideration was given to a report inviting the Panel to select its next policy review topic and establish a working group to undertake the review, having regard to the Panel Work Programme for 2015/16.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) A working group be established to review the Council's response to Child Sexual Exploitation, delivered in concert with Community Safety partner organisations.
- 2) Membership of the working group should comprise Councillors Mrs Birch, Mrs McCracken, Peacey and Mrs Temperton, together with Mrs Wellsted and any other interested members of the Panel not present.

4:30 – 5:00 pm was the preferred start time for meetings of the working group

75. Executive Forward Plan

The Panel noted the scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

In clarification of questions raised, the Panel noted:

- The process for appointing a sponsor for Binfield Learning Village as an Academy School had been agreed in line with the clear Government guidelines. Neither of the local schools had been in a position to adopt the Learning Village.
- The approval of a revised Larchwood Statement of Purpose for 2015-16 was a statutory requirement, which had to be carried out each year.
- A query in relation to the approval of the procurement plan for the expansion works at Great Hollands Primary School, which was subject to consultation with Headteacher, Governing Body, parents/carers and neighbours. The timescale of a decision date of 25 June 2015 and public consultation in July 2015 would be checked given the consultation requirements.

CHAIRMAN

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Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel 10 June 2015
Actions Arising

ITEM:	ACTION REQUIRED:	ACTION
9. Director's Introductory Briefing and Service Plan 2015/16	To provide an explanation of the -67.9% under 18 conception rate indicator (NI112).	The figure for teenage pregnancy shows the % reduction in the rates of teenage conceptions from the baseline established in 1998 when figures were very high. A figure of -67% is good, Bracknell Forest remains lower than the England and South East average for the reduced rates of teenage conceptions.
	To advise which school(s) have fewer than 60% of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2 (L158).	Crown Wood Primary School and Jennett's Park CE Primary School.
	To provide an explanation of the NI052.1 Primary Meals Target of 32% and Actual outcome of 36.7%.	The target is based on the uptake figure for the previous year (April 13 to March 14). Uptake has improved further this year following the introduction of universal infants free school meals (UFSM) for KS1 children from September 2014. The Council now has meal uptake data for the 8 months since September and understands the impact on uptake of UFSM. As a consequence the target for future years will be reviewed.
	To elaborate on the L207/208 target explaining why there is no target for primary schools, what the target is about and what it means.	The target refers to the analysis of primary school performance data and progress tracking. Each school has individual targets which are set annually.
10. QSR	To notify the Panel when the Private Fund Accounts of St. Michael's Easthampstead Primary School have been independently audited.	Confirmation that the audit has been undertaken has been received.
13. Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions Reference I054235	To consult parents/carers and neighbours on the Education Capital Programme for Great Hollands Primary School.	Full consultation is planned and in process within an established timescale.

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**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY
PANEL
24 JUNE 2015
5.00 - 7.18 PM**



Present:

Councillors Heydon (Chairman), Mrs Birch, Ms Hayes, Mrs Ingham and Mrs Temperton

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mrs McCracken

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Heydon be elected Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel for the municipal year 2015/16.

COUNCILLOR HEYDON IN THE CHAIR

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs McCracken be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel for the municipal year 2015/16.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

- Adopt Berkshire was a model of good practice for the future, particularly for smaller local authorities.
- There had not been any response from young people when a visit had been made by Member Services to the Leaving Care Team regarding elections and registering Care Leavers to vote. The Chairman suggested that this be tried again in the future.

Sarah Roberts gave an update received from Sharon Hickson, LAC Nurse, on the key themes in the statutory guidance, *Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children*, published by the Department for Education and Department of Health in March 2015.

Key themes:

- The statutory duty remained with the local authorities to ensure health assessments were arranged and regular reviews took place;

- A joint approach between Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), and providers was essential;
- There was a focus on the strength and difficulty questionnaire and its use in strategic planning as well as in the assessment of the child's health;
- The need for coordination of assessments and plans for children with special educational needs and aligning with the education, health and care plans was highlighted;
- Emotional and mental health of looked after children was a priority;
- Strategic planning was seen as key to ensuring the health needs of looked after children were met;
- Local Authorities should consider health when considering out of area placements, for example, how a child's health needs would be met;
- Local Authorities should audit themselves against the guidance.

Next steps:

- The leads within Social Care should read the guidance;
- Health of Looked After Children and Corporate Parenting Responsibilities on CPAP agenda for September 2015.

5. **Panel Announcements**

Introductions were made around the table. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mrs Ingham to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel.

Introduction to Peter Hodges, Head of Service for Looked After Children. Peter advised the Panel that A National Voice and the National Children's Bureau (NCB) would be running a series of six workshops for Children in Care Council members to attend with their Corporate Parents.

There would be three distinct workshops which would focus attention on:

- **Pathways to adulthood and independence** (including preparation and leaving care)
- **Raising achievements** (including education, arts and sports)
- **Diversity and inclusion** (hearing the voices and views of all young people in care)

The aim of the workshop would be to exchange ideas and challenges across local authorities, and for young people and corporate parents to work together on identifying ways to make improvements in their own areas. A Panel member was invited to attend, along with two officers and two members of SiLSiP. There were two events in London and one in Birmingham. Peter would liaise with the Chairman regarding this, and it was important that young people had the opportunity to attend.

(Action: Peter Hodges)

The Looked After Children Art Exhibition: A private view was held on 3 June 2015, 5pm – 7pm South Hill Park and the exhibition was on for a limited period of time following this.

The Looked After Children Achievement Awards were due to take place at 5.30pm to 6.55pm on 2 September 2015, with an arrival time of 5pm. Panel members requested for this information to be circulated again to them.

(Action: Amanda Roden)

For SiLSiP Summer Activities, young people suggested that there be a World Day with people from different countries doing different activities. There was also an

activity suggested at Horseshoe Lake and an art workshop. Two residential activities have also been planned.

The Chairman mentioned that Panel members had been supporting SiLSiP through the Members Initiative Fund and had helped to provide iPads for SiLSiP as well as funding the residential trips and an outing for care leavers.

6. Adopt Berkshire & Adoption Statement of Purpose and Annual Report

Alyson Graham, Adopt Berkshire and Kim Harris, Team Manager, Family Placement were present at the meeting to present a report on Adopt Berkshire & Adoption Statement of Purpose and Annual Report.

Adopt Berkshire had opened on 1 December 2014. This consisted of four local authorities joining together and it had been successful to date. It had got a good practice mention in a recent Department for Education (DfE) publication. There had been early successes in fostering to adopt and the placing of older children. Children could be adopted from birth if possible and the first child adopted from Adopt Berkshire was seven days old and adopted from hospital. Another placed was three months old; it was about managing risk.

There were adopters waiting to adopt children and this was a good position to be in. Adopters needed to understand the circumstances of children needing to be adopted and child profiles were shown at meetings once a month. Adopt Berkshire was a very experienced team and was making a positive impact.

There had been many changes to adoption over the years and the numbers of children waiting to be adopted had changed from 50 per year, to 100 per year, and was now back to between 50 and 70 per year for all Berkshire local authorities. The new Justice legislation had impacted on this.

Part of Alyson's role, as the manager of Adopt Berkshire was to review all adoption papers before they were considered by a panel. The aim was to place children as early as possible.

There was a wide enough gap geographically for placements within Adopt Berkshire and Bracknell Forest had access to a wider pool of adopters. It was a challenge to place siblings but there was a careful matching process to avoid an adoption breaking down.

An innovation funded project, Cornerstone, was linked to Adopt Berkshire and they would pilot helping to recruit and mentor adopters.

Post adoption support still remained with the Local Authorities. Kim presented the annual report and statement of Purpose.

The Panel were pleased with the implementation and progress of Adopt Berkshire and the support offered by the Local Authority.

7. Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report

Kim Harris, Team Manager, Family Placement was present at the meeting to present on the Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report.

It had been a busy year recruiting, assessing and supporting foster families. It was a lengthy, in depth process to become a foster carer. It had been another successful

year for recruiting foster carers. Ten new foster carers had been recruited this year and 52 assessments had been undertaken throughout the year. but more were still needed, particularly for teenagers and sibling groups. A target was set in the Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy relation to foster carers needed but people did resign or reached the end of the foster carer career.

Kim was due to meet with two people interested in being the Chairman and secretary of the Foster Care Association, which would mean the Association can be re-launched. Other areas had been introduced such as Staying Put.

8. Children Missing from Home and Care

Lilian Dickinson, Specialist Social Worker for Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation, presented a report on Children Missing from Home and Care.

Looked After Children (LAC) sometimes went missing and there were links between going missing and the risk of child sexual exploitation. The report focused on the six month period of Oct 2014 to March 2015 in which 9 looked after children were reported missing on a total of 20 occasions and 7 looked after children were absent from placement on a total of 29 occasions.

Some children were considered to be missing and some absent, some children could be considered to be both missing and absent, and there were some repeat offenders. 75% of these missing children went missing from residential placements. The profiles of residential homes, including their missing policy and location risk assessment, were considered before placing a child, and a child could be moved quickly if needed.

There could be different underlying reasons for children to go missing, such as substance misuse or mental health issues. Some carers might be quicker to report a girl missing than a boy, and there were more girls in residential placements. The average age for girls to go missing was 14 to 17 years and for boys it was 14 to 15 years.

The young people were engaging well with Keep Safe work and return interviews were usually undertaken within 72 hours of a child returning to a placement. This could be difficult if a child was placed out of the area and further away, but the quicker the return interview was undertaken the better for the child. Consistency was important and most of the children had engaged with the team.

Children tended to deny links to substance and alcohol misuse but three had been found to have links to this and they would be linked with a drug and alcohol worker as a result.

When a looked after child went missing for over 24 hours in Bracknell Forest, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning was advised of this.

9. Corporate Parenting Strategy

Sarah Roberts, Policy and Research Officer presented on the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

There was an overview of national and local context in the draft strategy and achievements over the last few years.

Sarah asked if Panel members wanted to consider widening the membership of the Panel and to have specific roles for Panel members. There were different models for

Corporate Parenting Advisory Panels; some had mixed membership, for example, a lay member, young people, or a foster carer representative. Individual members could take on a link role, for example with work experience, apprenticeships, education, and health.

Councillor Dr Barnard suggested that 3.1 and 3.2 of the report, in relation to membership and roles, could be trialled to see how they worked. Councillor Mrs Birch suggested that there could be representatives from the voluntary sector or health, or to have a lay member on the Panel. Councillor Mrs Temperton suggested that it would be good to have a foster carer representative on the Panel.

There was a need to think of confidentiality, and it was suggested that there could be recruitment from Reading University. Councillor Dr Barnard suggested that the foster carer representative could be someone from outside the area or who had wider care experience, so that children being discussed could not be identified. The link with young people was through the SiLSiP group. Panel members felt that formal meetings were not particularly appropriate for engagement with young people and that other methods might be more appropriate such as SiLSiP. Young people could be guests at some Panel meetings for particular issues.

Councillor Mrs Temperton volunteered for the education link, Councillor Dr Barnard volunteered for the care leavers link, and Councillor Mrs Birch volunteered for the placements and short breaks link. The three areas chosen should be linked up with the relevant Heads of Services. Roles and responsibilities should be reviewed in the Terms of Reference for the Panel and a meeting held with the volunteer Panel members.

(Action: Sarah Roberts)

It was suggested that some Panel members could pair up if they were interested in the same area, and that some protocols be piloted before the next meeting. The strategy should be adopted and reviewed in, for example, 12 months.

10. Inspection Briefing

Sandra Davies, Head of Service Performance Management and Governance, presented an Inspection Briefing.

Key messages from Ofsted included:

- Inspection improves lives and life chances;
- The bar has been raised – how well and what difference were central to the process;
- Good was the minimum standard to aim for.

What matters in the framework:

- How well you did things and the difference you made; what was your evidence?
- How Social Workers and others worked directly with families and managed the risks involved; what was the quality of this work?
- The quality of interventions in families, when risk remained or intensified.
- The quality of management oversight and decision making.

What matters in this framework:

- How well you helped, protected and cared for your children in your statutory service;

- How much you knew about the services you provided for children living in violent homes, where there was drug or alcohol misuse or mental ill health of a parent / carer;
- Leadership grip; all levels of management;
- Clear priorities, seeking and learning from feedback.
- Accountabilities; LSCB and operational practice.

Inspection framework overview:

- Universal, unannounced and on a three year cycle;
- Three key judgements: protecting children, looked after children and achieving performance, leadership, management and governance (+2 graded judgements adoption and care leavers) and an overall effectiveness judgement;
- Good was the minimum to aim for;
- The inspection would take place over a four week period, with one day's notice on the Monday of the first week, on site 9 days total;
- Eight HMI on site in weeks three and four;
- Components: Case file tracking, visiting children in residential out of area, observation of practice, adoption and fostering, meeting with children, young people, families, foster carers;
- Talking to key stakeholders.

Spotlight on:

- Children and young people missing from care, education and risks of sexual exploitation;
- Children and young people educated in alternative provision;
- Children and young people in need of child protection and the protection plans in place to support them;
- Promotion of education and schooling for children looked after.
- Children living in residential care out of area;
- Children and young people classed as Children in Need (CiN) (Section 17);
- Early help offer and assessment – includes assessment, step up and step down processes;
- Children and young people looked after through being accommodated (S20) or in care (S31);
- Young people leaving care;
- Children and young people who leave care to return home or living with Special Guardianship Order (SGO), Child arrangements order or adoption order.

There would be an LSCB Review, with a whole focus on the LSCB, i.e. partner members, and not just the Chairman. The review would be run in parallel with the Single Inspection, but would be a separate review. The review was introduced to identify the strategic and professional commitment and contribution of all statutory partners to early help, care and protection.

If Ofsted came in next week how confident would you be in explaining your corporate parenting role and what impact you have had? What are your strengths? What is your ambition for children and young people in care? What are our priorities in the coming months?

Guidance published recently showed that Prevent was a key area inspectors were looking at.

All Members needed to address Corporate Parenting roles and to revisit the Pledge.
(Action: Cllr Heydon)

11. Looked After Children Commissioning & Sufficiency Strategy

Peter Hodges, Head of Service Looked After Children, presented on the Looked After Children Commissioning & Sufficiency Strategy.

There was much data comparison, and page 131 of the agenda papers showed the legal status of looked after children in care. There was a high proportion of 10 to 16 year olds in the looked after children cohort. The aim was to recruit more foster carers for teenagers. The target was to recruit ten new foster carers this year. The strategy detailed types of placements and key priorities.

Page 138 onwards of the agenda papers showed a description of the current provision of services. There were action plans to manage cases. Page 161 of the agenda papers showed that the commissioning officer considered value for money. The life skills programme was being successfully rolled out.

12. Local Offer to Looked After Children Placed in Bracknell Forest by other Local Authorities

Sarah Roberts, Policy and Research Officer, presented on the Local Offer to Looked After Children Placed in Bracknell Forest by other Local Authorities.

There were new requirements for local authorities placing children and young people out of the area. There was a need to make sure that the host authority could provide adequately for them. Information sharing was facilitated by ADCS providing a single point of access. There was further information on the Borough Council's website.

13. Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

(1) Information relating to any individual (Items 14 & 15).

14. Life Chances Annual Report

Peter Hodges, Head of Service Looked After Children, presented on the Life Chances Annual Report. Peter attended monthly meetings with Kashif Nawaz, Virtual School Head. A RAG (Red, Amber and Green) system was used to highlight the risk or concern identified by the Life Chances Team on the database. Support of partners was beneficial in this process.

15. Performance Management Information

Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer Children's Social Care presented the latest Performance Management Information. There had been many improvements but some aspects of the work was always a challenge, for example, in relation to placement changes.

There had been 15 Special Guardianship Order and adoptions granted each year, over the past two years, which was extremely positive with good outcomes for those

children. Some cases were just outside the 12 month period with the decision and placement. Encouraging looked after children to attend the dentist was an ongoing issue and was still difficult. Health assessments continued to remain high, with Health encouraging other Local Authorities to follow the example of Bracknell Forest.

16. Dates of Next Meetings and Forward Plan

Wednesday 23 September 2015, 5pm, Council Chamber, Easthampstead House

- Educational Achievement and Destinations
- Larchwood Statement of Purpose and Annual Report
- Care Leavers:
 - o Beyond Care Councillor Guidance
 - o Highlights of Peer Review
 - o Accommodation survey update
- Health of LAC and Corporate Parenting Responsibilities
- Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Looked After Children in Custody

Wednesday 9 December 2015, 5pm, Council Chamber, Easthampstead House

- Participation Annual and SiLSiP Annual Report
- Foster Carers Association
- Staying Put

Wednesday 9 March 2016, 5pm, Council Chamber, Easthampstead House

- Regulation 44 Annual Report
- Health of Looked After Children

**TO: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER SERVICE: ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15
Director of Children, Young People and Learning**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the 2014/15 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service which performs a key role in assuring the quality of the local authority's care planning for children who are looked after. The annual report supports the continuing development and review of the local strategy for children's services.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider the 2014/15 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To enable the Panel to consider the 2014/15 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

**5 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES
IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES /
CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

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TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING

DATE: 14 July 2015

INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER SERVICE: ANNUAL REPORT
Director Children, Young People and Learning

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the 9th Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service to the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the report set out in Annex 1 is received by the Executive Member, Children, Young People and Learning.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. The IRO Service performs a key role in assuring the quality of the local authority's care planning for children who are looked after. The annual report supports the continuing development and review of the local strategy for children's services.
- 3.2. Guidance issued by the Department for Education [DfE] expects that an annual report should be provided to the Lead Member with Executive responsibility for Children's Services and for Corporate Parenting, with the aim of identifying good practice, and highlighting areas for further development / improvement. The Guidance states that the purpose of the report is to inform the development of local strategies for meeting the needs of children who are looked after by the Local Authority.
- 3.3 New guidance on care planning, placement and review of children who are looked after came into force on 1 April 2011, supported by a suite of documents; the IRO Handbook was one of those documents.
- 3.4 There have been significant changes to the family justice system in relation to care, supervision and family proceedings including the introduction of a 26 week timescale for Care Proceedings once initiated. All these changes have had an impact on the plans and timescales for children, and the IRO Service. While it is hoped this will prevent delay for the child it is likely to have resource implications for all those involved in the care process including social work teams, IRO Service and placements with more work being required before proceedings are initiated.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None considered as production of such a report is recommended in Statutory Guidance.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The attached report sets out the work of the IRO Service over the period 1st April 2014- 31st March 2015. The report highlights good practice and identifies areas where challenges have been made by the IRO Service and the measures that have been taken to address these.
- 5.2 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and consequent IRO Handbook reinforces and strengthens the role of the IRO enabling more effective independent

oversight and scrutiny of the child's case. This is to ensure that the child is able to meaningfully participate in planning for their own care and that the care plan that the local authority prepares for them is based on a thorough assessment of the individual child's needs.

- 5.3. The report provides an account of the activity of the IRO Service and identifies a number of areas of good practice, and highlights areas for development within the service for looked after children. A few of these to note are:
- The number of children being looked after at 31 March 2015 was 104 (at the end of March 2014 there were 113 LAC).
 - Whilst the total of children being looked after is counted at the end of the year, it is important to note that this figure will vary from month to month as children move in and out of the system, for example during the year 48 children became looked after and 58 ceased to be looked after.
 - A total of 307 looked after children reviews were completed during the last year. This is slightly lower than in the previous year (317) which reflects the lower number of children looked after during this review period.
 - A minority of children experience a higher number of reviews, this is due to a number of different factors including changes to the child's care plan and unplanned placement moves.
 - On the 31st March 2015, 100% of LAC reviews were carried out within statutory timescales. This is an improvement on the previous year (96%).
 - Communication systems are in place for Children's Social Care when notifying the IRO of any potential changes or when a child is accommodated.
 - Child participation in reviews remains high with 100% of children over the age of four participating at the end of March 2015; the report identifies some comments made by children and identifies two case studies to demonstrate the ways in which they participate.
 - The Life Chances Team has made a positive contribution to developing multi agency support and monitoring for LAC, and the contribution of a range of partners has a significant impact on key areas of need such as health, education and emotional wellbeing.
 - The positive impact of the Child Participation Development Officer which supports the effective participation of children and young people looked after including coordinating the Advocacy requests for children and in managing SiLSiP (Children in Care council).
 - The impact of the investment of the additional IRO resources has been positive in terms of reducing the case load of the IRO's and enabling them to more broadly fulfil the requirements of the IRO Handbook more.
- 5.4 In addition to the positive practice, the report also provides examples of challenge which are built into the IRO role, and how these have been resolved. The IRO Service has worked throughout the year to embed more robust challenge where this is felt to be required and the Dispute Resolution Process has been used more consistently with 19 informal challenges being made and 11 formal challenges using the agreed procedure. This provides clear evidence of challenge and outcomes.
- 5.5 A further area for ongoing development this year has been in improving the performance and quality assurance activity. The IRO Service reports quarterly to Children's Social Care Management Team, and the IRO undertakes an audit following each review. The Team Manager and Head of Service have completed direct observations of the IRO in reviews and undertaken some audits of key areas

of activity in the team. One outcome of this activity is the introduction of a new record of review template, written by the IRO after each meeting, this is now written as if to the child and is more child centred as a result.

- 5.6 The report identifies some of the national legislative and policy changes that have been taking place that impact on looked after children. The IRO Service continues to work with partners to embed these changes and play the appropriate role in implementing and monitoring impact.
- 5.7 The IRO Service has also actively engaged with regional and national IRO networks and has contributed to a number of regional and national meetings. There is further work planned on a national level to develop a national IRO website and to develop a set of standards for IRO's.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that reporting on the work of the Independent Reviewing Officer over the period of 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015 presents no significant financial implications.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The IRO Service is specifically for all children and young people who are looked after and as such includes a wide range of vulnerable children from variable backgrounds. Linked policies and procedures have been subject to EIA.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 No issues arise from this report.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups to be consulted

None

Method of Consultation

Not applicable

Representations Received

Not applicable

Contact for further information

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INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2014 – March 2015

The Contribution of Independent Reviewing Officers to Quality Assuring and Improving Services for Looked After Children

Authors

Carol Lamkin, IRO

Liz McAuley, Team Manager, IRO service

Sandra Davies, Head of Performance Management and Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the ninth annual report of the work of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service in Bracknell Forest, for the period from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

The IRO Handbook states that the annual report should cover:

- The development of the IRO Service, caseloads, make up of the team and how this reflects the identity of the Looked after Children population in Bracknell Forest.
- The extent of participation of children, young people and parents
- Performance data including the number of reviews held within timescales and reasons for those held outside of timescales
- Procedures for resolving concerns, the local dispute resolution process and analysis of issues raised and outcomes.
- Resource issues affecting the services provided for Looked after Children.
- The report of the IRO service should also; *'Identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development including where urgent action is needed'*.

The report begins with a summary of some of the key areas of progress in response to areas for development identified in previous reports and in national research.

The report identifies the legal framework for the work of the IRO Service and identifies areas that are felt to be at the centre of the service and progresses to provide an introduction to the team and information about the development of the IRO service in Bracknell Forest.

A profile of looked after children shows key information including numbers, age, gender and ethnicity. The legal status of children is shown and performance information about the timeliness of reviews, IRO caseloads and how IROs are fulfilling the requirements in the IRO Handbook 2010.

The participation of children and young people, parents and carers and the contribution of partner agencies is detailed including a case study and comments from children and young people who are looked after. Listening to the voice of the child and enabling children and young people to participate is a key function of the IRO role. Performance in this area is good with 100% of children participating in their reviews in a variety of ways.

There has been a significant focus on the development of quality assurance and performance monitoring including reporting to Senior Managers and to the Director Children, Young People and Learning. This is a key part of the IRO role and provides a good opportunity to feed back on key performance, practice and development issues.

The report demonstrates work undertaken to further embed challenge and dispute resolution processes. Such processes provide a mechanism to assist the IRO Service in fulfilling their independent function and to make challenges where there is drift in the care plan or it is felt that decisions and actions are not contributing to good outcomes for the child or young person. Some examples given in this section demonstrate the challenge that has taken place and the positive responses from Children's Social Care to addressing those challenges. This section also highlights good practice examples.

The final section identifies a range of issues that impact on services for looked after children and include the introduction of new legislation, continued increase in numbers of children looked after and ensuring caseloads for individual IRO's allow capacity for them to fulfil their statutory function.

A list of areas for development in 2015/16 concludes the 9th annual report.

A SUMMARY OF KEY AREAS OF PROGRESS DURING 2014 / 15

Secure sufficient resources to enable the IRO Service to fulfil the requirements of the IRO Handbook.

Outcome- A permanent additional part time IRO post (18.5 hours) has been secured for the team which has enabled caseloads to be reduced and has given IROs capacity to undertake the additional aspects of the IRO role. Further work is needed to balance the IRO case loads across the team to ensure a proportionate allocation of out of area cases. This will be done sensitively to ensure there is no change of IRO for the young person.

The provision of additional hours for the Team Manager has enabled further management oversight and service development opportunities.

Further development of more accessible options for children and young people to communicate with their IRO between reviews

Outcome This remains an area for development and we are considering how technology can assist the team. While these options would provide an additional form of communication we recognise the importance of face to face contact with children and young people.

Focus on further developing ways to include parents in the review process in a way that is most appropriate to the circumstances

Outcome This has been addressed on a case by case basis but remains an area for development and the number of parents participating in Looked After Children reviews has remained consistent to that of the previous year.

Review the systems and forms for recording the outcome of the LAC review to ensure they are more child focused

Outcome - The team completed a sample audit of the IRO 'Record of Discussion' reports and based on the findings revised the headings of the document to include new regulations such as 'staying put' and 'delegated responsibility'.

The Record of Discussion form has been changed to make it more child centred, the new format is written to the child/young person about their review. We plan to review this new approach and we will consult with others to decide if it should continue or be amended.

Continued focus on performance monitoring and quality assurance.

Outcome- This activity has taken place throughout the year and has led to ongoing improvements and developments in the service. Activity has included direct observations of practice by the Team Manager and Head of Service and some audit and internal peer review activity.

Continue to deliver workshop / seminars to Social Workers and Managers to ensure the role of IRO is clearly understood and new staff have good induction

Outcome – Members of the IRO service have continued to provide one to one induction sessions for new staff. In addition we have provided six monthly update sessions for social workers. The team has delivered additional sessions in 2015 to reach more CSC staff.


Continue to contribute to the South East Regional IRO group

Outcome – IROs have actively participated in the SE regional group. Bracknell Forest hosted one meeting in February 2015 and we have submitted an article for the national IRO newsletter highlighting the 'Do You Know training'. The SE regional group has two representatives who sit on the national IRO group who meet with the Children's Minister. The group plans to develop national IRO standards and templates, an IRO dispute resolution process and is about to launch a national website where IROs can share good practice. The group has been looking at the impact of new legislation and research, including a national survey about whether LAC know their entitlements.

1. PURPOSE OF SERVICE AND LEGAL CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Independent Review Officer (IRO) service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook 2010, linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the case including regular monitoring and follow-up between reviews. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of Care Planning for Looked After Children (LAC) and for challenging drift and delay.
- 1.2 National Children's Bureau research entitled 'The Role of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) in England' (March 2014) provides a wealth of information and findings in regards to the efficacy of IRO services and outlines a number of important recommendations.
- 1.3 The IRO Service in Bracknell Forest wishes to highlight areas we believe to be an essential part of the service:
 - Ensuring IRO's have the right skills: particularly the ability to communicate with children and young people, and to know how and when to challenge.
 - Have access to expert advice & resources, including independent legal advice and opportunities for reflective practice.
 - Dispute resolution protocols that work, from informal conversations to the escalation of formal disputes to senior management level.
 - Ensuring 'child-centred' IRO's, who demonstrate their commitment to each child and work out the best way to seek their views.
 - Having a focus on outcomes, and holding agencies to account for their contribution towards these.

The foreword to the IRO Handbook, 2010 was written by Mr Justice Peter Jackson in it he makes the following comment



The Independent Reviewing Officer must be the visible embodiment of our commitment to meet our legal obligations to this special group of children. The health and effectiveness of the IRO service is a direct reflection of whether we are meeting that commitment, or whether we are failing.

2. PROFILE OF THE IRO SERVICE

- 2.1 The legislation and regulations specify;
- The duty of the local authority to appoint an IRO.
 - The circumstances in which the local authority must consult with the IRO.
 - The functions of the IRO both in relation to the reviewing and monitoring of each case.
 - The actions the IRO must take if the local authority is failing to comply with the regulations or is in breach of its duties to the child in any material way, including making a referral to CAFCASS.
- 2.2. The IRO Service sits within a larger team called the Conference and Review Team. This team provides Independent Reviewing Officers to chair reviews for Looked after Children, and Independent Child Protection Chairs to chair Child Protection Conferences.
- 2.3. In order to provide independence from the line management of cases and allocation of resources within Children's Social Care the IRO Service sits within the Strategy, Resources and Early Intervention Branch of the Department. The Independent Reviewing Officers are managed by the Conference and Review Team Manager who reports to the Head of Performance Management and Governance. The Director Children, Young People and Learning retains overall accountability for the Service.
- 2.4 The staffing complement for the IRO Service is:
- Conference and Review Team Manager (30 hours per week). This role involves management of the IRO's, Child Protection Chairs and the Conference and review team administrators. The Conference and Review Team Manager also has the function of Local Authority Designated Officer and oversees the management of allegations against the children's workforce.
 - One full time Independent Reviewing Officer (37 hours per week)
 - Two part time Independent Reviewing Officers (18.5 and 16 hours per week)
 - Administrative support is provided by a small team supporting both the IRO process and Child Protection Conferencing.
 - The Independent Reviewing Officers in the team are all female and white British.
- 2.5 Every child who becomes looked after by the local authority is allocated an IRO within 5 days of becoming looked after. The Independent Reviewing Officers hold a case discussion meeting before making a decision as to who will become allocated as IRO. Where possible, to provide the child with consistency the same IRO will chair the reviews and monitor the care plan throughout the period the child is looked after.
- The role of the IRO is to monitor and maintain an overview of the Care Plan (including Court Care Plans) and the Pathway Plan of each Looked After Child at the review meeting and between reviews. In order to do this effectively the IRO needs to have pre meetings with social workers, to speak to carers and parents, to read the child's file and speak to the child between review meetings. The social worker in turn, needs to update the IRO on significant events and provide an updated Care Plan and a report for the LAC review. All the requirements and timescales for reviews are set out in the IRO handbook.
- 2.6 All looked after children, including children who are in an adoptive placement prior to an adoption order, have a review. This applies to all children who are the subject of a

Care Order (under section 31 of the Children Act 1989), or who are voluntarily accommodated for a period of more than 24 hours (section 20 of the Children Act 1989), including those described in this report as having short break care, or who are placed for adoption under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. It also covers those who are compulsorily looked after, such as those remanded by the court to local authority accommodation.

- 2.7. The IRO Handbook recommends that a caseload for a full time IRO should be between 50-70 children. The current case load of the full time IRO in Bracknell is 58 children. This is a considerable decrease of cases compared to the previous year and has been achieved by the appointment of a permanent part time IRO. The caseloads of other part time team members are also within this limit.

3 PROFILE OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN BRACKNELL FOREST

- 3.1 On the 31 March 2015 there were 104 children and young people who were looked after. This is a slight decrease from the 31 March 2014 where the number of looked after children was 113.
- 3.2 The number of children who are looked after can vary from month to month as children move in and out of the system. During the period of 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, 48 children became looked after and 58 have ceased to be looked after. Children can cease to be looked after for a number of reasons which include, returning home to live with parents, being adopted, or leaving care.
- 3.3 Of those children and young people looked after on 31 March 2015, 50 were female and 54 were male.
- 3.4 Of those children and young people looked after on 31 March 2015:
- 3 were under the age of one.
 - 14 were aged one to four.
 - 16 were aged five to nine.
 - 47 were aged ten to fifteen.
 - 24 were aged sixteen and over.
- 3.5 Of those children and young people looked after on 31 March 2015:
- 81% were identified as White British
 - 4% were identified as any other white background.
 - 15% were identified from a range of other backgrounds including any other Asian, African, White and Black African and any other ethnic group.

Legal Status

- 3.6. The legal status of children looked after on 31 March 2015 is shown in the table below, alongside figures for the same period in 2014. The comparator figures show an increase in the number of children subject to Placement Orders (granted when court proceedings conclude and the plan for adoption is agreed).

This includes children placed in adoptive families under adoption regulations but prior to an Adoption Order being made. The number of children subject to a Care Order has remained consistent with the figures from the previous year (2014). However there has been a significant decrease in the number of children placed under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (where a child is placed with the consent of the parent). This is reflective of a number of proceedings concluding during the year and the current legal advice regarding the use of Section 20.

Legal Status	March 2014	March 2015.
Care Order -Section 31 The Children Act 1989	38	34
Interim Care Order -Section 33 The Children Act 1989	5	9
Section 20 The Children Act 1989	56	42
Placement Order Adoption and Children Act 2002	13	19
On remand	1	0
Total	113	104

Legal status of LAC on 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015

Adoption Activity

- 3.7 The number of children requiring and gaining permanency in Bracknell Forest has remained high. During 2014-15, 6 Adoption Orders; 9 Special Guardianship Orders and 1 Child Arrangement Order (formerly known as a Residence Order) were made. The number of Special Guardianship Orders has increased during this reporting period. This reflects a national trend and needs to be closely monitored. During this review period we have seen the introduction of the 'Adopt Berkshire' a pan Berkshire Adoption Service. This offers a wider scope for potential adoptive parents to be identified and an opportunity to prevent delay in achieving permanence for children.

Timeliness of Statutory Reviews

- 3.8 Under provisions set out in the IRO Handbook (2010) local authorities are required to review the case of any child who is looked after or provided with accommodation within the following timescales:
- The first review must take place within 20 working days of the date on which the child becomes looked after or is provided with accommodation.
 - The second review must be carried out no later than 3 months after the first review and subsequent reviews must be carried out not more than 6 months after the date of the previous review meeting.
- 3.9 Each IRO has a designated case load and is responsible for ensuring that each child's review takes place within timescales. The IRO also ensures that care planning is robust and that young people, parents, carers and relevant professionals have the opportunity to participate fully in the review process.
- 3.10 In certain situations it may be necessary to bring forward a child's review meeting if:
- There is a change of placement or other substantial change to the care plan.
 - The IRO has specific concerns about the child and directs that the review be brought forward.
 - There is a request from the child or parent for a review to be brought forward.
- 3.11 A total of 307 looked after children reviews were completed during the last year. This is slightly lower than in the previous year (317) which reflects the lower number of children looked after during this review period. The number of reviews being conducted for a small minority of children year remains high, this is due to a number of different factors including changes to the child's care plan and unplanned placement moves.

- 3.12. On the 31st March 2015, 100% of LAC reviews were carried out within statutory timescales. This is an improvement on the previous year (96%). One important area of activity in ensuring that LAC reviews stay within timescales is close and effective liaison with social workers. This involves an email system to notify workers of any new children becoming looked after, any changes in circumstances and legal status and placement changes. Good face to face contact also assists this process.

4 PARTICIPATION IN REVIEWS

Child participation in LAC reviews

- 4.1 A central strand of the role of the IRO is to ensure that the voice of the child is central to the review process. During the year 100% of children aged four and above were able to participate in their LAC review meeting. The IRO's also visit children under 4 in their placements as part of the LAC review process, this enables the IRO to observe the child in placement and how they interact with their carers and other significant people.

Child Participation	Mar-12	Mar-13	Mar-14	Mar-15
Number who participated in all reviews	78	82	88	87
% of LAC who participated in reviews	100%	100%	99%	100%

Method of participation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Child under 4years old	26%	17%	24%	18%
Child attends the review and is able to speak for themselves	45.3%	59%	48%	48%
Child attends and an advocate speaks for them	0%	0%	1%	1%
Child attends and conveys their views non verbally	2.7%	1%	1%	1%
Child attends but does not speak or convey their feelings	0%	1%	0%	0%
Child does not attend but asks an advocate to speak for them	6.7%	4%	5%	7%
Child does not attend but conveys their views to the review	17.3%	17%	21%	26%
Child does not attend and does not convey their views to the review	0%	0%	0%	0%

- 4.2 It is recognised for some children attending their LAC review meeting can be a daunting experience. In Bracknell Forest the IROs work hard to find imaginative ways to fulfil the full IRO function and to support children and young people to engage in the process and express their views, feelings and wishes to be heard. Some examples are:
- Arranging a separate meeting with the child in the form of a pre review meeting. This has been very successful during this review period and offers the child an opportunity to share their views with the allocated IRO and also plan ahead of the formal meeting.
 - The child being supported by a formal or informal advocate in the meeting.

- The child being supported to write a letter or draw pictures which are shared at the meeting
- The child being supported to make a DVD to show at the review meeting

4.3 The decision about the venue of a LAC review is based on the child's wishes, parental participation and safety issues. LAC reviews are held in the child's placement or at a venue that is considered appropriate such as the Family Centre or Children's Centre. This can be difficult as the availability of rooms is sometimes an issue as some buildings and facilities are not always appropriate venues for the child.

Pre- LAC review meetings and IRO home visits to a child are held in a number of venues, depending on the child's wishes. The aim is not to hold meetings during the school day. Often these pre- meetings occur in the placement, but parks cafes etc are used at times.

Some LAC reviews were held over several meetings as it is not always appropriate for children to attend the whole meeting. This way of working enables the child's voice to be heard. The IRO Service continues to promote participation by children and young people with disabilities. Careful consideration is given to the choice of venue and the support needs of the child to facilitate and encourage meaningful participation.

Promoting the Voice of the Child – Some examples of children and young people's views

"I think it is good that my IRO comes to see me before the meeting. It gives me a chance to talk to her on my own"

"My IRO knows a lot about me and helps me say what I want to say".

"My IRO rings me or texts sometimes I meet up with her but sometimes I don't need too but it is good she offers to see me"

"I can ring or text my IRO as I have her mobile number and she gets back to me quickly"

"I like my IRO she listens to me and brings things up at meetings I find difficult to say"

Case Study One – Child Participation

A 10 year old girl met with her IRO before her LAC review. She was a bit nervous as this was going to be the first formal review meeting she had attended. At their pre review meeting they talked about the things she wanted to say and agreed where they would sit so the child had good eye contact with the IRO. They also made a list of the questions the child wanted to ask at the meeting.

On the day of the meeting the child spoke again to the IRO and requested everyone attending the meeting choose something to wear from her dressing up box. This included wigs, hats, fancy sunglasses and flower garlands. This was an unusual request but everyone agreed to do so. This took away the power of the adults in the meeting and helped to make it an enjoyable experience for the child. She was able to relax and take an active role in her review meeting.

The child has since become even more active at her review meetings and co chaired the following review meeting with the IRO.

Case Study Two – Child Participation

An 8 year old child who has been looked after for one year did not want to attend the LAC review meeting. The allocated IRO respected the child's wishes but to ensure his views about the care he is receiving were heard at the meeting she visited him in his placement. She used this time to observe the child in his placement and using various tools to support her she was able to gain the child's wishes and feelings through play. The IRO has remained consistent and over time has built a good relationship with the child. She has also been able explain to the child in an age appropriate way the reasons for the LAC review meeting and why they take place. The child is now at a point where he is confident to attend and verbally share his views.

Parental participation in LAC reviews

4.4 The IRO has a responsibility to gain the views of parents within the review process, this is important as it helps the IRO to understand the way in which the child is viewed by parents and to gain an idea of the life experiences of the child. One exception is that birth parents do not attend LAC review meetings when a child is on a placement order and about to be placed for adoption. Their views are sought and communicated to the meeting but they do not attend. There are many ways a parent can be involved including:

- Attending the formal meeting.
- Completing and returning consultation documents.
- A separate meeting can be arranged with the allocated IRO.
- Telephone / email communication with the allocated IRO.
- Via a Social worker / Advocate.

4.5 During the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, a total of 172 parents (124 mothers and 48 fathers) attended their child's review meeting. Others shared their views through a conversation with the IRO by telephone or completed consultation documents. Some parents chose to use other forms of communication such as email, text, using advocates, giving views to the child's social worker or having a separate meeting with the IRO.

Some parents' views were not obtained, this is due to a number of reasons including the parent being deceased, their whereabouts unknown, a Placement Order being in place or the child having been placed in an adoptive placement. Feedback from parents has been positive. One mother contacted the IRO thanking her for the support offered regarding contact issues in LAC review meeting and stated that

through receiving support from the IRO she has a better understanding of the role. A grandfather also commented on the efficiency and professionalism of the IRO/Chair.

Participation and contribution of partner agencies

- 4.6 Participation from partner agencies is strong in Bracknell Forest. Health visitors often attend review meetings and give detailed information on the child's progress. Schools, the Virtual School team and any specialist units are usually actively involved in relation to educational progress. The IRO Service remains concerned about the impact of CAMHS services in the Bracknell Forest area
- 4.7 The IROs meet with the LAC nurse every four months to discuss the wider issues relating to the health of LAC and their views about having medicals. One outcome from these meetings has been the agreement for a copy of the child's health care plan to be sent to the allocated IRO after each health assessment. The introduction of this process has supported the IRO to have a good overview of the child's health needs when preparing for a LAC review meeting.
- 4.8 Looked after children of school age have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting within 20 days of becoming LAC and then at six monthly intervals. The IRO recognises the importance of education in improving outcomes for children and young people and meets regularly with the Virtual School to ensure ongoing liaison and discussion. The IROs also have a process in place where PEP reports are sent directly to the allocated IRO to enable good preparation for the LAC review meeting.

The IRO Service acknowledges the efforts made by both CSC and the virtual school to support young people to continue in education post 18 with a number of care leavers applying to attend FE colleges and universities
- 4.9 A member of the IRO Service attends the Life Chances Team meetings and uses this opportunity to raise issues relating to individual children and also to highlight identified service deficits. Regular attendance at Life Chances meetings has supported the IRO Service to build good communication links with multi agency professionals involved in the LAC process.
- 4.10 The IRO Service has continued to work with the Child Participation Development Officer to encourage children and young people to develop skills to enable them to share their feelings and views regarding their care arrangements in positive ways during LAC review meetings and to have the support of advocates if requested. One of the tasks of the Child Participation Development Officer is to support Looked After Children in Bracknell Forest to have a say via the SILSIP Group (Say it Loud Say it Proud). Members of the IRO Service have attended SILSIP activities including 'Ready Steady Cook' sessions, the Christmas Party and activities based at John Nike Sport Centre during the summer holidays. The IRO Service sees this as a great opportunity to spend time with children and young people outside of the formal LAC review meeting.
- 4.11 This year all members of the IRO Service have taken part on the 'Do You Know' training provided by SILSIP.
- 4.12 The Youth Offending Service (YOS) is invited to the young person's LAC review meeting when they are involved. The contribution of the YOS worker in the LAC review process continues to be of a high standard which supports the LAC review process.
- 4.13. Members of the IRO service have been operating the Berkshire IRO/CAFCASS protocol and have attended the Berkshire CAFCASS liaison meetings. These meetings offer the IRO an opportunity to meet with Guardians and discuss the interface between Guardians and IROs. IROs also have contact with the Guardian on individual cases during court proceedings. Further development and commitment from all parties is required to build on this relationship to support the views of the child being heard in the court process.

5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Performance Monitoring

Quality Assurance of the IRO Service

- 5.1 The IRO service has continued to develop a team audit programme which quality assures aspects of the IROs work. This includes themed audits, peer auditing of reports and decisions and actions, observations of IROs by the Team Manager and the Head of Service and auditing of administrative processes. We aim to develop this further in the coming year, particularly the peer auditing so that the team can learn from one another.

Management oversight and monitoring

- 5.2 The role of the IRO manager is set out in the handbook. A key aspect of the IRO Service is in supporting ongoing quality assurance activity as part of the Quality Assurance Strategy for the Children, Young People and Learning Department. The IRO Service reports on a regular basis to Children's Social Care Management Team.

This report provides a range of qualitative and quantitative information taken from an audit form completed after each LAC Review takes place; the information collected from the audit activity is collated into a quarterly report and presented to Senior Managers in Children's Social Care. This is an opportunity to highlight good practice and note areas of concern and performance against national and local indicators.

The process of looking at performance quarterly ensures that senior management have an oversight of how LAC reviews are working and whether practitioners require further training in specific areas of practice.

- 5.3 A monthly IRO Business Meeting is led by the Team Manager, and attended by the Head of Performance Management and Governance this enables management oversight of areas in development, progress and issues being experienced by the IRO Service.
- 5.4 Ofsted recommends that senior managers regularly review performance to assure themselves of the quality of the IRO service and the impact and difference it is making for children, young people and families. In Bracknell Forest the Director Children, Young People and Learning has set up regular meetings with the Conference and Review Team Manager and the Head of Performance Management and Governance to report on IRO activity. This supports the DCS statutory responsibilities as identified in guidance. Children Services Chief Officer has observed a LAC review meeting and a Child Protection Conference.
- 5.5 A member of the IRO Service attends the Life Chances Team on a regular basis. This offers the IRO opportunities to work within a multi disciplinary team to support LAC children in Bracknell.
- 5.6 The IRO Service provides regular training for Social Workers on the roles and responsibilities for LAC, and also meets with new Social Workers as part of their induction.
- 5.7 The manager of the IRO Service attends legal tracking meetings which monitor progress on pre proceedings and legal proceedings and in relation to looked after children awaiting permanent placements. Following representation from the IRO service, the permanency tracking meeting considers children requiring permanence through adoption, long term fostering and special guardianship.
- 5.8 The IRO Service also contributes to foster carers' reviews by completing a consultation form. This allows for the IRO to comment on good practice and also areas of concern.

- 5.9 The IRO Service also works with the Placement Officer with regard to quality assuring residential placements. During this review period the IRO Service has raised issues regarding quality assurance of placements and suitability of placement for a specific child. The IRO Service have been informed of the decisions made and recognise the commitment of the department to ensure all children and young people are appropriately placed in placements which meet their needs.
- 5.10 Team Manager supervises the IROs monthly and monitors their caseload and overall performance and training needs. Each IRO has been observed by the Team Manager and Head of Service during the last year.
- 5.11 The IRO Service had been meeting regularly with the Head of Service for LAC but due to the changeover of managers in this role, meetings have been less frequent. Now that there is a permanent Head of Service for LAC in post new meeting dates have been agreed for the coming year.

Training and Peer support

- 5.12 Members of the team have undertaken training appropriate to their needs. As a whole team we have attended legal updates training and a training session on chairing meetings. All team members attended a Child Sexual Exploitation Conference run by the Local Safeguarding Board. The Head of Performance Management and Governance has been exploring the option of jointly commissioning specialist modular training options for IROs across Berkshire as there is currently no specialist training for IROs.
- 5.13 Members of the IRO Service have attended the IRO SE regional meetings and the Berkshire IRO legal surgeries. Common themes are IROs monitoring legal status and the use of S20; Local Authorities being aware that young people know their entitlements following the DfE report on Entitlements; clear evidence of the voice of the child and Ofsted being to see the IRO footprint on the case.
- 5.14 Members of the team have met with the Head of Specialist Services to discuss the IROs undertaking return home interviews for LAC children going missing where appropriate and we have also been liaising regarding child sexual exploitation (CSE) risks for LAC children. These links with the CSE operational group are very helpful alongside notifications from social workers about LAC who go missing or are involved in significant incidents.

6 CHALLENGE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 6.1 The IRO service has been working to resolve issues informally where possible but also to embed the process for formal dispute resolution which was introduced in November 2013. It is a requirement for IROs to have a clear framework and structure in place to be able to raise issues of concern which relate to the child's carer plan and for Children's Social Care to be able to respond using a formal process.

In January 2015 we reviewed the Bracknell Forest Dispute Resolution Process and took on board the feedback from Children's Social Care about operational issues and timescales for responding. We have developed a procedural guide which clarifies the types of issues and triggers for initiating the formal process and sets out how the process will be operated and recorded.

The process allows for a number of stages to be accessed in order to resolve an issue or concern which escalates appropriately if the issue remains unresolved to the satisfaction of the IRO. The informal challenge is the very first stage of the dispute resolution and the aim is to resolve issues at this stage wherever possible.

The informal and formal disputes are recorded. Since April 2014 there have been 19 informal challenges and 11 formal disputes raised by the IRO service; two formal disputes progressed went to stage 2 and two went to stage 3. None have

progressed to stage 4 or to CAFCASS. This is an increase from 21 informal and 3 formal on 2013/14. This increase was anticipated when the process was formalised. The majority of issues are resolved informally or at stage 1 of the formal process.

Informal challenges have included:

- Delay in care planning
- Regulatory LAC visits not taking place within timescales
- Drift in follow up actions in the agreed care plan.
- Delay in providing education
- Social Work reports not always being provided for LAC reviews.
- Level of contact and other contact issues

Formal disputes raised have included;

- Delay in achieving legal permanency for a child
- Delay in progressing legal proceedings
- Quality Assurance of placement
- IRO in disagreement with the Care Plan due to safeguarding concerns
- Delay in provision of education following a placement change

Examples of Challenges made by the IRO Service

6.2 Informal Challenge – regarding foster care placement

An informal challenge was raised regarding the standard of care provided by Bracknell Forest carers. In the LAC review meeting it became clear the foster carers had not attended planned school meetings and other actions regarding arranging sibling contact had not been carried out within timescales.

Outcome

All the issues of concern were addressed at this early stage by the supervising social worker. Visits were made to monitor progress and arrangements put in place to ensure all school meetings were re arranged and attended by the foster carers. Arrangements for sibling contact were clarified and the foster carers were supported by the supervising social worker to support family contact.

6.3 Informal Challenge – Accommodation support.

The allocated IRO raised concerns regarding the appropriateness of accommodation for a 17 year old young woman who was pregnant. The accommodation was a considerable distance from her college placement and her family.

The IRO also had some concerns regarding the conditions of the placement and the impact of other resident's behaviour for example openly smoking illegal substances in communal areas.

Outcome

Children's Social Care acknowledged the placement was not appropriate and worked hard to identify an appropriate placement which was in line with the young person's care plan to live independently. The young person is now living independently with support from Children Social Care local to her family who are able to offer support and also close to her college which has enabled her to continue to attend to complete her course. The young person has also able to access local health services who can offer support regarding her pregnancy

6.4 **Formal Challenge – Delay in care planning**

A formal challenge was made on behalf of twin babies who were placed in foster care. The dispute process was started as an informal challenge. The allocated IRO was concerned about drift in achieving permanency for the two babies. There was no evidence of a consistent care plan and delay in completing assessments.

The IRO did not receive a satisfactory response to the informal challenge and felt the issues for the children were not resolved, so the challenge was escalated to formal stage one. The IRO felt that responses to stage one and stage two were not satisfactory and continued the process to stage three.

Outcome

The stage three response satisfied the IRO that clear timescales and actions to address the concerns had been put in place. Childrens Social Care sought legal advice and appropriate assessments were completed. The overall outcome is that the children have both returned home to be cared for by their mother and supported by the department on Child In Need Plans.

Examples of Good Practice

6.5 The IRO Service observes many areas of good practice on a day to day basis and would like to note that the ongoing commitment and support given to children and young people by a wide range of professionals. Listed below are some of the many examples of good practice noted:

- **The support provided by a social worker in the Specialist Support Team.**

The social worker supported a young person to actively take part in her review meeting. It was clearly evidenced in the review that the allocated social worker had spent a great deal of time preparing the young person using various tools to enable her to share her views and feelings. Photographs, drawings and pre set questions and answers were used.

- **Joint work between Social Work Team and Family Placement Team to support stability of a placement**

Whilst a young person was really struggling to manage the transition to a long term placement the Over 11's team and Family Placement team worked together to offer support. The matters raised by the young person were dealt with sensitively and her views and wishes listened to. She also received a clear explanation as to why her wishes could not be met and agreed timescales for sharing decisions and information were adhered too.

- **Positive working relationship with residential unit to provide a service for a young person.**

A young man living away from the Bracknell Forest area in a residential unit had requested an Independent Visitor. This was proving to be very difficult to arrange and after several attempts to identify an appropriate person who was able to travel or who lived locally to the young man's placement failed. The social worker and residential workers agreed that it was time to think a little more 'outside of the box' They came up with a plan for the young person to meet up with an Independent Visitor in the Bracknell area. The residential unit agreed to transport the young man each month to enable him to have access to this service.

- **Preparation for siblings to return to the care of their mother.**

The work carried out by the allocated social worker, along with colleagues in the family placement team and the virtual school to support a sibling group of two to

return to the care of their birth mother when the care order was revoked by the courts.

All parties worked with the children, foster carers and birth mother to ensure the transition back to the family home was managed sensitively and within timescales which met the needs of the children. The allocated IRO commented that throughout the process there was clear evidence that the needs and wishes of the children were considered at all stages.

- **Understanding the individual needs of the child**

The allocated IRO acknowledged the work carried out by the foster carer and the allocated social worker to support a young man to work on his self esteem issues. They were both able to acknowledge the young person's need to take some control of his life and supported him to develop his music skills. Through music this young man has become more confident and used his skills to express his feelings and emotions.

7. ISSUES IMPACTING ON THE SERVICE FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- 7.1 The impact of the changing legal view with regard to the use of Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 has led to a review by Children Social Care of all Section 20 cases. This is impacting on the amount of court work being carried out by both social work teams but in particular has led to an increase of care proceeding being filed by the Over 11's social work team.
- 7.2 The relatively high number of children in Bracknell Forest subject to placement orders indicates a significant number of children who will require a permanent adoptive or long term placement. In recent years as the number of children in court proceedings has increased it has been a challenge to secure adoptive placements for some children. However the introduction of the pan Berkshire Adoption Service is welcomed and offers further opportunities to identify appropriate families able to offer children permanence through adoption. Matching and placing children in a timely way requires ongoing work and resources and it is still very challenging to find adoptive families and for older children, children with complex needs and sibling groups.
- 7.3 The introduction of the "Staying Put" Policy has offered support to young people leaving the care system and an opportunity to remain living in their foster placement for a period of time after their 18th birthday. This is welcomed by the IRO Service but we also acknowledge the pressures this will put identifying foster placements for new LAC children and the efforts required to recruit new appropriate carers.
- 7.4 The turnover of social workers within Children's Social Care continues to be a challenge. Changes of social worker can impact on the timeliness of care planning and also on the social worker/child relationship. The IRO Service has shared the views children and young people in relation to this issue with the Senior Management Team. The IRO Service welcomes the recruitment of a permanent Head of Service for LAC and also a Team Manager. This will provide stability within the social work teams. We also acknowledge the significant efforts being made to recruit and retain staff and recognise this is a regional and national issue.
- 7.5 The workload of the IRO service has continued to be high and is affected by the number of Looked After Children living out of the area; some at a considerable distance from Bracknell Forest due to their specialist care needs.
- 7.6 A small minority of children have experienced a higher number of placement moves which has resulted in additional reviews within a six month review period. The successful introduction of the pre review meeting with the child will also continue to impact on the IRO's workload when some children live at a distance from Bracknell.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The IRO Service has had a very busy and productive year. The number of children who have entered or left the care system has remained stable during the review period. Although resources have been increased and IRO caseloads have been reduced, the introduction of the pre review meetings with children and young people have resulted in additional workload for the IRO's. Having contact with children and young people between reviews however has been beneficial and as a service we would want to continue to fulfil this aspect of the IRO role.
- 8.2 The IRO service has strengthened the challenge function of the role over the last year and would seek to further embed the Dispute Resolution Process in the coming year and to be proactive in addressing delays and drift for children in care. This is clearly an expectation identified in the IRO Handbook and an element of the service which Ofsted seek to see evidence of during their Inspections.
- 8.3 There are many challenges in the coming year which will require the IRO Service to continue to focus on quality, improvement and ensuring the voice of the child remains at the centre of the process, the developments this year have been positive and we look forward to ensuring they continue to support good practice and positive outcomes for our children and young people. We are seeking to improve consultation processes and to encourage the increased participation of parents and carers.
- 8.4 As a service we are also mindful of safeguarding issues for children in care who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, substance misuse, missing episodes and disengaging from education and training. We will continue to monitor Care Plans closely and to include actions which build safety and stability for children and young people.
- 8.5 The IRO Service notes the ongoing hard work and commitment of social workers and other professionals in supporting young people who are looked after and the quality of the relationship with Children's Social Care in particular remains a strength.

9 ACTIONS FOR 2015/16

- 9.1 As a result of completing this report and reviewing progress in the past year the IRO Service has identified the following areas for development during 2015/16.
- To fully embed the Dispute Resolution Process in order to continue to provide effective challenge where appropriate on behalf of looked after children.
 - Further development of ways to maintain contact with children and young people between reviews and monitor plans.
 - Continue to investigate the use of technology such as "Skype" or "Face time" and consultation apps to provide more accessible options for children and young people to communicate with their IRO.
 - Further developing ways to encourage the participation for parents and carers in the review process in a way that is most meaningful and appropriate to the circumstances.
 - Review the LAC review documentation and forms for recording the outcome of the LAC review. Alongside this we would recommend that Children's Social Care review of the Care Plan format for LAC to make this more child focussed.
 - Continued performance monitoring and quality assurance of the work of the team. This will include ongoing observations of practice by Team Manager and Head of Performance Management and Governance, audit and peer review processes.

Unrestricted

- Continued delivery of workshop / seminars to Social Workers and Managers to ensure the role of IRO is clearly understood and new staff have a detailed induction.
- Continue to contribute to the South East Regional IRO group and take on board national developments, legislation and guidance.
- To secure appropriate professional training and development for the IRO's to ensure their practice knowledge and skills are maintained at a high standard.

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TO: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION
Director of Children, Young People & Learning

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the members of the Children, Young People & Learning (CYPL) Overview and Scrutiny Panel with an update on Elective Home Education in Bracknell Forest.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 Parents are required by law to ensure their children of a school age receive an appropriate full time education. In most instances this is achieved by registering their child with a school. However, some parents choose to educate their child other than at school: in the UK this is commonly known as Elective Home Education. Bracknell Forest currently have 48 children that are being home educated.

3 Supporting Information

- 3.1 The LA needs to be satisfied that a child is receiving suitable education at home, and will ask to meet with the family in order to talk to the parent and to look at examples of work and learning. LAs have no automatic right of access to a parent's home. However, parents may, if they wish to, permit access to their home, or offer an alternative venue for a meeting. At the initial meeting, the nature and frequency of future contact should be agreed.
- 3.2 Where it appears to an LEA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving efficient or suitable full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, the LA is under a duty to serve a notice on the parent requiring them to satisfy the authority that their child is receiving suitable education "otherwise than at school". If the parent's reply is unsatisfactory, or if they fail to reply, the LA may issue a School Attendance Order (under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996). LAs may also apply to the Court for a child assessment

4 Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- 4.1 Children and young people with statements of special educational needs can be home educated. When a child has a statement of special educational needs which names a special school, the child's name may **not** be removed from the register of that school without the consent of the education authority.

5 Bracknell Forest Interpretation and Profile

- 5.1 The Council has always fully acknowledged a parent's right to choose to educate their children other than at school and has procedures in place to support parents who opt to home educate.
- 5.2 Bracknell Forest's recent EHE policy was agreed in 2010 and followed the DCSF guidelines for Elective Home Education. Following a review in January 2015 the policy has now been updated in relation to achieving a balanced approach to both safeguarding issues and the rights of parents that opt to Home Educate (Appendix 1).

- 5.3 EHE numbers have increased over the past academic year. However this is in line a national trend. (Appendix 2).

6 Categories of EHE children:

- 6.1 **Long term:** These families are committed to EHE and strongly believe that home education is best for their child. They are usually in contact with other home educating families and support groups. They seek to provide an education provision that is suitable for their children. They are very aware of their rights and responsibilities and the majority are happy to engage with the LA to receive annual visits.
- 6.2 **Medium term:** These families become home educators usually because something has gone wrong at a school. (Sustained and unresolved bullying is sometimes cited as an issue). They remove their child from a school, or they are holding out for a place at a certain school and will accept no other. These families will often attempt home education until their situation is resolved. Because of the length of time that they may home educate, they will inevitably receive visits from advisers. The quality of education can be variable. Where the provision is not deemed suitable, attempts are made to re-engage the family with the education system.
- 6.3 **Short term:** These families use home education as a short-term solution to such things as avoiding a permanent exclusion, avoiding legal proceedings for poor school attendance, taking a child out of school because of an issue, (but often without having a plan for the child's education). These families do not usually provide quality home education provision.

7 Reasons for Elective Home Education

- 7.1 During home visits parents are asked for the reason they have elected home educate their children. There are a variety of reasons why parents chose to do this:
- Cultural or religious beliefs
 - Distance or access to a local school
 - Ideological reasons
 - Dissatisfaction with the education system
 - The inability or unwillingness of a child to go to school
 - A short term option for a particular reason.

8 Education adviser visits

- 8.1 The main point of contact for Home Education families is an education adviser who can provide advice and undertakes home visit to assess the education provided. The key judgements are:
- Is the education provision suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs the child may have?
 - Is the education provision efficient? Does it achieve what it sets out to achieve and does it prepare the child for life in society?

9 Recording Information

- 9.1 In October 2014, the EHE monitoring databases were merged and expanded to provide more accurate information and bring together additional information on EHE children in the borough. This database is reviewed regularly by the Safeguarding and Inclusion Manager.

10 Access to Examinations at GCSE or equivalent

- 10.1 It was agreed at a head teachers' meeting in January 2013 that all secondary schools in Bracknell Forest would be open to requests from EHE parents who were seeking to register their children to sit their formal examinations using the school as their examination centre. In principle, if the school was already offering the same examination board and qualification, parents would only have to pay the cost of the paper being sat. If they were following a different qualification, head teachers indicated that EHE parents would have to incur the additional cost to register that examination with the board.

11 EHE children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

- 11.1 There are currently two children who are home educated and have a statement.
- 11.2 The EHE adviser has attended the EHCP conversion meetings with the SEN team and parents to provide a link between EHE and transferring from their SEN Statement to the new Education and Health Care Plan.

12 Regional EHE meetings

- 12.1 The EHE adviser / officer attends regular meetings of the Oxfordshire and Home Counties Home Education Officers Group. At these meetings they can share knowledge and experience with colleagues in similar roles from across the southern region.

13 Management Oversight

- 13.1 The Safeguarding and Inclusion Team Manager has Management responsibility for Elective Home Education. This includes the supervision of the named EHE School Adviser.
- 13.2 The Safeguarding and Inclusion Team Manager meets with the EHE team (EWS Team Leader, EHE School Adviser, Admin Officer) on a half termly basis. During this meeting the database is discussed to ensure visits are up to date and processes are reviewed.
- 13.3 The Safeguarding and Inclusion Team Manager provides regular half termly supervision for the EHE School Adviser where each case is reviewed and updates from visits shared.
- 13.4 The Safeguarding and Inclusion Team Manager meets with the Chief Officer of Learning and achievement for exception reporting and updates on a half termly basis.

14 Risks and Processes to Mitigate Risk

- 14.1 In November 2009 the Department for Children Schools and Families introduced measures in the Children Schools and Families Bill that attempted to change the law on home education in England. The Government was not successful, and the Children Schools and Families Act 2010 received Royal Assent on April 8th without any of the home education clauses passing into law.
- 14.2 In March 2014, the NSPCC published a report 'Children not educated in school: learning from case reviews. A summary of risk factors and learning for improved practice around elective home education'.
- 14.3 The report found in a small number of serious case reviews, children involved were not found to be enrolled in school. It identified that Home education is not, in itself, a risk factor for abuse or neglect. However there is a danger that these children can become invisible to the authorities. The serious case reviews examined identified that, in a small number of cases, elective home education can lead to isolation and the obscuring of children from the universal services that would otherwise be in a position to monitor their welfare. Under current legislation and guidance, there is no formal registration process for elective home education which means that some children may be completely unknown to the local authority.
- 14.4 This NSPCC report identified five key issues for Elective Home Education and five areas of learning for improved practice. These recommendations were each carefully considered in a major overhaul of the Bracknell Forest Policy and Procedures. There are clear and robust actions identified to minimise any risk to children who are in receipt of Elective Home Education.

Background Papers

Report to the Secretary of State on the Review of Elective Home Education in England.
Graham Badman, June 2009

'Children not educated in school: learning from case reviews. A summary of risk factors and learning for improved practice around elective home education'. **NSPCC, March 2014**

Contact for further information

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Appendix 1

Elective Home Education Policy



Elective Home Education Policy and Procedure

September 2015

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Acknowledgement: Bracknell Forest Borough Council would like to thank Oxfordshire County Council for sharing their materials in the development of this policy and procedure document.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Elective Home Education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to describe the education provided by parents¹ at home, rather than providing education for their children by sending them to school. This is different to home tuition or education other than at school provided by a Local Authority (LA).
- 1.2 This document outlines our recently reviewed policy and procedures to enable Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) to comply with its duties towards children and young people in Bracknell whose parents have elected to educate them otherwise than at school. It is published for parents, schools, local authorities and other agencies with an interest in EHE.

2.0 Policy Statement

The DfE “Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities”, published in November 2007, emphasises the importance of local authorities building “effective relationships with home educators that function to safeguard the educational interests of children and young people: relationships that are rooted in genuine mutual understanding, trust and respect.”

This revised policy seeks to implement improved relationships with home educators and provide a better signposting service to a range of sources to improve outcomes for learners.

3.0 The Law relating to Elective Home Education

- 3.1 The definition within section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

*(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
(b) to any special educational needs he may have,
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”*

This gives parents considerable freedom in determining the scope of education provided.

- 3.2 There is no legal definition of what constitutes a “full-time” education, although children in school usually spend between 22 and 25 hours working each week for 38 weeks of the year. Measurement of “contact time” in this way is not relevant in the context of elective home education, where the child often has continuous one to one contact with the educator and the types of educational activity which the child follows may be varied and flexible.

¹ The term parent, for the remit of this policy, applies to parent/s, guardian/s or legal carer/s and to any other person with parental responsibility.

3.3 Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the start of the first term commencing after the child's fifth birthday (or on the fifth birthday). A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen. As part of "Raising participation age" from 2015 all young people are required to continue in education, which might be through employment and/or training until their 18th birthday.

4.0 Parental Rights and Responsibilities

4.1 Parents have a legal right to educate their child at home and are not required to have any qualifications or training to provide their children with a suitable education. The 1996 Education Act makes clear that it is a parent's duty to ensure his/her child receives a suitable education. In addition, the Act provides that, generally, children are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

4.2 Parents are not required to inform the LA that they intend to elect or have elected to home educate. They are not required to seek approval from the LA, unless their child attends a special school.

4.3 Parents are responsible for writing to the HeadTeacher of the child's school informing him/her that they elect to home educate, unless the child is in a special school in which case they are required to seek approval from the LA first.

4.4 The type of educational activity can be varied and flexible. Parents are not required to:

- teach the National Curriculum
- provide a broad and balanced education
- have a timetable
- have premises equipped to any particular standard
- set hours during which education will take place
- have any specific qualifications
- make detailed plans in advance
- observe school hours, days or terms
- give formal lessons
- mark work completed by their child
- formally assess progress or set development objectives
- reproduce school type peer group socialisation
- match school-based, age-specific standards.

4.5 Parents may choose to employ other people to educate their child, though they themselves continue to be responsible for the education provided. It is recommended that parents ensure that such people are qualified and suitable, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

4.6 Parents assume full financial responsibility for their child's education, including the costs of private tuition, courses and public examinations. However, colleges of FE can claim the cost of course fees on an individual basis for home educated young people under 16.

5.0 The Local Authority's Responsibilities

Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights states that:

No person shall be denied the right to an education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical conviction.

- 5.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty, under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible) the identities of children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. This duty applies to statutory school age children who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school.
- 5.2 A further statutory duty exists, which requires the LA to serve a formal notice under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 if it appears that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education. The formal notice requires the parent to satisfy the LA that the child is in fact receiving suitable education. If the authority does not accept the evidence it has the power to issue a school Attendance Order requiring the parent to register the child at a named school.

6.0 Responsibilities of Schools in Bracknell

- 6.1 There is no legal requirement for parents to discuss home education with the school but if a parent does approach the school to discuss the possibility of home educating, the LA expects the school to respond positively and constructively. If parents are considering home education because of a dispute with the school, the LA expects the school to take all necessary steps to resolve the issue. The school should signpost the parent to the Team Leader, Education Welfare for further advice and guidance to enable them to make an informed choice.
- 6.2 The DfE guidelines make it explicit that: *“Schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance record. In the case of exclusion, they must follow the statutory guidance. If the pupil has a poor attendance record, the school and LA must address the issues behind the absenteeism and use the other remedies available to them.”*
- 6.3 When a school receives formal, written notice from a parent, that a child is being withdrawn from school in order to be home educated and the child has ceased to attend the school, the Headteacher should ensure that the pupil's name is removed promptly from the admissions register in accordance with Section 8(1) (d) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- 6.4 Regulation 12 (3) of the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 states that *“the “proprietor” (Headteacher) of the school must, make a return to the LA for every such pupil giving the full name of the pupil, the address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides and the ground upon which their name is to be deleted from the admission register as soon as the ground for deletion is met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register”*.
- 6.5 In practice the school must inform the LA immediately when a child is removed from the school roll by sending a copy of the letter written by parents. They must also complete the LA's "School Exit" form (show as link) and provide information requested by the EWS Team Leader. The school must create a Common Transfer File and post it to the s2s website where the file will be stored in the Lost Pupil Database section of s2s.

6.6 The school is responsible for raising any safeguarding concerns relating to a child with the LA's Children's Social Care Team.

6.7 The school must retain the child's school file.

7.0 Elective Home Education and Safeguarding

7.1 The welfare and protection of all children, both those who attend school and those who are educated at home, is of paramount concern and the responsibility of the whole community. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 imposes a duty on the LA to make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred on them are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Similarly, section 10 of the Children Act 2004 talks about promoting cooperation between departments to improve children's wellbeing and section 11 places a statutory duty on key people and bodies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

7.2 The EHE Officer will follow Bracknell Forest' Safeguarding Children Board safeguarding procedures at all times and work with relevant agencies and individuals to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and, in the event of any concerns about the welfare of a home educated child, initiate and follow through established procedures.

7.3 The EHE Officer will consider contacting the relevant Social Care team on those occasions where there is uncertainty about the welfare of the child. The EHE Officer will explain the reasons for any welfare concerns to the parents in accordance with procedure.

8.0 Support, guidance and resources provided by the Local Authority

8.1 The EHE Officer provides support in the form of:

- Referring parents to resources and services, discussing methods and philosophies, networking and advising on examinations;
- Publishing written information about EHE that is clear, accurate and sets out the legal position, roles and responsibilities of both the LA and parents;
- Discussing the implications of EHE with parents before they make the decision to leave or enter the school system;
- Producing and distributing accurate written records of meetings with home educating parents and children;
- Offering the above information in local community languages and alternative formats on request;
- Provide details for EHE families in Bracknell Forest to facilitate networking;
- Referring to other agencies, such as Early Intervention Hub, for support;
- Promoting positive relationships with elective home education families based on mutual understanding, respect and trust in order to safeguard the educational interest of children.

8.2 BFC embraces diversity and respects individual choice. The EHE Officer recognises that parents of all educational, social, racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds successfully educate children outside the school setting.

- 8.3 The EHE Officer has links with local secondary schools accepting private candidates for examinations.
- 8.4 Analysis of data shows that young people who have been educated at home have a higher risk of not making an effective transition into education, training or employment post-16. Families with children in the equivalent of year 10 will be contacted and encouraged to engage with the Transition Coordinator to enable the development of a clear post 16 plan to reduce the risk of the young person becoming NEET.
- 9.0 Bracknell Council's EHE Procedures
- 9.1 When the Education Welfare Service receives an enquiry from a parent or carer who is considering home education the enquiry response letter (EHE 001) and Information Leaflet for Home Educators (EHE 003) will be sent.
- 9.2 When the Education Welfare Service receives formal confirmation from a school or directly from a parent that a child is being home educated, a check will be made on the Capita ONE database to ensure that de-registration has been correctly recorded. If this has not been done the school will be contacted to do this. The EWS will then add EHE (EOTAS) as the new registered base for the pupil with the appropriate start date.
- 9.3 The EWS will send a letter (EHE 002) and an EHE "Information Leaflet for Home Educators" (EHE 003) to parents and will ask them to provide basic information via completion of an "EHE Outline Plan" form (EHE 004). Electronic records will be saved to the LA electronic filing system (EWS/pupil file).

The EWS will:

- Contact Children's Social Care and the Special Education Needs Team for information if case known (open or closed).
 - Request information from school, including completion of the "School Exit" form (EHE 005) and advises on off roll procedure.
 - Contact EMTAS if Gypsy, Roma and Traveller to share information and suggest a joint visit.
 - Contact the Safeguarding and Inclusion Manager if the child is at risk of permanent exclusion.
 - Check if there are siblings via ONE system and identification on School Exit form
 - Contact the EI HUB co-ordinator and Family Intervention team to ascertain if services are working with the child and share information.
 - Check the address on the ALERT system via BORIS
- 9.4 The EWS will forward the completed EHE "Outline Plan", withdrawal letter, "School Exit " form and other relevant information to the EHE Officer within 10 working days (or sooner if concerns are held or parents request an early visit).
- 9.5 The EHE Officer will now have responsibility for the progress of the case and will contact parents to introduce themselves. A visit from the EHE Officer will be offered to discuss the child's education at home and to offer the parent support and advice. The aim of the visit will be to maintain a positive and constructive relationship with parents.

The EHE Admin Officer will ensure copies of all correspondence and reports are placed on the pupils EHE file.

The EHE Officer will undertake a Risk Assessment and complete the Risk Assessment Form (EHE006) prior to any visit to the home.

9.6 Following a visit, the EHE Officer completes the “Record of Discussion” form (EHE 007) and agrees next contact with parents. Within 7 working days of the visit the EHE Officer will:

- Send the completed “Record of Discussion” to the EWS, the Safeguarding & Inclusion Team Manager and SEN Casework Officer (where appropriate)
- Send a letter (EHE 008) with the Record of Discussion extract embedded in it to the parents. Parents will then be given the opportunity to respond.

9.7 The frequency and format of meetings will be determined by factors such as the EHE Officer or parent identifying concerns about the child’s progress and education. Where education is suitable the EHE Officer will arrange a further visit in 12 months.

9.8 Parents may exercise their right not to allow the LA access to the home, the child or the child’s work. The duty on local authorities to intervene under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996 only applies if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable education at home. Elective Home Education Guidance for Local Authorities (DCSF-2009) Section 3.4 “Parents are under no duty to respond to such requests for information or a meeting but it would be sensible to do so”.

9.9 Where parents decline a home visit, information about education provision should be sent to the EHE Officer (parents do not have a legal obligation to provide this), who should take it at face value unless other information is received to contrary that could raise concerns. The EHE Officer will continue to make regular, written contact with parents, at least on an annual basis, in order to confirm that EHE continues successfully and to offer support. The EHE Officer will also offer phone or email contact.

9.10 Where formal notice is required:

If it appears to the EHE Officer that a suitable education is not taking place, then s/he should go through the following steps:

- Allow the parent the opportunity to address the identified issues and recommendations for improvements within an agreed timescale, usually a maximum of six weeks. These should be discussed and agreed with the parent and confirmed in writing within the EHE Officer’s “Record of Discussion” (EHE 007) and Notice to Improve (EHE 009).
- A referral to the Early Intervention HUB will be offered to help support the family where appropriate.
- After the agreed timescale for improvement, if the education is still believed to be unsuitable, then the EHE Officer will discuss the matter with the Safeguarding & Inclusion Team Manager who will liaise with the EWS Team Leader for a legal discussion.
- The EHE Officer should send the relevant documents to the EWS Team Leader. The EHE Officer will write to the parent/s to inform them of this.
- The EWS Team Leader will write to parents (EHE 010) requesting they satisfy the LA that their child is receiving full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have and may then proceed to issue a School Attendance Order, within 15 days.

- 9.11 A School Attendance Order (EHE 011) will be served after all reasonable steps have been taken to try to resolve the situation. At any stage following the issue of the Order, parents may present evidence to the LA that they are now providing an appropriate education and apply to have the Order revoked. If this is refused, parents can choose to refer the matter to the Secretary of State. If the LA prosecutes parents for not complying with the order, then it will be for a court to decide whether the education being provided is suitable and efficient. The court can revoke the Order if it is satisfied that the parent is fulfilling their duty. It can also revoke the order where it imposes an Education Supervision Order.
- 9.12 In cases where the EHE Officer has been unable to contact a family within the first six weeks they will send "unable to contact" letter (EHE 012) and complete a referral (EHE 013) to the Children Missing Education Officer, EWS.

10.0 Elective Home Education and Special Needs

- 10.1 Parents' right to educate their child at home applies equally where a child has special education needs [Section 319 of the Education Act 1996]. Where it is known that a child has either a Statement or an Education, Health and Care plan and the parent wishes to remove the child from the school roll for elective home education the parents will be written to advising them of the process (EHE 014). Included in this letter will be the EHE Information Leaflet for Elective Home Educators (EHE 003) and the EHE Outline plan (EHE 004)-.

The LA has a duty to maintain the statement/Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and review it annually, so long as it remains relevant, following procedures set out in Chapter 9 of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001. Statement/EHC plan review meetings will be convened and chaired by the SEN Casework Officer. The LA will make it clear to parents that they are welcome to attend, but are not obliged to do so.

- 10.2 If the child is on the roll of a special school, the child's name may not be removed from the school register without the LA's consent, or if the LA refuses to give its consent, at the Secretary of State's direction [Regulation 8(2) Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006].
- 10.3 In order to assess whether home provision meets the needs of the statement/EHC plan parents may be asked to provide information such as lesson plans and completed work regarding the home education provision. The LA will only be relieved of its duty to arrange the provision specified in the child's statement/EHC plan if it is satisfied that the parents' arrangements are suitable.
- 10.4 If the LA is satisfied with the parents' arrangements it will continue to have a duty to maintain and review the statement/EHC plan annually until: it decides to cease the statement/EHC plan; or the statement/EHC plan automatically lapses; or the statement/EHC plan is transferred to another LA. The LA does not have to name a school in part 4 of the child's statement/EHC plan, though it should state the type of school it considers appropriate and go on to state that "parents have made their own arrangements under section 7 of the Education Act 1996".
- 10.5 If the LA is not satisfied with the parents' home provision, it will not be absolved of its responsibility to arrange the provision in the child's statement/EHC plan. Where the child remains registered at a special school, he/she will be expected to return to that school. If they do not return the SEN Officer will consider whether to refer the matter

to the Education Welfare Service for prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

- 10.6 If the SEN Casework Officer decides the statement/EHC plan should remain in place, the statement/EHC plan will be maintained and reviewed annually and amended where necessary. The annual review will be arranged by the SEN Casework Officer.
- A decision will be made at the review as to whether the educational needs, as stipulated in the statement/EHC plan, are being met.
 - In the event that the LA is not satisfied the EHE Officer will coordinate a second visit, at a mutually agreeable date, to collect agreed evidence.
 - If the evidence is not made available at the second meeting the SEN Casework Officer will then name an educational provision which can meet the needs and the parents will be informed of their duty to ensure that the young person attends.
- 10.7 Therapy provision, if stipulated in the statement/EHC plan, should be accessed through the GP and professionals invited to contribute to the annual review.
- 10.8 A parent who is educating their child at home may ask the LA to carry out a statutory assessment of their child's special educational needs and the LA will consider the request within the same statutory timescales and in the same way as for all other requests.
- 11.0 Elective Home Education and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Communities
- 11.1 BFC is sensitive to the distinct culture, ethos and needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. GRT parents have the same right to educate their children at home as other families and will be treated in exactly the same way as any other families. The LA will take a broad and holistic view of the education being provided with reference to their communities' culture and lifestyle, when considering the suitability of the education.
- 11.2 The EHE Officer will liaise with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) to request a joint initial home visit with the Traveller Education Support Officer. This will ensure that GRT families have full access to advice and guidance on establishing suitable educational provision for their children.
- 11.3 The duty of the LA to act if children are not receiving a suitable education applies equally to traveller children residing with their families on temporary or unauthorised sites and to settled travellers. Although travelling children of school age have the same legal right to education as anyone else, it can be difficult to claim or seek these rights without a permanent or legal place to stop. BFC therefore seeks to positively assist traveller families (in the same way as other families) who do not appear to be providing a suitable education for their children, before taking action.
- 12.0 Roles, Responsibilities and Monitoring
- 12.1 The EHE Officer is line managed by the Safeguarding & Inclusion Team Manager. The Team Manager will provide regular (at least half-termly) supervision and performance management. The Safeguarding & Inclusion Team manager may delegate responsibility for EHE visits to other colleagues within the department if additional capacity is required.

- 12.2 The role of the Elective Home Education Officer is to establish and maintain contact with families educating their children at home and to offer parents appropriate advice and support in the best interests of their children.
- 12.3 The EHE Officer must ensure that all reasonable care is taken to ensure their safety, be advised by any risk assessment information and report any concerns over health, welfare and safety issues to the Safeguarding & Inclusion Team Manager.
- 12.4 The EHE Officer should always leave details of the venue for a meeting and predicted timings with someone at home or with EHE Administration Officer. The EHE Officer should discuss any cases of concern and make decisions in conjunction with the Safeguarding & Inclusion Team Manager.
- 12.5 The EHE team (EHE Officer, EHE Admin, EWS Team Leader, SG&I Team Manager) will meet regularly, at least half-termly to discuss and review cases.
- 12.6 The Safeguarding & Inclusion Team Manager will collate and present updates on all EHE cases for review with the Chief Officer on a regular basis.
- 13.0 Review and Evaluation

This policy and procedure is reviewed annually. Evaluation questionnaires are given to parents and children and their views inform developments in the service. Consultation with home educators will take place where there are significant changes to policy or procedure. The voice of parents and children/young people, through the EHE Officer, also informs developments. BFC is committed to securing an effective partnership with home educators.

Date of next review: September 2016

References

- Children Act 2004 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents
- Education Act 1996 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents
- Education Act 2002 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents
- Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities (November 2007) www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/parents/involvement/homeeducation/a0073367/elective-home-education-guidelines
- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2015 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made

Appendix 2

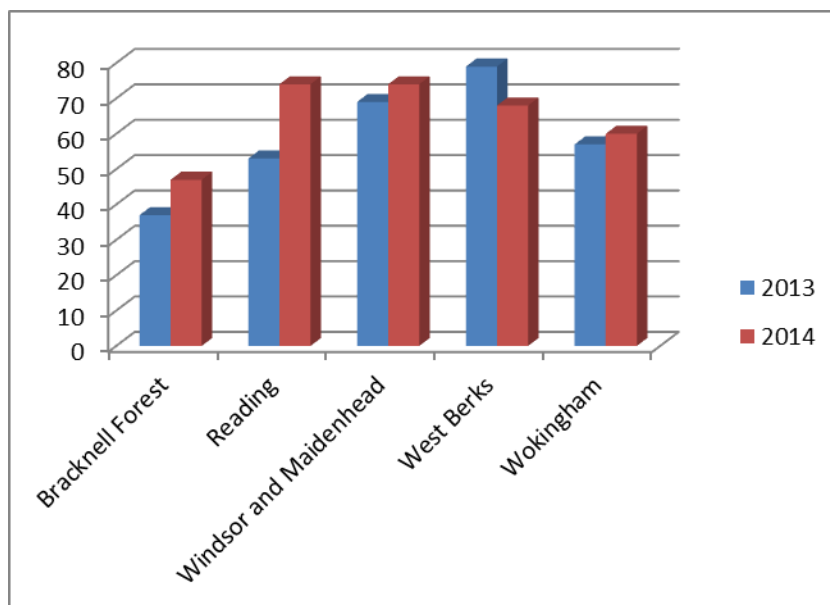
Elective Home Education – Statistical Information

Numbers of home educated children in Bracknell Forest over the last 9 years

Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Primary	6	11	6	11	12	8	17	18	26
Secondary	34	32	29	31	32	29	18	19	19
SEN with Statement	4	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	2
Total	44	45	36	44	47	39	37	39	47

EHE numbers have increased during the period 2014-15 although this is in line a national trend. In Bracknell Forest there has been an increase in the number of families who have chosen to educate their children at home while their names are on the waiting list for a preferred local school.

Compared to our local neighbours, over the last two published years, the numbers of Elective Home Educated children in Bracknell Forest are proportionally lower.



**TO: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
REVIEW OF SUBSTANCE MISUSE INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report introduces the attached Executive response to the report of the Overview and Scrutiny review of substance misuse involving children and young people.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Panel considers the response of the Executive to the review of substance misuse involving children and young people undertaken by one of its working groups.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To enable the Panel to consider the attached Executive response to the report of the review of substance misuse involving children and young people undertaken by one of its working groups.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

**5 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES
IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES /
CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Substance Misuse Involving Children and Young People, April 2015.

Contact for further information

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TO: EXECUTIVE
23 JUNE 2015

**JOINT RESPONSE TO THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY REPORT ON SUBSTANCE MISUSE INVOLVING CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Director Children, Young People & Learning
Director Adult Social Care, Health and Housing**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Members of the Executive of the response from the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning and the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing to the Overview and Scrutiny report on substance misuse.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the following recommendations of the Working Group "A Review of Substance Misuse Involving Children and Young People" be accepted:

- 2.1 Following consultation with the Youth Council and/or other relevant groups of local young people, the substance misuse leaflet be updated on a partnership basis to ensure that up to date information is disseminated and that all partners are working together with common understanding and goals.
- 2.2 Awareness raising booklets including 'before and after' pictorial content be produced to alert parents to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse by their children, and to provide a step guide to recognising a substance misuse issue, acknowledging its potential impact on the family and seeking advice/assistance/treatment to overcome it to be produced.
- 2.3 A substance misuse peer mentoring scheme be introduced in Bracknell Forest schools to support children and young people with related issues.
- 2.4 Additional training for both newly qualified and established teachers be provided to enable them to detect early signs of substance misuse and then offer support and signposting to services.
- 2.5 A programmed, consistent and joined up partnership approach to substance misuse prevention education in schools involving misuse youth workers, the Youth Offending Services, police and other relevant organisations.
- 2.6 Opportunities are taken to pursue closer family-wide substance misuse working practices between Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Public Health.
- 2.7 Efforts be made to secure the closure of the gap in CAMHS Tier 2 preventive mental health services and to increased CAMHS service provision to assist young people to break free from substance misusing peer groups and support young people at risk of offending and entering the court system owing to substance misuse.

- 2.8 A Berkshire wide substance misuse data sharing protocol be developed to enable comparisons with other local authorities and to facilitate identification and response to issues.
- 2.9 In recognition of the link between substance misuse and child sexual exploitation, relevant groups such as Children's Social Care, the police and Local Safeguarding Children's Board strategic group be requested to monitor this situation and report to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel on request on a regular basis.
- 2.10 Where appropriate, child protection plans include the requirement for parent(s)/guardians to attend a relevant substance misuse support for treatment programme.
- 2.11 The Working Group has carried out a thorough review of substance misuse services involving children and young people. Although the review is focused on the impact of substance misuse on children and young people, it also involved adult family members and the drug and alcohol services function which falls within the portfolio of the Executive Member for Adult Services and Health.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Working Group has spent considerable time on the review and the Executive are asked to support the recommendations outlined above.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The recommendations and early actions in support of these are set out below:-
There are ten recommendations made in the report six have been accepted in full and four have been partially accepted. This is because of the cost implications of full implementation of three of the recommendations, therefore they have been accepted in part and actions agreed from within existing budgets.
- 5.2 We would like to thank the Working Group for their very helpful and well informed report which will enable us to further improve and develop our services. It is also of note that in the conclusion the successful work of the services to addressing substance abuse is commended and in particular the high level of partnership work which takes place in Bracknell Forest.

5.3 **Recommendation 1**

Following consultation with the Youth Council and/or other relevant groups of local young people, the substance misuse leaflet be updated on a partnership basis to ensure that up to date information is disseminated and that all partners are working together with common understanding and goals.

- 5.4 Accepted. The Executive Members both share the group's view of the valuable role of providing and promoting up to date information. The substance misuse leaflet will be updated as requested. It is recommended that this is also prepared as electronic copy so that they can be more widely and cost effectively disseminated through the Youth Council, schools and relevant community groups. The Drug and Alcohol Strategic Group has tasked the operational group to review and revise the information currently being supplied. An initial draft document has been completed with young people and further editing is being undertaken.
- 5.5 The development of a local drug and alcohol website by the DAAT and the Public Health Team will allow us to include any leaflets, information and advice and will sign post adults and young people to further support and information.
- 5.6 The DAAT has recently purchased a license for an online programme which contains over 20 psychosocial interventions. This programme is for adults and young people and can be used as part of one to one sessions. It also provides the ability for people to use the programme on their own and e-mail their work to their recovery facilitator. The programme also has a dashboard for monitoring use and progress towards outcomes.
- 5.7 Working with the police and other partners we will ensure that the information is widely disseminated via schools and community venues.
- 5.8 The estimated costs of printing leaflets will be approximately £208 for 2,000 black and white leaflets or £295 for 2000 colour. This would be met from existing DAAT budgets.

5.9 **Recommendation 2**

Awareness raising booklets including 'before and after' pictorial content be produced to alert parents to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse by their children, and to provide a step guide to recognising a substance misuse issue, acknowledging its potential impact on the family and seeking advice/assistance/treatment to overcome it be produced.

- 5.10 Accepted. The Drugs and Alcohol Team will undertake research into any existing resources in respect of raising parental awareness in respect of drug and alcohol misuse. The Drug & Alcohol Strategic Group will consider the use of before and after pictures to illustrate the harm that drug and alcohol misuse can cause as well as researching images that may provide pointers to parents. It is recommended that these are also prepared as electronic copy so that they can be more widely and cost effectively disseminated to the local community through schools and community groups.
- 5.11 The development of a local drug and alcohol website by the DAAT and the Public Health Team will allow us to include any leaflets, information and advice and will sign post parents to further support and information.

- 5.12 The estimated costs of printing and disseminating awareness raising booklets is not yet known as there may already be resources available for downloading. If funding was required to produce specific leaflets this would require approval from the Drug & Alcohol Strategic Group.

- 5.13 **Recommendations 3-5 are accepted in part and will be promoted and discussed with Headteachers, but implementation will be reliant on the taking up the recommendations.**

- 5.14 **Recommendation 3**

A substance misuse peer mentoring scheme be introduced in Bracknell Forest schools to support children and young people with related issues.

- 5.15 Accepted in part. The recommendation can be promoted as an idea to schools alongside the work that the Youth Service and DAAT already carries out in schools, but developing and implementing a peer mentoring scheme for substance misuse will depend on head teachers wanting to promote and develop such a scheme in their school, and use their staff and other resources to commission, develop and continue such a scheme in the long term, as well as allocate time in school to meet this recommendation.

- 5.16 Consideration should be given to Youth Services rolling out a mentoring programme in schools as two of the substance misuse youth workers have experience of developing these schemes and have previously done so in community settings in Bracknell Forest. Any such scheme would need to be fully costed before a decision is made as to the practicalities and affordability of this type of scheme.

- 5.17 **Recommendation 4**

Additional training for both newly qualified and established teachers be provided to enable them to detect early signs of substance misuse and then offer support and signposting to services

- 5.18 Accepted in part. The LA promotes a wide range of training opportunities and courses to schools. Substance misuse will be included in the future provision advertised to schools however courses all have a charge for attendance. It is therefore the school's decision which staff attend particular training courses and how school in-service days are used.

- 5.19 Consideration should be given to providing short awareness raising session for teachers as part of in-service days. The approximate cost of this would be £250 per half day.

- 5.20 Alternatively the DAAT provides a full training programme which teachers are in a position to access for a small charge.

- 5.21 **Recommendation 5**

A programmed, consistent and joined up partnership approach to substance misuse prevention education in schools involving substance misuse youth workers, the Youth Offending Services, police and other relevant organisations be adopted.

- 5.22 Accepted in part. The recommendation can be promoted to schools alongside the work that the Youth Service and DAAT already carry out in schools. It will be up to individual schools to take this work forward.
- 5.23 DAAT can provide on request substance misuse information sessions for children in year six and their parents in preparation for their transition to secondary school.
- 5.24 The DAAT has been in discussions with the information lead for Alcoholics Anonymous with a view to offering awareness sessions in schools. These sessions will include a short video presentation followed by a questions and answers session with people who are in recovery from drug and alcohol misuse.
- 5.25 We recognise that Recommendations 3-5 are of value, but will carry a significant cost implication to be fully implemented.

5.26 **Recommendation 6**

Opportunities are taken to pursue closer family-wide substance misuse working practices between Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Public Health.

- 5.27 Accepted. It should be noted that there are already close working relations with these teams. The DAAT team lead on this work and we will continue to develop our good practice.

5.28 **Recommendation 7**

Efforts be made to secure the closure of the gap in CAMHS Tier 2 preventative mental health services and to increased CAMHS service provision to assist young people to break free from substance misusing peer groups and support young people at risk of offending and entering the court system owing to substance misuse.

- 5.29 Accepted. This recommendation consists of three strands of work, that relate to improving preventative support for CAMHS Tier 2 is being overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The young people who are at risk of offending or who are known offenders have access to a wide range of high quality preventative support through the Youth Offending Service. We will seek to further emphasise the links with substance misuse as a result of this recommendation. The DAAT has commissioned 'Mindfulness' training to help staff to better support people and their families with substance abuse.

5.30 **Recommendation 8**

A Berkshire wide substance misuse data sharing protocol be developed to enable comparisons with other local authorities and to facilitate identification and response to issues.

- 5.31 Partially Accepted. The DAAT team have access to a wide range of information at a local, Berkshire wide and national level. The Public Health Team have access to the full range of information and are already in a position to make comparisons as required. Regular needs assessments are undertaken in respect of both adults and young people to identify any emerging trends or barriers to entering treatment.
- 5.32 The JSNA also includes substance misuse and using national comparisons in terms of hospital admissions, treatment uptake and successful outcomes.

- 5.33 The Berkshire DAAT leads meet quarterly with the Drug & Alcohol Lead Consultant for Public Health and raise issues, concerns, emerging trends and examples of best practice.

5.34 **Working Group Recommendation 9**

In recognition of the link between substance misuse and child sexual exploitation, relevant groups such as Children's Social Care, the police and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board strategic group be requested to monitor this situation and report to the Children and Young People' Overview and Scrutiny Panel on request on a regular basis.

- 5.35 Accepted.

5.36 **Recommendation 10**

Where appropriate, child protection plans include the requirement for parent(s)/guardians to attend a relevant substance misuse support or treatment programme.

- 5.37 Accepted. A Child Protection Plan can request attendance at relevant treatment or support and they already do, with parents/guardians being required where appropriate to provide evidence that they have not been using drugs.
- 5.38 The DAAT Team Leader and SMART Service Co-ordinator have recently met with the Independent Safeguarding Chairs to discuss the use of drug testing and attendance at group sessions in CP & CIN plans. A further visit to a team meeting is planned to ensure that all Independent Chairs have information on the relevant groups.
- 5.39 The Head of Drug & Alcohol Services has reviewed and revised the Substance Misuse Testing Policy and this has been provided to the Chief Officer for CSC and all relevant Heads of Service and Team Managers to try to reduce the amount of regulated testing being used and replaced it with random testing which is considered far more effective.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that there are no significant financial implications arising out of this report. Where there are costs associated with the recommendations that have been accepted, these are marginal and can be met from within existing budgets.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 N/A

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 N/A

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 N/A

Method of Consultation

7.2 N/A

Representations Received

7.3 N/A

Background Papers

Report by the Working Group of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Panel 'A Review of Substance Misuse Involving Children and Young People'.

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**TO: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**WORKING GROUP UPDATE REPORT
Working Group Lead Member**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress achieved to date by the Working Group of the Panel reviewing child sexual exploitation.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the progress achieved to date by its Working Group reviewing child sexual exploitation.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To keep the Panel up to date regarding the activities of its Working Group reviewing child sexual exploitation.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 A Working Group of the Panel, comprising Councillors Mrs McCracken (Lead Member), Mrs Birch, Ms Gaw, Peacey and Mrs Temperton, was established to undertake a review of child sexual exploitation (CSE) owing to concerns associated with the increasing level of awareness of it following recent high profile cases in areas such as Rotherham, Rochdale and Oxford.
- 5.2 The Working Group has met on two occasions to date. It received an introductory briefing and presentation from officers and considered the scope of the review at its first meeting. The Working Group's future programme of work was discussed and agreed at its second planning meeting.
- 5.3 Future work will include gathering further information and data; meeting relevant Council officers, representatives of Thames Valley Police and the Children's Commissioner for England; and visiting Oxfordshire County Council to meet the Executive Member, Scrutiny Chairman and Director of Children's Services to learn about how that Council responded to CSE.

**6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES
IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES /
CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None.

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**TO: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**EXECUTIVE KEY AND NON-KEY DECISIONS RELATING TO
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING
Assistant Chief Executive**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning for the Panel's consideration.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel considers the scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning appended to this report.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To invite the Panel to consider scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Consideration of Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions alerts the Panel to forthcoming Executive decisions and facilitates pre-decision scrutiny.
- 5.2 To achieve accountability and transparency of the decision making process, effective Overview and Scrutiny is essential. Overview and Scrutiny bodies are a key element of Executive arrangements and their roles include both developing and reviewing policy; and holding the Executive to account.
- 5.3 The power to hold the Executive to account is granted under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 which states that Executive arrangements of a local authority must ensure that its Overview and Scrutiny bodies have power to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive. This includes the 'call in' power to review or scrutinise a decision made but not implemented and to recommend that the decision be reconsidered by the body / person that made it. This power does not relate solely to scrutiny of decisions and should therefore also be utilised to undertake pre-decision scrutiny.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

No advice was sought from the Borough Solicitor, the Borough Treasurer or Other Officers or sought in terms of Equalities Impact Assessment or Strategic Risk Management Issues. Such advice will be sought in respect of each Executive decision item prior to its consideration by the Executive.

7 CONSULTATION

None.

Background Papers

Local Government Act 2000

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME**

REFERENCE:	I054104
TITLE:	Release of Section 106 Funding
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To agree the release of S106 contributions as part of the 2015/16 Education Capital Programme.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning
DECISION DATE:	22 Sep 2015
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	Within existing funding.
CONSULTEES:	Relevant Ward Councillors
CONSULTATION METHOD:	Consultation with Ward Councillors

REFERENCE:	I054937
TITLE:	Amendment to the Post 16 Transport Policy 2015/16 and to approve SEN Transport Policy 2016/17
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To agree an amendment to the Post 16 Transport Policy and to agree the SEN Transport Policy for 2016/17
DECISION MAKER:	Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning
DECISION DATE:	9 Oct 2015
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	Unknown at this time
CONSULTEES:	None.
CONSULTATION METHOD:	None.

REFERENCE:	I054843
TITLE:	Education Capital Programme - Edgbarrow School Expansion Procurement Plan
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	Approval of the procurement plan for expansion works at Edgbarrow School.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning
DECISION DATE:	20 Oct 2015
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	Department of Education Basic Need Grant.
CONSULTEES:	Ward Councillors, Headteacher, parents and neighbours.
CONSULTATION METHOD:	Meetings with the school and Education Capital Programme Board. Public consultations to be held during the 2015 Autumn term.

REFERENCE:	I056174
TITLE:	Implementing a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Bracknell Forest
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To inform the Executive about the progress with the MASH project and to endorse the MASH implementation programme to be fully operational from May 2016.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive
DECISION DATE:	20 Oct 2015
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	Cost pressure anticipated. To be considered as part of the 2016/17 budget setting process.
CONSULTEES:	Not applicable.
CONSULTATION METHOD:	Not applicable.

REFERENCE:	I055861
TITLE:	Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual Report
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	For the Executive to receive the annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and to note the key messages / recommendations made.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive
DECISION DATE:	20 Oct 2015
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	No financial implications
CONSULTEES:	Members of the LSCB and wider Forum of partners and stakeholders
CONSULTATION METHOD:	Meetings with interested parties

REFERENCE:	I056229
TITLE:	Secondary School Expansion and Leisure Provision on School Sites
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To agree the proposals to alter the provision and management of Sports Centres on Edgbarrow and Sandhurst School sites.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive
DECISION DATE:	20 Oct 2015
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	To be determined.
CONSULTEES:	Joint Management Committee School Governing Bodies
CONSULTATION METHOD:	Meetings with interested parties

REFERENCE:	I056240
TITLE:	School Provider Processes
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To agree the specifications and processes for the appointment of school sponsors for the new schools at the Binfield Learning Village and Amen Corner North developments.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive
DECISION DATE:	17 Nov 2015
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	Financial implications will be met from within existing resources.
CONSULTEES:	The steering groups include local stakeholder representatives.
CONSULTATION METHOD:	The steering groups for both schools will have the opportunity to comment on the processes.

REFERENCE:	I051899
TITLE:	School Places Plan 2015-2020
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To approve the annual update of the School Places Plan that describes latest pupil data, forecasts of pupil numbers for the next five years and a commentary on the need to add school capacity.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive
DECISION DATE:	15 Dec 2015
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	No direct financial impact as a result of the Plan.
CONSULTEES:	Professional partners
CONSULTATION METHOD:	Through discussion at meetings and comments on draft papers

REFERENCE:	I056119
TITLE:	Binfield Learning Village: Appointment of School Sponsor
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To agree the school sponsor to recommend to the Department for Education for the proposed all-through Binfield Learning Village.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive
DECISION DATE:	8 Mar 2016
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	No direct financial implications arise from agreeing the sponsor.
CONSULTEES:	The Education Review Group which comprises local stakeholders.
CONSULTATION METHOD:	Expressions of interest will be sought from existing academies and academy chains. The Education Review Group will consider the recommendation prior to it coming to the Executive.

REFERENCE:	I056042
TITLE:	Amen Corner North: Appointment of School Sponsor
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To agree the school sponsor to recommend to the DfE for the proposed Amen Corner North primary school.
DECISION MAKER:	Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning
DECISION DATE:	10 Mar 2016
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	No direct financial implications arise from agreeing the sponsor.
CONSULTEES:	The Education Review Group which comprises local stakeholders.
CONSULTATION METHOD:	Expressions of interest will be sought from existing academies and academy chains. The Education Review Group will consider the recommendation prior to it coming to the Executive Member.

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**TO: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLIMENTS
ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015**

Director of Children, Young People and Learning

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the attached 2014-2015 Annual Report in respect of Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and also concerns and compliments.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the attached 2014-2015 Annual Report regarding Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To inform the Panel of the 2014-2015 Annual Report of Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and also concerns and compliments.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

**5 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES
IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES /
CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

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TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING
DATE: 28 July 2015

ANNUAL REPORT – CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLIMENTS

Director Children, Young People and Learning

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the annual report of the statutory complaints function for Children’s Social Care – attached as Annex 1, for approval by the Executive Member for Children Young People and Learning. The report will then be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Children, Young People and Learning and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Executive Member approves the report.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 The Representations Procedure Regulations 2006 state that Complaints Services should produce an annual report for consideration.
- 3.2 The Complaints Service performs an important role in assuring the quality of response to children and young people or parents and carers who make complaints. The annual report supports the continuing development and review of the service and learning from complaints.
- 3.3 The Annual Report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Children, Young People and Learning and the Local Safeguarding Children Board following the approval of the Executive Member.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None considered

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The report provides an overview of the work of the Complaints Manager and identifies some of the key issues arising in terms of complaints. It also considers further developments to continually improve the way in which the Department responds to complaints in a positive manner. In addition to complaints the report identifies concerns and compliments that have been received by Children’s Social Care.
- 5.2 The Complaints Manager works closely with Children’s Social Care to ensure any complaints are resolved in a timely and satisfactory manner. In order to ensure positive outcomes, the Complaints Manager has regular meetings with senior

managers in Children's Social Care, and provides training for new Social Workers on the complaints process. Findings from complaints are considered in the development of policies and procedures and in the ongoing learning culture within Children's Social Care.

- 5.3 The Complaints Manager also attends and works within a regional complaints network so that good practice can be shared and there is a continuing focus on raising standards for complaints management practice across the region.
- 5.4 Overall, there were 47 complaints received during the period of 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 (46 in 2013/14). In March 2014 there were 775 open cases and 46 complaints represented 6% of the total open cases. In March 2015 there were 776 open cases and 47 complaints represented 6.1% of open cases showing that the volume of complaints have remained steady with only a marginal 0.1% increase this year.
- 5.5 Out of the total of 47 complaints that were received this year 15 complaints were deferred / declined, 11 were investigated under the statutory procedure; 21 were investigated under the Corporate procedure. This means that out of the 47 complaints received a total of 32 were investigated.
- 5.6 The nature of the complaints included the following:
 - Assessments / investigations
 - Communication
 - Staff decisions / conduct
 - Standard of service
 - Eligibility criteria
- 5.7 A concern is identified as issues that are raised and addressed without recourse to the statutory or corporate complaints procedure. During the year there were 31 concerns identified which were dealt with by Children's Social Care Managers and did not progress to formal procedures. This is an increase on the previous year where 28 concerns were identified. Dealing positively with concerns at this stage can often negate the need to progress to the formal procedure which reduces the need for Children's Social Care Managers to spend additional time on lengthy complaints.
- 5.8 There were 181 compliments recorded during the year which is an increase on the previous year where only 91 compliments were recorded. The compliments cover both Children's Social Care activity and activity within Strategy, Resources and Early Intervention. The report identifies some examples of the compliments made and they are from a range of individuals who have contact with the Department either as a service user or professional. It is important to ensure that compliments are recorded as they provide a good balance against the complaints made and highlight areas of good practice and positive outcomes. In the last year the ratio of compliments to complaints is 3.9 compliments to every 1 complaint.
- 5.9 It is important to note that while the number of complaints has not increased significantly there are an increasingly complex number of complaints which are costly, time consuming (for those making the complaint and those responsible for investigating the complaint) and can impact on the small amount of resource available.

- 5.10 The report in paragraph 4.9 identifies a range of learning from complaints and demonstrates the way in which the Complaints Manager is working alongside colleagues in Children's Social Care to ensure there is a mechanism for learning from complaints. This includes the use of learning from complaints form that a Manager or Service Head completes including identifying actions to be undertaken as a result of the complaint a positive outcome of learning from complaints includes the development of an information pack for independent investigators, an exemplar report, flowcharts and detailed guidance for carrying out investigations.
- 5.11 The cost of investigating complaints during the year has increased this year to £7,220; this is an increase on the previous year where £5,045 was spent on investigations. The reason for the increase in cost has been due to more complex complaints which require more extensive investigation.
- 5.12 Within this year there have been a small number of complaints from 3 children and young people. One complaint made by a young person with the use of an advocate was a very positive process and managed well between the Investigating Officer, Independent Person, the Advocate and the young person. It demonstrated sensitivity to the needs of the young person and was undertaken in a flexible way to accommodate the young person's emotional capacity to participate in the process. Whilst the outcome was that the complaint was not upheld, the young person was able to access a fair and transparent process and have their views heard with the support of an independent Advocate.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The Guidance on statutory complaints is issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 which requires local authorities in their social services functions to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. As such the Guidance does not have statutory force but the authority should comply with it unless local circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which justify a variation.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that there are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The Complaints Procedure is available to all those who meet the specified criteria for making a complaint using wither the Statutory or the Local Authority Procedure.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 None identified in connection with the annual report. It should be noted that complex complaints are carefully managed with support from the Borough Solicitor where relevant to address and minimise risks with individual cases.

Other Officers

- 6.5 None identified

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 None

Method of Consultation

7.2 Not applicable

Representations Received

7.3 Not applicable

Contacts for further information

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Children's Social Care Complaints, Concerns and Compliments

**Annual Report
2014 - 2015**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This annual report covers the period from 1st April 2014 through to 31st March 2015 and reports on complaints, concerns or compliments made by, or on behalf of children and young people who receive support / services from Children's Social Care in Bracknell Forest. It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual report which will be published on the Council's website.

The Complaints Manager has the key responsibility for managing the statutory process for complaints from children and young people (or their representatives) about the quality of that service. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview and analysis of all complaints, concerns and compliments received and to summarise the issues that have arisen, providing a mechanism by which the Department can monitor the quality and effectiveness of services and of its complaints procedure.

The report will be approved by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning, and will also be presented to the Children and Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Complaints about school provision and Special Needs are dealt with under a separate procedure and are not part of this report.

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 Definitions

The Children Act 1989 defines the complaints procedure as being for 'representations (including complaints)'. A representation could also include a concern, a compliment or enquiry on the nature, delivery or availability of a service. Therefore for a clearer understanding, we have provided the following definitions for the purposes of this report which are used within our complaints procedures:

Complaint: A complaint may generally be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet.

Concern: There are many instances where minor concerns can be addressed without further recourse to the complaints procedure. These are generally handled locally within the team or handled informally by the complaints manager and resolved within a short space of time (see point 5, page 15 for further information).

Compliment: Something nice that you say to praise or to thank someone (many of those in receipt of a service wish to give a compliment).

Deferred Complaint: It may not be possible to respond to a complaint immediately, for example if a case is in, or about to begin Court proceedings; the Local Authority has discretion in deciding whether to consider the complaint, whereas to do so would prejudice any court decisions. In such cases the complaint is deferred until the court proceedings are concluded; upon conclusion, the complaint may be resubmitted for consideration.

2.2 Legislation

The arrangements for the statutory procedure and management of complaints from children and young people (or their representatives) are set out in *The Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006*.

The legislation requires local authorities to appoint a Complaints Manager with the responsibility for:

- ✧ Managing, developing and administering the complaints procedure
- ✧ Providing assistance and advice to those who wish to complain
- ✧ Overseeing the investigation of complaints that cannot be managed at source
- ✧ Supporting and training existing and new members of staff
- ✧ Monitoring and reporting on complaints activity and data

Legislation is supported by detailed guidance from the Department for Education entitled 'Getting the Best from Complaints' which has been taken into account in the Complaint Procedures published by the Local Authority.

3.0 COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

3.1 Statutory complaints procedure in Bracknell Forest

Responsibility for the service rests with the Director for Children, Young People and Learning. In order to provide independence from the line management of cases and the allocation of resources, the Complaints Manager's post is located in the Strategy, Resources and Early Intervention branch of the Department and reports to the Head of Performance Management and Governance.

The purpose of the statutory procedure is to enable the complainant to have access to independent consideration of matters raised.

Complaints process using the Statutory Procedure:

Stage One: Local Resolution

This initial stage provides Children's Social Care Services the opportunity to try and resolve issues of dissatisfaction at local level with managers and staff who have responsibility for the case.

The Department has 10 working days in which to respond to the complaint made. As a rule, the Assistant Team Manager or Team Manager (of the service in question) will write to the complainant within this timescale, providing details of their investigations and any outcomes or decisions made.

Stage Two: Independent Investigation

Stage two involves a full and formal investigation; having received the response at the conclusion of stage one, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome and has requested to progress onto the next stage.

The Complaints Manager will appoint an independent Investigating Officer (IO) to lead the investigation of the same complaint previously responded to at stage one of the procedures (this is not an opportunity to make additional complaints). An Independent Person (IP) must also be appointed who works alongside the IO and will be involved in all aspects of the investigation. The role of the IP (as identified in guidance) is to shadow and oversee the quality of the work of the Investigating Officer.

The Investigation should be completed and the response sent to the complainant within 25 working days. Where this is not possible, this may be extended to 65 days. The Complaints Manager will maintain dialogue with the complainant if a response in the 25 working days is not feasible.

At the conclusion of the investigation, both the IO and the IP individually produce a report; the IP will comment on the findings outlined in the IO's – whether or not they are in agreement with the outcomes recommended. Both reports are forwarded for the consideration of the Chief Officer when they draft their stage 2 response.

The final decision regarding the outcome of the complaint rests with the Chief Officer, who will use the reports received from the IO & IP in reaching their conclusions which will be clearly detailed in the response. A copy of the IO's report will also be forwarded to the complainant for their information.

Stage Three: Review Panel

Where stage 2 has been concluded and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they will be eligible to request further consideration of the complaint by a Review Panel.

The Panel does not re-investigate the complaints, nor would it consider any new complaints that have not been first considered at stage two.

The Panel will be made up of three people, all of whom must be independent of the Council. The purpose of the Panel is to consider the complaint and wherever possible, work towards a resolution, which very often takes the form of recommendations made to the Director of CYP&L. The final decision rests with the Director, who will write to the complainant. Informing them of the outcome reached.

The complainant should be advised of their right to refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if still dissatisfied.

Final Stage: The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The LGO are impartial and investigate complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by the local authority; when they receive a complaint, they are on the side of neither the complainant nor the respondent authority.

Complainants are entitled to refer complaints onto the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) at any stage; however the LGO will not normally accept the complaint until the Council has had a chance to complete all stages of the complaints procedure.

This is the final stage that the complainant can take with their complaint, if they remain dissatisfied; their only recourse is through judicial proceedings.

3.2 Local Authority complaints procedure (Corporate Procedure)

Complaints not covered by the statutory procedure may be dealt with under the Local Authority's Corporate Procedure. These are often complaints made by parents, or carers regarding the impact of a service on them personally, liaison and coordination of these remain through the Complaints Manager.

Complaints process using the Corporate Procedure:

The Corporate procedure was updated in January 2015 and has changed to what was previously a four stage procedure to three stages, which are as follows:

Stage One

The new corporate procedure aims to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity. Stage 1 is the 'informal complaint' stage - to a member of staff at the first point of contact.

However, within Children's Social Care, stage 1 complaints considered under the corporate procedure are investigated formally and just as thoroughly as those received under the statutory procedures.

Stage Two

Formal complaint to the Director, who will initiate an investigation (independent to the Department concerned) into the complaints made.

Stage Three

The Chief Executive needs to consider whether the complaint has been dealt with appropriately. The Chief Executive may personally investigate the complaint, or appoint the Director or a senior manager who has not previously been involved, to review the complaint.

Alternatively, the Chief Executive may decide to refer the complaint to a complaints review panel, although they have the option to suggest a solution rather than convene a panel.

3.3 What may be complained about?

Some examples are given below (this is not an exhaustive list and the Complaints Manager should seek legal advice as necessary):

- ✧ An unwelcome or disputed decision.
- ✧ Attitude or behaviour of staff.
- ✧ Poor / lack of communication.
- ✧ Application of eligibility and assessment criteria / assessment care management and review.
- ✧ Concern about the quality or appropriateness of a service.
- ✧ Delay in decision making or provision of services / delivery or non-delivery of services.

3.4 What is exempt from the complaints procedure?

Some examples are given below (this is not an exhaustive list and the Complaints Manager should seek legal advice as necessary):

- ✧ The person wishing to complain does not meet the requirements of 'a qualifying individual'. *A person is a 'qualifying individual' if social services have a power or a duty to provide a service to her/him. A representative can complain on behalf of the child, but there must be a direct connection, for example, have parental responsibility.*
- ✧ The same complaint has already been dealt with at all stages of the procedure.
- ✧ The complaint does not concern the actions or decisions of the local authority (or any body acting on its behalf).
- ✧ Regulation 8, as set out in the *Children's Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006* provides the local authority with discretion in deciding whether to consider complaints, where to do so would prejudice any of the following:
 - (i) Court proceedings
 - (ii) Tribunals
 - (iii) Disciplinary proceedings or
 - (iv) Criminal proceedings

(v) Grievance proceedings

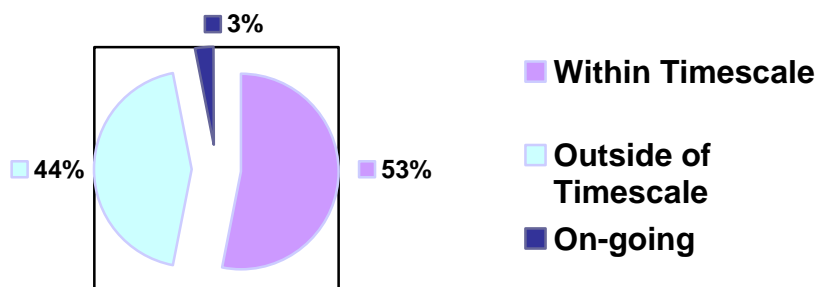
3.5 Timescales

Timescales for response to a complaint are clearly defined within both the Corporate and Statutory Complaint Processes (which also includes progressing through stages 1 to 3). We always aim to resolve complaints within defined timescales, however occasionally there are challenges in keeping within deadlines and it is sometimes necessary to re-negotiate these with the Complainant; allowing more time if required for the investigation and response. When this occurs the Complaints Manager will contact the complainant and update them of the situation and seek agreement for an extended period of investigation.

Some of the reasons why the complaint may go out of timescales include:

- ✧ A more complex complaint may require additional time for a thorough investigation to take place.
- ✧ Those who need to be interviewed (either professionals or complainant) could be unavailable within timescales due to annual leave or sickness.
- ✧ In some cases a member of staff may have left the Council and it may take time to contact them and seek their agreement / involvement in the investigation.
- ✧ It may take time to secure the services of an Investigating Officer and an Independent Person.

The following chart shows the breakdown of the complaints made throughout the period of April 2014 to March 2015 and whether timescales set in the Complaints Process were met. It shows that 53% have been met within timescale, 44% were outside of timescales (these were with the agreement of the complainant), with 3% still within the investigation stage at the time of recording during the 4th quarter.



4.0 OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

The Complaints Manager maintains a list of on-going complaints that are currently under investigation and endeavours to send a report to the Chief Officer and Heads of Service for the Children's Social Care Department on a monthly basis; which keeps them informed on individual cases.

Liaison meetings are held on more complex cases, particularly if any recommendations have been made or any 'learning' can be gained from the complaint / investigation experience (see *point 4.9*)

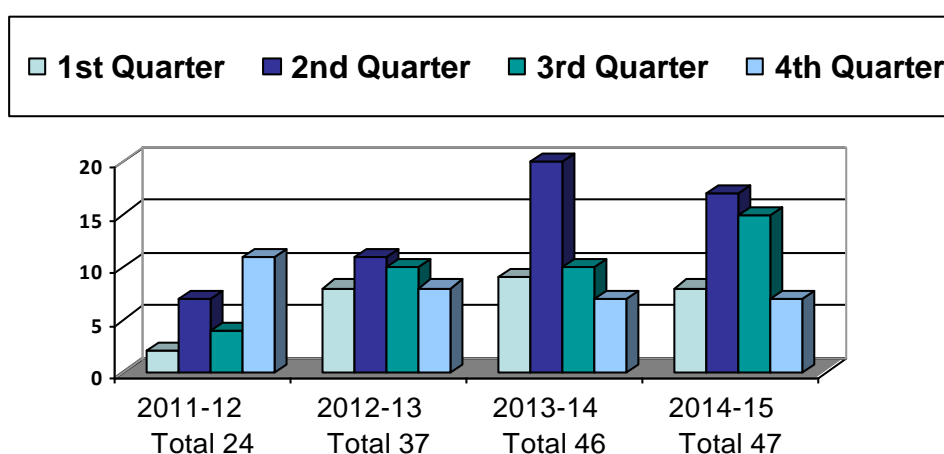
4.1 Number of complaints received (Statutory and Corporate combined)

The following tables show the comparison figures of the total complaints received over the last 4 financial years. These show that there has been an increase in the number of complaints in previous years, but they have remained virtually the same for 2013/14 and 2015/16.

At the end of March 2015 there were 776 open cases within Children's Social Care for children and young people (an open case is one where a referral has been made to Children's Social Care which has been followed up with an assessment which may lead to additional support being provided to the child or young person). All open cases are eligible and therefore have the potential, to complain to Bracknell Forest Council.

The table below shows the total number of complaints made over the last four years.

Comparison Data:



Response to complaints in 2014 - 2015

Complaints Received in Total	Complaints Deferred	Investigated Under the Statutory Procedure	Investigated Under the Corporate Procedure
47 (46)	15 (10)	11 (22)	21 (14)

**2013/14 figures in brackets*

Out of 47 complaints that were received this year, 15 complaints were deferred, 11 were investigated under the Statutory procedures; eligible for stages 1 through 3.

Under the Corporate procedure, 21 were investigated, eligible for stages 1 through 4 (which was the procedure used pre January 2015*), thus giving a total of 32 complaints which were formally investigated (see point 4.3 for further breakdowns / outcomes / comparisons).

The complaints recorded show an increase of 1 to 47 in 2014/15, compared to 2013/14, where 46 complaints were received; however the figure of formal investigations for 2014/15 is slightly lower, 36 complaints were formally

investigated for 2013/ 14 in comparison to 32 in 2014/15. The table below shows that the figures for the number of children being supported by Children's Social Care for the past two years are very similar; the rate of complaints remains similar as well.

Period	Open Cases	Complaints Received
2013-14	(as at 31 st March 2014) = 775	46 (6.0% of open cases)
2014-15	(as at 31 st March 2015) = 776	47(6.1% of open cases)

The following table shows a breakdown of the outcomes reached at the conclusion of the individual investigations during 2014-15, which have been dealt with using either the Statutory, or the Local Authority's corporate complaints procedure.

Comparative figures for 2013 – 2014 are shown in brackets.

Stage / Procedure Used	Number of Complaints
Stage 1 – Statutory Procedure	8 (20)
Stage 2 – Statutory Procedure	2 (1)
Stage 3 – Statutory Procedure	0 (1)
Stage 1 – Corporate Procedure	19 (13) *
Stage 2 – Corporate Procedure	1 (1)
Stage 3 – Corporate Procedure	1 (0)
Stage 4 – Corporate Procedure	1 (0)
Complaints Deferred	15 (10)

**As with last year, stage 1 investigations using the corporate procedure are not recorded in the Council's collective general quarterly figures. However, all complaints received at stage one by the Children, Young People & Learning Department are investigated just as thoroughly, irrelevant of which procedure is used; i.e., either the statutory procedure or the Local Authority's own corporate procedure; we have therefore elected to continue to log these separately for our own monitoring purposes whilst at the same time continuing to provide a valuable source of information on services, experiences and practices followed.*

All Managers within Children's Social Care make an effort to resolve problems or concerns before they escalate into formal complaints. This ensures that wherever possible, complaints are promptly dealt with or whenever possible, resolved within stage one of the complaints process. It is

notable that there has been a positive increase in dealing successfully with complaints at this stage. Out of the 27 complaints received and investigated at stage one of both the Statutory and Corporate procedures, only three cases progressed onto stage two, with only one progressing onto stage three and four of the Corporate Procedure. This reflects the good practices and swift responses of the staff involved.

It is clear from the aforementioned data that by putting in the time and effort into the early stages of the complaints process of either procedure will reduce the number of complaints progressing onto the next stage.

This leads to better outcomes for the complainant and more time for the practitioners to focus on delivery of services.

4.2 Cost of complaint service and investigations for 2014 – 2015

The Complaints Manager works 15 hours a week and the annual salary costs are £15,147.

When a complaint proceeds to stage two under the statutory procedures, it is a requirement that an Investigating Officer and an Independent Person be appointed (see point 3.1). The cost of this varies depending on the length of time involved and complexity of the investigation. Similarly, if a complaint progresses onto stage three of the statutory complaints procedure, an independent panel will need to be arranged, it may be necessary to commission appropriate members to attend.

In 2014/15 it should be noted that there have been some extremely complex complaints which tend to be costly in terms of the time of Officers involved in investigating and responding to the complaint and those who are interviewed as part of the investigation.

The overall cost of the complaint investigations, which covers the cost of commissioning the Independent Investigators and Independent Person, was £7,220. This shows an increase from the previous year which was £5,045 for complaint investigations.

We have aimed to minimise the costs of complaints investigation by accessing the services of experienced investigators within the Council, this year however, has involved an increased use of external independent investigators due to the complexities of the complaints received, where an independent investigator with relevant social care experience has been essential.

4.3 Findings from complaints

The findings as shown on the following page were made in respect of the 47 complaints received that have reached conclusion (at the time of reporting, one had yet to be completed and therefore is still under investigation)

Breakdown of procedures / stages

At Stage 1 of the Statutory Procedures	5	Complaints - Not Upheld
	2	Complaints - Partially Upheld
	1	Complaints - Upheld
At Stage 2 of the Statutory Procedures	2	Complaints – Not Upheld
At Stage 1 of the Corporate Procedures	9	Complaints - Not Upheld
	5	Complaint - Partially Upheld
	3	Complaints - Upheld
At Stage 2 of the Corporate Procedures	1	Complaint - On-going
At Stage 3 of the Corporate Procedures	1	Complaint - Not Upheld
At Stage 4 of the Corporate Procedures	1	Complaint – Not Upheld
Complaints Resolved Complaints Deferred (either procedure)	2	Complaints - Resolved
	15	Complaints - Deferred

At times, we are able to resolve matters to the satisfaction of the complainant within the investigation stage and effectively shorten the complaints process. As shown in the table above, we were able to resolve 2 cases this year.

Similarly it may be necessary to defer a complaint. In these situations we will write to the complainant, explaining why their complaint cannot be investigated at this particular juncture and advise that they may re-submit their complaint for consideration at a later date.

Some examples for this:

- ✧ The Department may be in the process of applying for a Court order*.
- ✧ The complainant wants to make an appeal against a Court order (they should take the legal route in such cases, as the complaints procedure cannot be used to overturn a Court decision).

**It is important that a complaint does not impact on any Court proceedings or judgements.*

Dissatisfaction about a Local Authority's management or handling of a child's case, even where related to a Court order may be appropriately considered, for example; conduct of social work staff involved in Court procedures. It is for the Complaints Manager to identify whether these may be considered (whilst gaining the advice from the Council's Legal Team).

4.4 Local Government Ombudsman referrals (LGO)

Upon completion and having taken their complaint through all relevant stages of either the Statutory or Corporate procedures, the complainant may remain unhappy with the outcome and decisions made by the Department. Under such circumstances the complainant may refer their complaint onto the LGO, who will decide whether to progress the matter further by carrying out their own impartial investigations.

An LGO information leaflet is always provided with the concluding letter to the complainant for this purpose.

Local Government Ombudsman	2
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- (i) The first complainant to approach the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) during 2014 – 15; was due to their complaint having been declined by Bracknell Forest Council (on the grounds that the complainant did not have parental responsibility). The LGO consequently declined to investigate as there was no evidence of fault.
- (ii) The 2nd LGO referral received is an on-going investigation.

4.5 Complaints by areas of service provision

The following table shows the service areas where complaints have been made.

The area with the highest number of complaints received relates to the safeguarding team, which is to be expected given the nature of the work undertaken; as this often involves working with families who are unhappy to be receiving such services.

It should be noted that there are fewer complaints made in relation to safeguarding this year, and there has been a slight increase in complaints regarding Looked after Children.

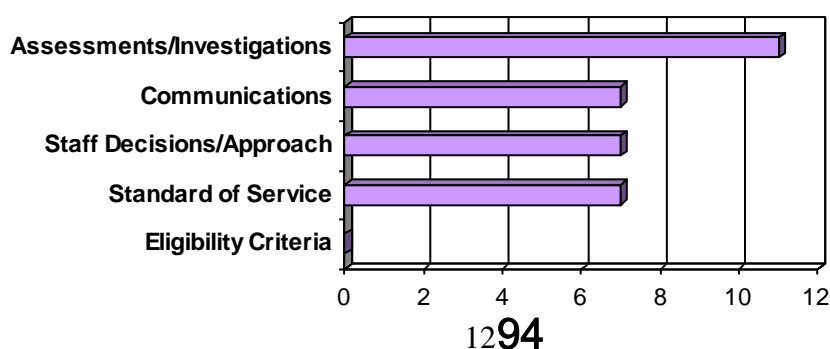
Comparative figures for 2013 – 2014 are shown in brackets.

Service Area / Team	Number
Specialist Support Team	6 (6)
Looked After Children	10 (7)
Safeguarding	16 (22)
Youth Offending Service	0 (1)
Complaints Deferred	15 (10)

4.6 Nature of complaints received

Complaints received are often complex and can cover a variety of issues.

For the purpose of this report the primary issue has been identified in relation to the 32 complaints investigated, these are shown below:



Areas where complaints have decreased in the last year are in communications and staff decisions and approach, areas of complaints that have increased include assessment and investigations and standard of service. In the last two years there have been no complaints regarding eligibility criteria.

4.7 Commentary on complaints received

The following are examples of complaints received regarding some of the primary issues identified – as shown in the table above:

Regarding assessments / investigations

Family felt that the assessment carried out by the Social Worker was one sided.

Comments

The Investigator identified during the investigation at stage one of the complaints process that the assessment in question was thorough and well balanced, evidencing and taking into account the views of both of the parents, as well as those of the Social Worker. Outcome of complaint – not upheld.

Regarding communications

A parent was concerned that they were not provided with enough information / or 'notice', as to when their access visits would occur.

Comments

It was identified during the investigation that appropriate information had been provided. Outcome of complaint – not upheld.

Regarding staff decisions / approach

The complainant sensed that they were being 'doubted' by the allocated Social Worker, and felt that their past was 'continually being brought up' and used against them.

Comments

In this particular case, a 'Written Agreement' was in place (a 'statement of commitment / a joint set of goals and targets to promote the welfare of a child'). The signing of a Written Agreement provides the Department with evidence of commitment on the part of the parents.

The complainant was informed that the allocated worker had to prioritise this task in a situation where there may be conflicting views from parents. The complainant's views had been heard and taken on board; however the welfare and wellbeing of the child would always be paramount. Outcome of complaint – not upheld.

Regarding standard of service

The complainant felt that their family had received a poor service, and there had been a number of Social Workers allocated to their case.

Comments

It was agreed by the Investigator that there had indeed been a 'turnover' of workers. During the investigation it was demonstrated that the changes implemented had been completely unavoidable. Appropriate apologies were made to the complainant. Outcome of complaint – not upheld.

4.8 Involvement of young people in the complaint process

Children and young people are informed on how to make a complaint when they first become 'looked after' and receive a child friendly leaflet which explains clearly what to do if they are unhappy. Information is also provided on how to contact the Complaints Manager within the 'Children's and Young Person's Consultation Booklet', which they receive before every LAC review. In addition, they may bring complaints to the attention of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

Laminated 'text' cards were first introduced during the period of 2011-12, developed with the support of the Child Participation Officer. They provide simple instructions on how to 'text' a complaint through to the Complaints Manager.

In some circumstances children and young people may require additional support to make a complaint. Help may be best provided by a relative or friend or by the provision of an Advocate from an Advocacy Service (who will be independent of the Department). If this is required the Complaints Manager will approach the Child Participation Development Officer who is able to provide advice and help in securing a service where requested.

Although our records show that the majority of complaints were made by the parent / carer; during this period there were three complaints made by a child or young person, one involved the use of an Advocate, which was arranged by our in-house Participation Development Officer.

The complaint made by a young person with the use of an Advocate was a very positive process and managed well between the Investigating Officer, Independent Person, the Advocate and the young person. It demonstrated sensitivity to the needs of the young person and was undertaken in a flexible way to accommodate the young person's emotional capacity to participate in the process. Whilst the outcome was that the complaint was not upheld, the young person was able to access a fair and transparent process and have their views heard with the support of an independent Advocate.

4.9 Learning from complaints in 2014-15

At Bracknell Forest we recognise that the formal complaint investigation process is not to 'find fault' but to look at the practices followed in relation to the complaint issues at hand. This also provides a valuable source of information and we will use these experiences to:

- ✧ Identify service problems and make improvements
- ✧ Improve / adapt staff learning and enhance professional development.

To this aim, a 'learning from complaints' form has been devised, which is forwarded to the appropriate Manager or Head of Service for completion following the investigation and closure of a complaint.

Within this document, either the investigator or the manager can record any recommendations made. The Manager / Head of Service agree an action plan and nominate who will undertake the action and the outcome achieved will be logged. It is not signed off by the Senior Manager in Social Care until the action has been implemented.

Where a complaint has been difficult or complex, a 'learning from complaints' meeting is held with Senior Managers in Children's Social Care to ensure we are able to reflect and learn from the situation and put in place measures to reduce the risk of issues arising in the future. There have been two such meetings during the year.

An information pack for independent investigators using the Statutory Procedure was developed as a result of discussions held at one of these meetings. Within the pack is a template for the investigation report (promoting consistency), flowcharts and detailed guidance for carrying out thorough investigations.

Key learning points and services improvements – *taken directly from completed 'learning from complaints forms' as follows:*

- ✓ Social Workers are asked to provide their direct email addresses to the families they work with – so that they have an alternative means of contact.
- ✓ Social Workers are encouraged to update the 'child or young person' they are working with at every step of the process involved.
- ✓ Templates should be used to ensure consistencies of process and documentation.
- ✓ It is important that considerations and decisions need to be clearly recorded on the case recording system.
- ✓ Increased monitoring of social work visits undertaken by the manager in supervision.
- ✓ Manager to ensure that Social Worker undertakes statutory visits to timescales.
- ✓ Manager proof read assessments before they are sent out to the family
- ✓ Appointments for LAC reviews to be sent by letter (not by telephone unless completely unavoidable)

5.0 FEEDBACK

When a case is closed to Children's Social Care, a feedback form is sent to the parent / carer to provide an opportunity for them to express their views of how they feel they have been supported by the Department. These are a crucial element in the reviewing of the service delivery for Children's Social Care and contribute to service improvements.

The Complaints Manager receives a copy of these forms in order to provide some wider contextual information about the experiences of families, which can be incorporated into on-going training and support of practitioners managing the complaints process.

Some examples of the comments made are as follows:

Examples of feedback received	2014-15
<p>"I thought the children had grown out of play, but through observing the SW, I realised I still can".</p> <p>"In my case, the SW couldn't do enough, I am more than satisfied"</p> <p>"The initial experience was very traumatic, and we had little support, but things have improved".</p> <p>"Excellent communication between all parties, my child's needs were taken into consideration at all times"</p> <p>"The involvement of CSC is having a positive effect on my mental health"</p> <p>"During our time with CSC, there was a high level of staff change, more consistency would be helpful in establishing relationships with the SW"</p>	

6.0 CONCERNS

There are occasions where the Complaints Manager is contacted by members of the public with:

- ✧ a concern
- ✧ wanting to have a general discussion regarding 'something' they are apprehensive about, or
- ✧ may just wish to comment on services received from Children's Social Care

If such matters do not merit a formal investigation and progression onto the formal complaints processes of either the Statutory or Corporate procedures, then these are logged as a 'concern'.

The table below shows concerns received and it is of note that these have increased slightly in the year 2014/15 compared to the previous year (in brackets).

Concerns Received	31 (28)
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Dealing positively with concerns at this stage is a productive and proactive action that can negate the need to progress to more formal procedures which can be more costly.

However, these can be time consuming for the Complaints Manager who must ensure that correct processes have been adhered to and that the person raising the concern is satisfied with the response. If they are not, then it may be necessary to investigate formally at stage one of the complaints procedure.

7.0 COMPLIMENTS

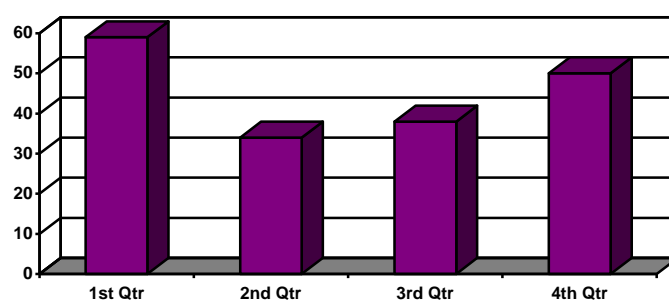
Compliments provide a valuable source of information regarding the quality of our services and help identify where they are working well. The compliments received this year (181) outnumber the complaints received (47) by a ratio of 3.9 to 1.

A large majority of the compliments are made by parents or users of the services, but they are also made by a range of independent professional colleagues who work with Children's Social Care. Although compliments across different professionals in the Department are many – these are not formally recorded.

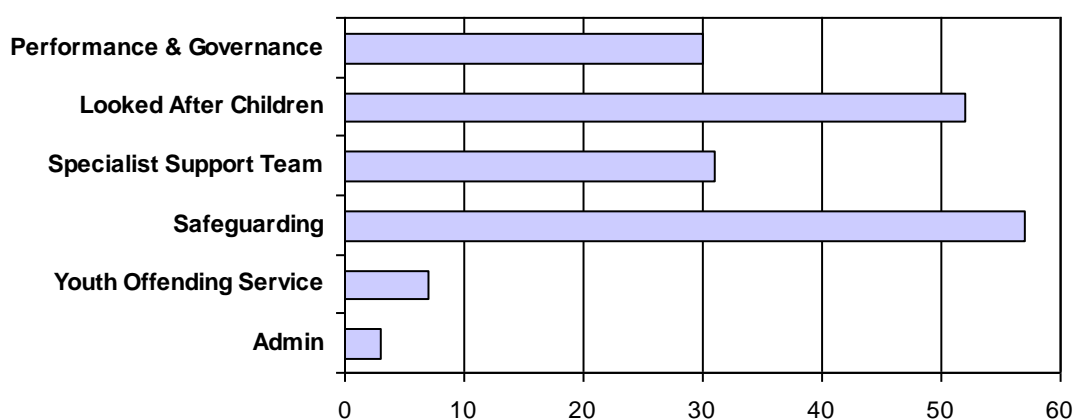
The figure of 181 compliments received by the Department is almost double to those obtained last year where 91 compliments were received. This demonstrates the high value that people receiving support place on the services they receive.

The Department welcomes the receipt of compliments and should always thank those who take the time and trouble to give them.

7.1 Breakdown of compliments *(table below shows the distribution of compliments each quarter over the past year)*



7.2 Distribution of compliments across the services



The 'keen eyed' will notice that there are only 180 compliments logged in the previous table, the last was received from BFC members, who complimented the Department as a whole for a job well done.

7.3 Some examples of compliments received

Some examples of compliments received	181 in Total
<p>“We are so grateful for all the hard work you do to support my husband and I cope with the added pressure of parenting a child with learning disabilities, it is truly appreciated and we are so pleased that we live under Bracknell Forest Council and receive so much” – Parents of a disabled child</p> <p>“I felt that the Social Worker listened to me; she has been fantastic and very understanding, caring and always wanted to see both sides” - Parent</p> <p>“Thank you; you all do such a great job and we benefit loads from what you do” – Parents</p> <p>“A breath of fresh air, efficient and understand” – Parents</p> <p>“The Section 7 report was exceptional for it’s ‘explicit clarity’”- Judge</p> <p>“The Social Worker arrived early, good report, excellent presentation, a good rapport with the family while being clear about the concerns” – Indep. Chair</p> <p>“Your outstanding Social Worker helped me move out of a bad situation and has improved me and my daughter’s lives. I can’t thank you enough” – Parent</p> <p>“Our granddaughter’s future is now secure as a result of your support and guidance” – Grandparents</p> <p>“Brilliant, thank you so much! Have we ever told you that I think you are brilliant at your job? I can see that the parents know that too. They really value you!” – Community Church</p> <p>“The service you provide is excellent and the adopters in this area are very lucky to have you and your team! – Prospective Adopters</p> <p>“(Name) and his team worked so hard with pure professionalism and always with a ‘child centred’ approach (even though they had been working for many hours into the night!)” – Emergency Duty Service</p> <p>“Things have improved in our household since your intervention” – Young Parents</p>	

8.0 DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

8.1 Staff training in managing complaints

Training is provided by the Complaints Manager on a quarterly basis and is available to all staff in Children’s Social Care; this will continue to be provided and in particular targeting new staff as they begin their employment.

The Complaints Manager held 4 separate training sessions over the last year, with 15 members of staff attending. It is hoped this number will increase in 2015/16.

8.2 Networking and sharing policy and practice

It is important to continue to network, share practice and contribute to regional policy and practice. To further this aim, the Complaints Manager attends the Southern Regional Complaints Managers Group (SRCMG).

The network aims to raise standards for complaints management across the South East, to promote consistency of practice and excels in providing a source of mutual support.

9.0 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ENQUIRIES

MPs cannot make a complaint using the statutory complaints procedure on behalf of their constituent – although they are able to make a generic enquiry on their behalf (these enquiries are dealt with via the Chief Executive's office).

However, if it is established that the enquiry requires a formal investigation, we would recommend that the MP goes back to their constituent and encourages them to forward their complaint directly, thus enabling the appropriate complaints process to be used.

In view of this, enquiries from Members of Parliament are logged separately from statutory complaints.

For information purposes, there were 15 MP enquiries made during the period of 2014-15 compared to 5 that were received last year.

10.0 AREAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Complaints provide an opportunity to consider practice and identify ways to improve on areas identified. In the coming year the Complaints Service will focus on the following areas for development:

- ✧ Continue to deliver training to social care staff and Managers to ensure the process is managed and understood – to consider elevating training sessions to be 'mandatory attendance'.
- ✧ Now that the revised Statutory Complaints Procedure has been in place for 2 years – to revisit the procedure and update where appropriate, ensuring that this document continues to be fit for purpose.
- ✧ Contribute to the continuing development of the Quality Assurance Strategy which maintains an overview of the quality of services delivered and supports on-going improvement and development.
- ✧ Further develop the systems in place to secure more Independent Investigators, and consider how to reduce the costs of investigations.
- ✧ Provide a quarterly report to Children's Social Care Management Team highlighting issues of good practice, and areas for development.
- ✧ Continue to promote information about how to make a complaint and ensure it is available for children and young people who are eligible.
- ✧ Revise leaflets and information to ensure it continues to be clear and accessible.

11.0 CONCLUSION

The complaints function for Children's Social Care has met the requirements of the relevant guidance and regulations. Overall management of complaints in this Department is robust, concerns and complaints are managed well and the process of investigating complaints is undertaken with great sensitivity by all staff involved.

Children's Social Care do not receive a high number of complaints, however the nature of those complaints that are received are often complex.

Whilst a complaint may be distressing to the individuals affected, (which includes the staff involved) they are a valuable mechanism for ensuring the on-going quality of our work. Thus ensuring policies and procedures are followed appropriately and children, young people and families receive the best possible services in what can be difficult and challenging circumstances.

The next report will cover the period from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

Sue Horton
Complaints Manager
June 2015

**TO: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**CONSULTATIONS ON CHANGES TO ANNUAL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS 2017/18
AND SCHOOL DESIGNATED AREAS**

Director of Children, Young People and Learning

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report introduces the attached consultations in respect of changes to Annual Admissions Arrangements 2017/18 and School Designated Areas.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the attached consultations in respect of changes to Annual Admissions Arrangements 2017/18 and School Designated Areas.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To inform the Panel of the consultations in respect of changes to Annual Admissions Arrangements 2017/18 and School Designated Areas.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

**5 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES
IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES /
CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

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Policy Officer (Scrutiny)
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TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING
DATE: 24 AUGUST 2015

**CONSULTATIONS ON CHANGES TO ANNUAL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS 2017/18 AND
SCHOOL DESIGNATED AREAS**
Director, Children, Young People and Learning

1. PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1. To seek the Executive Member's agreement to the annual admission arrangements to apply from 2017/18 and on the proposed consultation on changes to designated areas.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. **That the consultation plan attached as Appendix A be approved.**
- 2.2. **That views are sought on the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for 2017/18.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To ensure that the admission arrangements for Bracknell Forest comply with the requirements in the School Admission Code.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. None. There is a legal obligation to consult on and provide annual admissions arrangements.

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1. The Executive approved on 23 June 2015 changes to be made to school designated areas and admission arrangements with effect from 2017/18 and that non-statutory and statutory consultation will take place between 1 September and 20 November.
- 5.2. Detailed proposals for the consultation are attached in the Consultation Plan as Appendix A.
- 5.3. Annual admission arrangements for 2017/18 include changes to reflect the proposed designated area changes, the protection for siblings and, in the secondary arrangements, to consult on removal of the feeder primary criterion (it will still remain within the infant to junior criteria). The proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools are attached:
- Appendix B sets out the arrangements for children starting primary phase schools in 2017/18.
 - Appendix C sets out the arrangements for children starting secondary schools in 2017/18.
 - Appendix D sets out the arrangements for students starting sixth form in 2017/18.
 - Appendix E Sets out the arrangements for children starting nursery in 2017/18.
 - In-year admissions arrangements for 2017/18 are attached at Appendix F.
- 5.4. Academy and Aided schools set their own admission arrangements. They will be consultees in this process.

6. CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 6.1 Consultation on this paper is not needed. The paper outlines the arrangements to be undertaken in the planned consultation.

Method of Consultation

- 6.2 Not applicable.

Representations Received

- 6.3 Not applicable.

7. ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Finance Officer

- 7.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3. Bracknell Forest Council has an inclusive admissions policy and children will not be discriminated against as laid down by the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 and Equality Act 2010.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4. Significant Risks Include:

ISSUE		RISK	COMMENT
	If the required consultation arrangements are not set, the Local Authority would be in breach of the School Admissions Code.	Low	The Local Authority could be reported to the Adjudicator for failure to comply with the School Admissions Code.

Background Papers

Paper to the Executive on 23 June 2015 - 'Changes to admission to schools as a basis for consultation'.

School Admissions Code 2014, DfE

Contacts for further information

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CONSULTATION PLAN**CHANGES TO ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS AND DESIGNATED AREAS****1. Introduction**

The consultation has two purposes: to seek views of local people and other interested parties on changes to:

- Admission arrangements to apply from 2017/18 and beyond. This is a statutory consultation. Note that necessary changes to admission arrangements in following years will be subject to annual statutory consultations.
- Designated areas - The consultation will outline the desired future pattern of designated areas in the light of planned significant housing developments, expanded and new schools. Changes will be enacted in stages, as required, through annual statutory admissions consultations.

Over the past few years in excess of 5,000 school places have been created. Projecting forward, up to 13 additional primary forms of entry (FE) and up to 10 secondary FE are required as a result of new housing. Although there was a review of school provision in South Bracknell 10 years ago, there has been no significant review of designated areas for over 15 years. The only change to our schools' designated areas was made by RBWM to Charters School DA in 2001 which removed Forest Park from their designated area. Forest Park was added to the DA of Brakenhale School.

The consultation is relevant to:

- Children and young people
- Their parents and carers
- Schools and governing bodies
- Early years and other educational providers and services
- A range of partnership partners
- Wider community

2. Background

All local authorities must plan for the provision of sufficient school places for children in its area. The Council has identified significant areas of new housing that are scheduled to be built in the current planning period through to 2028. These bring the implication of a need for further school places and the Council works with developers to have these places provided through the development process. The following changes are expected:

- Warfield CE Primary is to expand to meet new needs in Warfield West. The expansion is due to be operational from September 2016.
- Crowthorne CE Primary is to expand to meet new needs in arising in Crowthorne through the TRL development. The expansion is currently likely to be operational from September 2018.
- New schools will be commissioned to meet:
 - Needs for primary spaces in Amen Corner, 2 schools, North and South, currently likely in September 2017 and September 2019 or 2020.
 - Needs for primary spaces in Binfield, and secondary spaces to meet needs across the wide North Bracknell area. These are to be provided through a Binfield Learning Village development to open in September 2017.
 - Needs for further spaces in Warfield East from September 2019 onwards.

All these changes have implications for designated areas which need to be addressed. Changes to admission arrangements are also needed.

3. Details

A detailed specification of the changes, and reasons for them, is attached as Annex 1.

4. Consultation scope

The Consultation Mandate is attached as Annex 2.

The Council is committed to understanding the views of everyone with an interest in the admission of children and young people to schools. These views will:

- Inform the statutory consultations in 2015/16 (to apply for admission arrangements in 2017/18) and in later years.
- Help establish the desired picture of the eventual pattern of designated areas throughout the Borough so that annual changes can be defined accurately and consistently.

The consultation should ensure that the following list of people are consulted. Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals.

- a) 'parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
- b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions;
- c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
- d) whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority;
- e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority; and
- f) in the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination'.

A mapping of consultees is attached as Annex 3.

5. Consultation process and methods

The consultation methodology will include a range of consultation methods ensuring a balance between consulting with children and young people, with their parents and carers, with local schools and local educational service providers and with the wider community.

Methods will include:

- Information and a questionnaire available on the Council's consultation portal, website and on paper.
- School-based meetings
- Display in Time Square

Promotion will include:

- Circulating information to interested parties
- Use of Council press releases
- Use of Council social media feeds
- Information on the Council's website and links on all schools' websites

Unrestricted

- Promotion – display and/or leaflets available - of the consultation at Council offices, libraries, sports centres and other venues

See detailed timetable/project plan available as Annex 4.

6. Proposed questions

1. Do you agree with the proposal to remove the secondary school 'feeder primary' criterion? Yes / No

Comments

2. Do you agree with the proposed changes to designated areas for 2017/18 admissions? Yes / No

Comments

3. Do you agree that the expected pattern of designated areas is the best way of planning for the necessary increase in school places? Yes / No

Comments

4. Are there any other points you would like to raise in relation to our admission arrangements?

5. Do you have children of nursery or school age? Yes / No

If Yes ...

6. What (is) are the age(s) of your child(ren)?

7. Are you? (Tick as many as appropriate)
A parent of a child(ren) aged 2-18 / A BF resident? / Living in Hatch Ride or Oaklands DA? / Not a BF resident (and not living in Hatch Ride or Oaklands DA) / A member of school staff (Teaching, Non-teaching) (and at which school) / a School Governor (and at which school)

8. Are you making a response on behalf of:
A Local Authority / An own admissions authority / A Diocese

7. Timescales

The consultation will be open for the period Tuesday 1 September to Friday 20 November 2015 (12 weeks). This comprises a 4½ week period of non-statutory consultation from 1 September to 1 October at which date the statutory consultation will start and run until the start of half term (7½ weeks; it must be a minimum of 6 weeks)

The Executive Member for CYPL will consider the outcomes of the consultation and agree recommendations in January / February 2016.

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Background paper: School catchment changes

Changes to admission arrangements and designated areas.

1. Background

The Council is proposing to change the admission arrangements and the designated areas (otherwise known as catchment areas) in the light of significant new housing that is likely to be built over the next 10 years. Admission arrangements are what are used to decide who is offered a place when a school has more applicants than places.

New housing will lead to the creation of significant numbers of additional school places in existing or new schools. Up to 13 additional primary school forms of entry (FE) and up to 9 secondary school FE are required to be built as a result of new housing in the next 10 years. Current admission arrangements need to change to reflect these developments.

Although there was a review of school provision in South Bracknell 10 years ago, there has been no significant review of designated areas for over 15 years. The only change to our schools' designated areas was made by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to Charters School DA in 2001 which removed Forest Park from their designated area. Forest Park was added to the designated area of Brakenhale School.

2. In summary

There are proposed to be two significant changes:

- 1. Removal of secondary school 'feeder primary' criterion.**
- 2. Changes to designated areas (DAs) to establish DAs for the new or expanded schools with consequential revision to the DAs of schools affected.**

In addition there is the opportunity to address over the years ahead two historic DA features: in some areas there are DAs shared by two schools and there are some local instances where boundary lines are inconsistent and it is proposed that these be 'tidied up'.

It is recognised that changes to DA boundaries are sensitive and create a lot of interest with schools, parents and local communities. As a complex project it is sensible and desirable to:

- Outline this year the planned pattern of designated areas (DAs) when there are 6 more primary school sites and 1 more secondary school.
- Work towards this year by year through annual statutory admissions arrangements consultations when school providers are known and when schools are ready to open.

The changes demonstrate that the Council is responding positively, transparently and fairly to new housing and the need for new schools.

3. New housing and school places

New housing developments are planned at Amen Corner (on two sites, North and South), Binfield Learning Village at Blue Mountain, the Transport Research Laboratory site (TRL) near Crowthorne and in Warfield (on two sites, West and East).

Up to 13 additional primary FE and up to 9 additional secondary FE places are being planned through school expansions or new Academies as part of all these developments. The timing of additional school places being available are currently scheduled as:

<i>School</i>	<i>Likely to be provided as Academy / Expansion</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Due to open Sept.</i>
Warfield West	Expansion	Primary	2016
Binfield Learning Village	Academy	Sec'y & Primary	2017
TRL site at Crowthorne	Expansion	Primary	2018
Amen Corner North	Academy	Primary	2017
Amen Corner South	Academy	Primary	TBA
Warfield East	Academy	Primary	TBA

4. The proposals in more detail

4.1 Removal of secondary school 'feeder primary' criterion

Current Community secondary schools admission arrangements include provision for feeder primary schools. This has proved over time to be an effective feature of the admission arrangements. The School Admissions Code (2014) states that the use of a feeder school as an over-subscription criterion must be 'transparent and made on reasonable grounds'.

The current arrangement of the five Community secondary schools having feeder primary schools is recommended for removal.

The table below is a simplified illustration of the admissions criteria for community secondary schools before and after the change. Children are admitted in a combination of the criteria listed below*:

<i>Current admission criteria</i>	<i>Proposed admission criteria</i>
Children with a statement of special educational needs that names the school.	Children with a statement of special educational needs that names the school.
Children 'looked after' by the local authority.	Children 'looked after' by the local authority.
Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to the school.	Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to the school.
Children who live in the designated area of the secondary school.	Children who live in the designated area of the secondary school.
Children who have brother(s) or sister(s) at the school.	Children who have brother(s) or sister(s) at the school.
Children who attend a primary school that is formally linked with ('a feeder to') the secondary school.	
*In some cases a tie-breaker will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of	

higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (e.g. Under current arrangements an applicant who fulfils designated area will take precedence over one who fulfils sibling and feeder primary; an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling, will take precedence over one who fulfils designated area etc).

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the radial distance (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away.

If there are feeder school arrangements then there must be a reasonable and transparent likelihood of gaining admission to the fed school. The reason for this proposed change is that the current arrangements will become untenable in two ways.

1. With the current feeder school arrangements there is no provision for one part of a primary school DA to feed one secondary school, and another part to feed a different secondary school.
 - New school places at TRL are to be provided as an expansion of the adjacent school, Crowthorne CE Primary, onto a second site. However the DA of the current school feeds into Edgbarrow School, and the DA of TRL would feed into Easthampstead Park School.
 - Similarly, the new Warfield West development is to be served by an expansion of Warfield CE Primary onto a second site. The DA of the current school feeds into Garth Hill College, and the new area would feed into the new Binfield Learning Village secondary provision.
2. Additionally the Council is likely to need to respond to RBWM's removal of the feeder school criteria for Charters which will affect Ascot Heath and Cranbourne schools.

Secondary schools can continue to have working links (for visits, study days, resource sharing etc.) with primary schools in their designated area.

The proposed changes will affect all schools in the Borough. The changes will be implemented for admission in 2017/18.

4.2 Changes to designated areas

Establishing DAs for new / expanded schools

There is a need to establish DAs for the new/expanded schools, with consequential revision to the DAs of schools affected. The proposed pattern is based on knowledge of future school locations, the numbers of houses to be built and the envisaged size of schools. The aim is to create designated areas that are more in line with the numbers of houses and families within its area.

Two **primary** schools are expanding onto a second site - Warfield and Crowthorne CE Primaries. For these schools primary DAs will not need to be created, but will need adjusting:

<i>New primary places</i>	<i>Currently in the DA(s) of:</i>
Warfield West	Warfield/Whitegrove, Sandy Lane & Meadow Vale
TRL/Crowthorne	Crowthorne, Hatch Ride and Oaklands (Wokingham schools)

Four Academy **primary** schools are likely to be forthcoming. There will be a need for primary school DAs to be created from existing DAs in the following areas:

<i>New primary places</i>	<i>Currently in the DA(s) of:</i>
Amen Corner North	Binfield
Amen Corner South	Binfield

Unrestricted

Binfield Learning Village¹ Binfield and Meadow Vale
 Warfield East Warfield/Whitegrove

The new **secondary** phase of the 'all-through' school to be built at the Binfield Learning Village at Blue Mountain is planned to take children from the western half of the current Garth Hill College DA. A new DA is required for the Binfield Learning Village secondary provision and a subsequent revision made to Garth Hill College's DA.

Removal of shared DAs

Four areas of the Borough are currently shared by more than one primary school which makes admissions arrangements more complicated for parents. It is recommended that these shared areas be removed when the opportunity is presented.

- Binfield and Warfield / Whitegrove
- Warfield and Whitegrove
- College Town and Owlsmoor
- New Scotland Hill and St Michael's Sandhurst

It should be noted that, in order to be flexible and plan admissions to the new schools, some additional shared areas will be created for a limited time.

Inconsistent boundaries

It is proposed that boundaries of the following schools which currently follow an inconsistent line be addressed when the opportunity is presented. This is normally where a garden has been sold for development and the line is not consistent with the rest of the road

- Cranbourne and Ascot Heath
- Meadow Vale and Sandy Lane
- Holly Spring and Sandy Lane

Summary

Changes to designated areas are likely to affect the following schools in North Bracknell, Sandhurst and Crowthorne. ***The DAs of other schools will not be affected.***

School affected	New/ expanded primary school	New secondary school	Shared DA	Inconsistent boundary	To be implemented in which year
Binfield CE ~	Y		Y		2017/18*
Warfield CE	Y		Y		2017/18
Whitegrove	Y		Y		2017/18*
Sandy Lane	Y			Y	2017/18
Meadow Vale	Y			Y	2017/18

¹ Note that primary provision at Binfield Learning Village at Blue Mountain is part of a proposed 'all-through' school for children aged 5-18 years old.

Unrestricted

Garth Hill College		Y			2017/18
Crowthorne CE	Y				2017/18
Hatch Ride (in Wokingham)	Y				2017/18
Oaklands (in Wokingham)	Y				2017/18
Holly Spring				Y	Later year
Cranbourne				Y	Later year
Ascot Heath				Y	Later year
College Town Infant & Junior			Y		Later year
Owlsmoor			Y		Later year
New Scotland Hill			Y		Later year
St Michael's CE Sandhurst ~			Y		Later year

* Note that these schools will also be the subject of consultations in future years.

~ Binfield and St Michael's Sandhurst are both Voluntary Aided schools which determine their own admission arrangements. If proposals are taken forward, the Council will need to work with the governing bodies of these schools to bring about changes.

5. Changes in designated areas to be introduced from 2017/18

The specific content of consultation for 2017/18 entry will be to:

- Establish DAs for the new Binfield Learning Village at Blue Mountain – primary and secondary.
- Make the necessary changes in North Bracknell involving Binfield CE, Warfield CE, Whitegrove and Sandy Lane schools.
- Establish a DA for the new school at Amen Corner North, involving Binfield CE School.
- An expanded DA for Crowthorne CE School to include the TRL area, currently in Wokingham BC.
- Address historic issues of shared DAs and inconsistent boundaries

6. Likely changes to designated areas in the longer term

There will be further changes in DAs in coming years. The proposal is to work towards this pattern year by year through annual statutory admissions arrangements consultations when school providers are known and when schools are ready to open.

7. Protected Sibling Status within the designated area

Parents of children attending a school that was their designated area school at the time of processing the application but where the designated area has changed will have a protection for any younger siblings for the next six years. The younger sibling's application will be processed as living in the designated area of the same school as the older sibling is attending even though the designated area has changed.

8. Timescales

The consultation will be open for comments between 1 September to 20 November (this period includes the necessary statutory 6 week period of consultation)

The Council will then consider responses and is due to make a decision in January.

The Council is committed to understanding the views of everyone with an interest in the admission of children and young people to schools.

Your views are welcome on these changes to designated areas and admissions criteria.

Please respond by email to consultation.education@bracknell-forest.gov.uk, on paper or by using the Council's website **xxxxxx**

9. Contacts

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Consultation mandate

	Consultation mandate 7 elements	Your consultation mandate
1	We	Bracknell Forest Council, Children, Young People and Learning (CYPL)
2	Need to understand the views of (target audiences/stakeholders – such as residents, local businesses)	Headteachers, governors, school staff, parents, children & young people and the local community.
3	Concerning (issue)	Future admission arrangements, including revising school designated areas, to apply from 2017 onwards.
4	So that (actor – such as Executive or Executive Member, a Director, lead officer or team)	CYPL DMT
5	Can (take an action)	Seek views on proposals.
6	Between (date)	1 September 2015 and 20 November 2015
7	So as to accomplish/in order to (wider aim)	Ensure that all school places for maintained schools are allocated and offered in an open, clear, fair and objective way throughout Bracknell Forest.

Consultation mapping

Annex 3

High

Early Years providers

Town and parish councils

Unions / Prof Assocs

Public health

Governing bodies C & VC schools

Diocese of Oxford

Governing bodies VA & Academy schs

Children's Centres

Other churches and faith groups

Wokingham BC

Members

Berkshire Youth

Interest / Not much power

Businesses

RBWM

Interest & power

Churches Esp. Warfield

Local Youth settings

Charters School

B&W College

Hants & Surrey Councils

BF Schools

Emmbrook School

Yateley Frogmore schools

Parents / Carers

NB: Excluded BFC services

St Crispin's School

Level of interest

117

Transport users

FE Colleges Neigh. LAs

Community/ Resident's Assoc'ns

Police

CCG

Newbold College

Transport providers

Low Power / Low Interest

Children & Young people

Other 'own Admission' schools in RBWM Wok'ham & Hants

High Power / Low Interest

Diocese of Portsmouth

School meals prov.

Landscape

School Cleaning

Low

Influence & power

High

Timetable / Project Plan

Annex 4

Initial liaison		Notes	Earliest	Latest	Progress
Liaise with Wokingham re 'triangle' (LA)		Piers/Sue Riddick require formal request incl. maps	Now	31 July	Complete
Wokingham consult re 'triangle' (GS/LA)			Now	31 October	
Liaise with Dioceses re denominational changes (LA)		CoE re VC schools			Complete
Liaise with church school GBs to get view (LA)			14 May	22 July	
Preparation, political briefing and approvals					
Paper to DMT (GS)			31 March		Complete
Lead Member Briefing (GS)			21 April		Complete
Leaders' Briefing	Papers				
	Meeting		19 May		Complete
Members' Briefing	Meeting		20 May		Complete
Paper to CMT (LA)	Papers		20 May		Complete
	Meeting		27 May		Complete
PRG	Papers		28 May		Complete
	Meeting		2 June		Complete
Schools' Briefings		Link to school briefings overleaf	21 May		Started
Executive Briefing	Papers		2 June		Complete
	Meeting		9 June		Complete
Executive	Papers		16 June		Complete
	Meeting		23 June		Complete
Consultation preparation					
Meet or send email to schools involved	Binfield	VA school compulsory for them to agree change. Need to ask them to include in their consultation in 2015 for 2017/18 admission	May	June	Complete
	Whitegrove	Explain about changing DA	May	June	Complete
	Warfield	Explain about changing DA	May	June	Complete
	Crowthorne	Explain about changing DA	May	June	Complete
	St Michael's Sandhurst	VA school compulsory for them to agree			

Unrestricted

		change. Need to ask them to include in their consultation in 2016 for 2018/19 admission			
	Garth Hill College	Explain about changing DA, and Binfield LV implications			Complete
	Owlsmoor	Explain about changing DA			
	New Scotland Hill	Explain about changing DA			
	Sandy Lane	Explain about changing DA			Complete
	Meadow Vale	Explain about changing DA			Complete
	Holly Spring Inf & Jun	Explain about changing DA			
	College Town	Explain about changing DA			
	All schools (incl. above)	Removing the Feeder	June		Complete
Book roadshow (LA)	Edgbarrow	12 Oct 7pm			Booked
	Sandhurst	19 Oct 7pm			Booked
	EP	14 Oct 7pm			Booked
	Garth	21 Oct 7pm			Booked
	Brakenhale	7 Oct 7pm			Booked
	Warfield	23 Sept 7 pm			Booked
	Binfield	TBA			
	Meadow Vale	18 Sept 9.00am			Booked
	Sandy Lane	16 Sept 2.30pm			Booked
	Crowthorne	2 Oct 11.00am			Booked
	Ascot Heath Infants	22 Sept 9.00am			Booked
	Time Square reception				
FAQs (GS/LA)				Before consult	Underway
Dates in diaries for those attending consultation (LA)				Before consult	
Prepare displays (GS/LA)				Before consult	
Write AAA (LA)				Before consult	
Prepare wording/ marketing of roadshow (GS/LA)				Before consult	
Leaflet to send to affected people (GS/LA)				Before consult	
Finalise maps and phases (LA)				Before consult	Underway. Revisions needed
Set up consultation on web (GS)				Before consult	

Unrestricted

Press release (Comms)			Before consult	
List of consultees (LA)	Follows this table		Before consult	Underway
Warfield leaflets for builders (LA)			Before consult	Underway
Consultation				
Consultation start		1 Sept	5 Oct	
Statutory consultation	6 weeks (excl. half-term)	5 Oct	20 Nov	
Liaison with VA and Academies		July	20 Nov	
Approvals - Review outcomes and agree				
DMT Papers				
Meeting		15 Dec	5 Jan	
CMT Papers				
Meeting		23 Dec	13 Jan	
PRG Papers				
Meeting		5 Jan	19 Jan	
Executive Briefing Papers				
Meeting		12 Jan	26 Jan	
Executive Papers				
Meeting		26 Jan	9 Feb	
Statutory deadline			28 Feb	

NB: School Admissions Code 2014 states that:

Statutory consultation. Minimum of 6 weeks, not school holidays, between 1 October 2015 and 31 January 2016.

Decision to be made by 28 February 2016.

Admission authorities **must** consult with:

- a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;

- b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions;
- c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
- d) whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority;
- e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority; and
- f) in the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.

For the duration of the consultation period, the admission authority **must** publish a copy of their full proposed admission arrangements (including the proposed PAN) on their website together with details of the person within the admission authority to whom comments may be sent and the areas on which comments are not sought.

Admission authorities **must** also send upon request a copy of the proposed admission arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed above inviting comment. Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals.

Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals.

Appendix B

**School Admissions Arrangements
2017/18**



**Coordinated Scheme for Admission to
Primary, Infant and Junior Schools,
incorporating admission policies for
community and voluntary controlled schools
For entry to schools in 2017-2018**

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR PRIMARY ADMISSIONS 2017/2018

BACKGROUND

Legislation requires Local Authorities (LA) to draw up a statutory scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in its area (excluding special schools, but including aided schools and academies).

The purpose of a co-ordinated scheme is to ensure that every parent of a child living in Bracknell Forest area who has applied for a place in the normal admissions round receives an offer of only one place on the same day. Any scheme should also aim to ensure that parents are treated fairly and consistently regardless of the status of the school for which they make an application.

When drawing up admissions arrangements, admissions authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are clear, fair and objective, for the benefit of all children, including those with special educational needs, disabilities or in the care of the LA, including those children who were previously in care. The Admissions Arrangements must also comply with the relevant legislation, including the equalities legislation. Bracknell Forest Local Authority's admissions criteria for its maintained schools reflect these requirements. Admissions arrangements should enable parents to express their preference. There is no guarantee that a school place will be available at the school(s) chosen by the parents. However, the Admissions Authority will adhere to the parent's expressed preference subject to availability of a school places and in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria.

MAIN DETAILS OF THE CO-ORDINATED SCHEME

- **Equal preferences**

The DfE (Department for Education) states that a co-ordinated scheme is based on equal preferences. In other words all preferences are treated as equal initially. If more than one place can be offered, the single offer will be for the school the parent/carer has ranked highest. If a place cannot be offered at any of the preference schools, then a place will be offered at the next nearest school with available spaces.

This system allows each preference that parents/carers give to be considered separately. If a child could be allocated a place at two or more of its preference schools, then the parents' ranking will be used as a tie breaker.

The scheme will not affect the duty of the Governors of Aided Schools or academies to set and apply their own admissions arrangements. These schools will continue to be able to operate their own oversubscription criteria and these **must** be clear, fair and objective and they must comply with the School Admissions Code.

- **Information for parents**

Information regarding the scheme and the admissions arrangements will be published in the LA's composite prospectus. This is entitled A Parent's Guide to Primary School Admissions in Bracknell Forest for children starting at a primary or an infant school in the school year September 2017 to 31 August 2018 for children born

on or between 1 September 2012 and 31 August 2013. The guide also provides information for parents of those children applying to transfer from infant to junior school. This guide will be available on the Bracknell Forest website from 12th September prior to the admissions year and hard copies will be available for those who do not have access to the internet.

- **Making an Application**

Bracknell Forest residents can apply for a place for any primary or infant school either on line or using a Common Application Form. It must also be used if residents wish to apply for a primary or infant school outside the Borough. All applications will be recorded by the home LA and then sent to the maintaining LA for each of the preference schools in accordance with the co-ordinated scheme's timetable.

If non Bracknell Forest residents wish to apply for a Bracknell Forest school they should use their home LA form or internet access site of their home LA to apply. That request will then be transferred electronically by that Local Authority to Bracknell Forest by the date in the scheme.

- **Common Application Form**

All applicants living in Bracknell Forest can use the LA's Common Application Form (CAF) to make an application. Parents will need to register with the School Admissions Team from May 2016 to receive information on how to apply for a school place.

Parents will be allowed to name up to three schools and parents are encouraged to do this. Parents will be asked to rank their preferences. They will also be allowed to give reasons for each preference, referring these to the admissions criteria.

If applicants wish for one or more of their preferences to be considered under the designated area criteria then they will have to send in a copy of their current council tax statement in order to prove their residency. If an applicant does not have a copy of their council tax statement then they should contact their council tax office to obtain a copy. Service families should refer to the General Information section below.

Any Supplementary Information Forms issued by an aided school or an academy can either be returned to the school or to Bracknell Forest School Admissions Team. These forms are available on the Bracknell Forest website, the school website or on request from the School Admissions Team.

- **On Line Applications**

Parents have the option of completing an on-line application. Parents will be able to apply for a primary school place on line via the council's website. Information on how to do this will be available in the Parent's Guide and on the Bracknell Forest website. The site will be open for applications from 1 November 2016 to midday 15 January 2017.

If applicants wish for one or more of their preferences to be considered under the designated area criteria then they will have to send in a copy of their current council tax statement in order to prove their residency. Service families should refer to the General Information section below.

- **Applications for Aided Schools or Academies**

Aided Schools or academies can prepare a Supplementary information Form (SIF) to be completed with the on line application/common application form if they require further information in order for them to allocate places at their school against their admissions criteria. Governing Bodies of VA schools and academies and the Local Authority will make the SIF available to parents/carers both in hard copy and as a document on their school website. The forms will be available from and can be returned to either the individual schools or the Local Authority.

The LA will process all the applications for the Aided schools and academies and then transfer the information electronically to schools. On Line applicants who name a school that may require the completion of a SIF will be prompted by the system to complete and return the form in addition to their on line application if necessary.

The Governing Bodies of Aided schools and academies will need to meet within the timescales defined in the scheme in order to advise the LA of their ranking of their applications. The LA will require the Governors to produce a brief statement which will explain to applicants (and future appellants) how and why places have been ranked. The LA will make this statement available on their website and hard copies will be available on request.

- **Applications made after the closing date of 15 January 2017**

- **Late Application**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could have been made by the closing date of 15 January 2017 the application will be processed by the School Admissions Team in the second round which begins on 2 May 2017.

- **Moving into Bracknell Forest**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could **not** have been made by the closing date of 15 January 2017 (for example if they have just moved into Bracknell Forest) but the application form is submitted by 9 February 2016 the application will be considered on time. However evidence to support the reason for the late application will be required by the Local Authority. If the application is received after 9 February 2017 it will be processed in the second round which begins on 2 May 2017.

- **Moving within Bracknell Forest**

If parents move house within Bracknell Forest after the closing date of 15 January 2017 and by 9 February 2017 they must contact the Local Authority to discuss any changes they may be able to make to their preferences. They will be accommodated if at all possible. If parents move house after 9 February 2017 the request will be processed in the second round which begins on 2 May 2017.

- **OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

Within Bracknell Forest there are 25 primary schools, 3 infant schools. Of these, 6 primary schools are either voluntary aided or academy schools and set their own admission criteria. Of the remaining 19 are community school and 3 are voluntary controlled schools and the LA sets the admission criteria for these schools. The criteria for all of these schools can be found in the 'Guide to Primary Admissions within Bracknell Forest', on the Bracknell Forest website or from the school. However to make an application for any school (including schools outside of Bracknell Forest) they must be listed as a preference.

In circumstances where more applications than places are received for Bracknell Forest maintained schools the following criteria will be used.

- **Oversubscription Criteria for community schools**

The LA is the admission authority for community schools and sets the admission criteria.

The following criteria apply to these 19 Bracknell Forest community schools:

Ascot Heath Infant	Holly Spring Infant	Wildridings Primary
Birch Hill Primary	Meadow Vale Primary	Wooden Hill Primary
College Town Infant	New Scotland Hill Primary	Wildmoor Heath Primary
Cranbourne Primary	Owlsmoor Primary	
Crown Wood Primary	The Pines Primary	
Fox Hill Primary	Sandy Lane Primary	
Great Hollands Primary	Uplands Primary	
Harmans Water Primary	Whitegrove Primary	

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health & Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school. After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children² and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted³ (or became subject to a child arrangements order⁴ or special guardianship order⁵) immediately following having been looked after.

² A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

³ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

⁴ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁵ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

- (B) Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school. This evidence must set out the particular reason why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- (C) Children who live in the designated area of the school.
- (D) Children who have siblings, brother(s) or sister(s), at the school, and who will still be attending the school at the time of the child's admission.

In some cases a **tie-breaker** will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria (categories) will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling will take precedence over one who fulfils designated area only).

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

Distances are measured using direct distance calculations within a computer system. The measurement of each distance has been calculated using Pythagoras' Theorem. The way in which this is done is to calculate the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing co-ordinates for each location. The measurement in metres is then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert this measurement to miles. The same method of calculation is used for each direct distance measured. This can be to three, four or five decimal places where necessary.

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school and it cannot be separated, for example where families live in flats and there are fewer places available, then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the Council.

Where demand exists, schools admit up to their admission number and no places are reserved for pupils moving into their designated area.

- **Oversubscription criteria for voluntary controlled primary schools**

The LA is the admission authority for their voluntary controlled schools and sets the admission criteria.

These criteria apply to the following schools:

Crowthorne CE Primary Warfield CE Primary	Winkfield St Mary's CE Primary
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If the number of requests for places is equal to or less than the number of places available, then all applicants could be offered a place at that school.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school.

After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children⁶ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted⁷ (or became subject to a child arrangements order⁸ or special guardianship order⁹) immediately following having been looked after.
- (B) Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school. This evidence must set out the particular reason why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- (C) Children who live in the designated area of the school.
- (D) Children who have siblings, brother(s) or sister(s), at the school, and who will still be attending the school at the time of the child's admission.
- (E) Children whose parents choose the school on denominational grounds.

In some cases a **tie-breaker** will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria (categories) will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling will take precedence over one who fulfils designated area only).

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and

⁶ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

⁷ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

⁸ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁹ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

Distances are measured using direct distance calculations within a computer system. The measurement of each distance has been calculated using Pythagoras' Theorem. The way in which this is done is to calculate the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing co-ordinates for each location. The measurement in metres is then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert this measurement to miles. The same method of calculation is used for each direct distance measured. This can be to three, four or five decimal places where necessary.

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school and it cannot be separated, for example where families live in flats and there are fewer places available, then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the council.

- **Denominational Grounds**

Where denominational grounds are a reason for the application for a *voluntary controlled school* where the LA is the admission authority (Crowthorne CE School, Warfield CE School and Winkfield CE School), it will be necessary for at least one of the parents/carers of the child concerned to regularly attend a church that is part of the group of Churches Together. This group includes the following category of churches - Church of England, all the protestant non-conformist churches (e.g. Baptist, Methodist, United Reform) and Roman Catholic or any other Christian denominational church.

At least one of the parents/carers, who live at the same address as the child, must attend worship on at least two occasions in each calendar month for at least 8 months of the year in the 12 months prior to the published closing date for admissions or the date of application if it is an in-year application. Attendance does not include services of marriage, funerals or christenings (except for the christening of the child seeking entrance to the particular school).

Applicants will need to complete the relevant form in order to confirm that they are applying to the school on denominational grounds. In addition it will then be necessary for the form to be passed onto their local clergy for verification before it is sent to the School Admissions Team.

Application for Warfield CofE School

Applications for Warfield C of E School are made for the school not a particular site. Places will be available across both sites - All Saints Rise and at Woodhurst Park.

Parents should in the usual way name Warfield as one of their preferences on their common application form. They can then request which site they would prefer their child to attend. However this is just a request and does not form part of the application and admission process. The offer of a school place will be made for the school not the site.

If there are more applicants than places within the same criteria then the tie break will be distance as follows:

- Each applicant will be measured using the distance to the mid point between the two sites.
- The tie break will be those nearest the mid point.

The school will be given the list of those allocated a place and their preferred site. The school will also be given information around siblings and distances to both sites to help them organise their classes across the two sites.

After all places has been accepted the parent will be written to by the school and the parent will be informed as to which site their child will be taught on.

Should parents then turn down the offer of a place (either because they no longer wish for the site offered or for another reason) then the offer will be withdrawn. The Department for Education guidance states that there is no right of appeal for a site, only for a school.

Faith-based school with a religious character

A faith-based school with a religious character is required to offer every child who applies, whether of the faith, another faith, or no faith, a place at the school if there is a place available. However, faith-based schools are popular and often over subscribed. Such schools are permitted to use faith-based oversubscription criteria and allocate places by reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.

○ Voluntary Aided and Academy Schools

Within Bracknell Forest there are 6 voluntary aided or academy primary schools and they are each their own admissions authority. Some of these schools require Supplementary Information Forms to be completed. The forms can be found on either the schools website, the council's website or from the school direct and can be returned to either the school or the LA by the required deadline to be considered as part of the application.

The 5 voluntary aided primary schools within Bracknell Forest are as follows:

Binfield Primary CE School	St Michael's East'd CE Primary School
Jennett's Park CE Primary School	St Michael's Sandh't CE Primary School
St Joseph's RC Primary School	

There is 1 academy primary school within Bracknell Forest

St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School

• ALLOCATION PROCESS

As soon as all applications have been received, including those submitted on line and from outside Bracknell Forest, the LA will consider all applications equally for its maintained schools and apply the admissions arrangements as published.

Offers will be sent to parents by their home LA on 18 April 2017. The home LA will advise all parents of the result of their application. If they have been refused a place at one of their preference schools they will be informed of the reasons for refusal and

the details of how to make an appeal. Parents will also be required to accept the offer of a place by 2 May 2017. Failure to do this could result in the offer of a school place being withdrawn. Parents will also be required to send a copy of their child's birth certificate at this time to the School Admissions Team.

The Governors of an aided school or an academy will make their decisions based on the information received from applicants on the common application form or on line and the SIF where necessary.

The Governors will rank all the applications for their school and advise the LA of the results. Their ranked list will include all on time applications. The Governors will provide a statement explaining how places have been ranked and (where appropriate) the reasons why all the preferences have not been met. This statement will be available on the Bracknell Forest website on 18 April 2017 and a hard copy can be sent to parents if requested.

On behalf of the Governors of the aided school or academy the home LA will advise all applicants of the results of their application. The home LA will advise those applicants who are refused a place of their right of appeal and of the arrangements in place for making an appeal.

If the LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools then an offer will be made to the parent for a place for their child at the next nearest school to the home address of the family, this may not necessarily be their designated area school and it may be some distance from their home address.

All parents will be offered a full time place for their child to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the academic year or until the child's statutory school age. If this delayed date is September 2017 (for summer born children who reach statutory school age at this time), their child's entry will be as a year 1 child and a new application must be made. Parents can request that their child takes up a part time* place until their child reaches statutory school age. For an explanation of statutory school age see General Information below.

*Part time is defined as either 5 mornings or 5 afternoons a week.

- **The allocation process – non Bracknell Forest schools**

Parents who have applied for schools outside Bracknell Forest will be sent the results of their application by their home LA on 18 April 2017. In order to do this the maintaining LA will inform the home LA whether they are able to allocate a place at any of the preferred schools. The home LA will then consider all the preferences and possible offers. The home LA will offer a place at the school that was ranked the highest by the parent/carer.

If the home LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools then an offer will be made to the parent for a place for their child at the next nearest school to the home address of the family, this may not necessarily be their designated area school and it may be some distance from their home address.

All non Bracknell Forest admissions authorities will be expected to provide the home LA with a detailed statement explaining how places have been allocated and (where appropriate) the reasons why all the preferences have not been met in order to inform the applicants where necessary.

- **The Allocation Process - Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs**

Admission of children with a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) pupils to school will be managed by the Special Needs Team In accordance with the Code of Practice for Pupils with Special Educational Needs The parents will be informed of their child's allocated secondary school by 14 February 2017 by the SEN Team.

- **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Statutory school age**

Statutory school age is defined as the following:

If a child's birthday falls on or between **1 September and 31 December** they will become of statutory school age on the 1 January after they turn 5, which is defined as the start of the spring term. They will start in a reception class where they will spend two terms before starting in a Year 1 class in the following September.

If your child's birthday falls on or between **1 January and 31 March** they will become statutory school age on 1 April, which is defined as the start of the summer term. They will start in a reception class where they will spend one term before starting in a Year 1 class in the September.

If your child's birthday falls on or between **1 April and 31 August** they will become of statutory school age on the 1 September, which is defined as the start of the autumn term. **However you are unable to defer entry to a new academic year; a new application would have to be made for a place in Year 1.**

However all children will be offered a full time start in the September following their fourth birthday.

- **Multiple Births**

Where the LA has received applications for twins or other multiple births and when one of the siblings is the last child to be admitted the other sibling(s) may be admitted as an exception.

- **Child arrangements orders (previously called shared residence orders)**

It is increasingly common that parents are agreeing, and courts are endorsing, child arrangements orders (previously called shared residence orders) under Section 8 of The Children Act 1989. Further advice on this matter can be obtained from the School Admissions Team. Any details regarding these arrangement orders, or the child's living arrangements, must be submitted at the time of application. It is the parents' responsibility to provide this information. As a general rule shared residence is based (for admissions purposes) on the number of school nights a child spends at the home. The School Admissions Team may take legal advice on these matters as they relate to a specific case. A main address will need to be used to process the application. If the second parent/carer's address is different from the first they will not receive any information/letters unless this is requested.

- **Home address**

The address where the child lives at the closing date of 15 January 2016 will be used to process the application. It is for the applicant to satisfy the Admissions Authority that they live at the address that they state. If fraud is suspected then further proof may be requested. If fraud is established then any offer of a school place will be withdrawn. If a parent/carer owns a property within the Borough which they do not occupy and/or rent out and then move into another property within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school, the address of the property they own will be the address used for determining their designated area, unless the owned house has been rented out for 12 months prior to the closing date for the return of the Common Application Form.

If an applicant already owns a property within the borough which is in the process of being sold Bracknell Forest is able to accept the address of the new property on submission of the appropriate evidence in support eg. a solicitor's letter showing exchange of contracts. The address must be a permanent address, temporary addresses are not acceptable. If applicants are in the process of moving house within Bracknell Forest they should contact School Admissions Team for further advice.

- **Protected Sibling Status**

Parents of children attending a school that was their designated area school at the time of processing the application but where the designated area has changed will have a protection for any younger siblings for the next six years. The younger sibling's application will be processed as living in the designated area of the same school as the older sibling is attending even though the designated area has changed.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the School Admissions Team on their application that they fulfil this criterion. This information will then be verified by the School Admissions Team. Parents **must** enclose a copy of their current council tax notice.

The child must still be living at the address within the original designated area from where the parents applied for the older sibling. If a child's address has changed then this criterion will not be applied.

The older sibling must also still be attending the school where the protected sibling status is being requested.

Note that in all cases the normal admission process will be followed and there will be no guarantee of a place at the school.

- **Applicants from abroad**

If families are moving (for the first time) into the Bracknell Forest area from abroad, then they (including the child) must be resident in Bracknell Forest before an application for a school place can be accepted. Proof of residency within Bracknell Forest will be required. If they are living abroad and returning to a property that they own, within Bracknell Forest, then they will need to produce written proof confirming the details and timing of the relocation. Further advice on the documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

- **Service Families**

Families of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the Bracknell Forest area (or Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in Bracknell Forest) will be able to make an application for a school place if it is accompanied by an official letter from the relevant service declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering address.

For those service families who already live in Bracknell Forest or are moving to live in Bracknell Forest a formal letter from their chain of command verifying their address would be accepted if applying under the designated area criteria.

- **Looked After and Previously Looked After Children**

Criteria A includes those children from whom a request for the allocation of a place for a child has been made and who is Looked After Children¹⁰ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted¹¹ (or became subject to a child arrangements order¹² or special guardianship order¹³) immediately following having been looked after.

If a parent or LA (where relevant) wishes to apply under this criterion it is their responsibility to ensure that all relevant paper work is submitted with the application., for example a copy of the relevant order issued by the family court. Should a parent not submit any relevant documentation with their application it will be assumed that the parent does not wish these circumstances to be taken in to account.

Social Grounds or Medical Grounds (criterion B)

If a parent has indicated on the Common Application Form that they wish their application to be considered on either social or medical need it is their responsibility to obtain a form which must be completed and returned to the School Admissions Team along with supporting written evidence from a professional by the given closing date. The supporting evidence for medical grounds should be from the relevant registered professional(s) involved with the child or family. Examples include registered health professionals, such as Consultant, GP, Psychologist, Psychiatrist; or registered social care professionals such as a Social Worker / Care Manager. Please note, evidence from childminders will not normally be accepted as sufficient evidence. All evidence must be on letter headed paper.

¹⁰ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

¹¹ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

¹² Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

¹³ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

This evidence must set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the **only** suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. This evidence must be specific to the school in question; it must show why only that school is the most suitable; what facilities will benefit the child, and why no other school can offer the same support. Where relevant this school must be the most appropriate for the family circumstances. However it will not be possible to consider an application under this criterion if no supporting evidence is supplied. The Local Authority will **not** contact professionals involved with the family as it is for the applicant to supply this information when submitting the social/medical form. The LA reserves the right to ask parents to supply further evidence or clarification where the LA considers necessary. It is important that applicants seeking to rely on these grounds provide the fullest supporting evidence they can by the closing date. It is the parent's responsibility to produce this evidence. Where further evidence is required it will need to be supplied by the closing date so that the decision can be made alongside all other applications for places at the particular school. Evidence submitted after the closing date will not be considered. Only in exceptional circumstances the LA may apply its discretion to consider evidence submitted after the closing date. It is therefore very important to submit all relevant evidence together with the application to avoid possible delay. But in any event all the relevant evidence must be submitted by the closing date to ensure full and proper consideration.

Medical

If a child or the parent/ carer of that child has a medical condition, that is a serious chronic health condition, or one that would cause significant hardship or risk if the child could not attend the preferred school it must be indicated on the application as their highest preferred school.

All schools have the resources to work with special educational needs and common childhood complaints such as asthma.

Social

If a child or the parent/ carer of that child has a social need that would cause significant hardship or risk if the child could not attend the preferred school it must be indicated on the application as their highest preferred school.

Also considered under this criterion on social grounds will be parents who have applied for a place at their designated area school as their highest preferred school for an older child by the published closing date and the local authority have been unable to meet this preference and a place has been allocated to this older child at an alternative school. If the parent then wishes to apply for this alternative school by the published closing date for their younger child (and the older child will still be attending at the date of admission of the younger child) then the applicant must notify The School Admissions Team on their application for that younger child that they consider this criterion applies and ensure all relevant information is supplied. This information will be assessed as published in the procedure for dealing with social or medical applications.

If a parent moves house or chooses not to accept the offer of a place at their designated area school then this information will have been recorded by The School Admissions Team at the time and will be used in the decision making process as to whether a younger child will be accepted as fulfilling this criterion.

Late applications that could have been made by the closing date will not be assessed as fulfilling this criterion.

- **Appeals**

If parents have been refused a place at one or more of their preferences they will be informed of their right of appeal. All appeals for Bracknell Forest schools must be submitted by 17 May 2017. Admissions authorities will then endeavour to hear all appeals submitted by this date within 40 school days.

- **Waiting lists**

The LA will maintain waiting lists for all Bracknell Forest over subscribed schools. Applicants not offered a place at a higher preference school than that which has been offered will automatically be placed on a waiting list for a school that is within Bracknell. Parents should be aware that their child's name can go up or down the waiting list according to the priority of new additions to the list, for example someone moving into the area is placed on the appropriate place on the waiting list. Waiting lists must be maintained in criteria order at all time. The LA will maintain the waiting lists for all Bracknell Forest schools for the school year for which they have applied. At the end of the school year the waiting list will end and parents will need to reapply for a place for the following year. Waiting lists will be re-ordered at the end of the academic year 2016/17 as the infant to junior feeder criterion will no longer be a valid criterion at this stage. If a child has left the infant school the feeder infant school criteria will not be valid.

- **Changes of preference**

Parents who wish to amend their paper application before the closing date will be allowed to do so as long as they put their request in writing to the Admissions Team by the closing date. Online applications can be amended up until the closing date.

Changes of preference after the closing date of 15 January 2017 will only be allowed after 18 April 2017 in writing to the School Admissions Team and will be processed in the second round.

- **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents of gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group. Where the parents of a summer born child chooses not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, they may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. If an application is received for a child outside of their normal year group the relevant admission authority must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and the parent will be informed of their right of appeal. This right does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.

Where a parent contacts the School Admissions Team with a request for their child to be admitted into a different year group than the relevant one according to their date of birth then the following will apply:

The parent will be required to put all information in writing to the School Admissions Team. It is for the parent to ensure that they have submitted all relevant documentation as no further request will be made to the parent. The paperwork must be submitted before the published closing date for their child's date of birth.

If the application is for a school where Bracknell Forest is the admission authority The paper work will be forwarded to the Principal Educational Psychologist who will advise the admission authority. This advice will then be discussed with the Headteacher of the relevant school(s) and a final decision will be made.

If the application is for a school that is their own admission authority (eg voluntary aided school, academies etc) then the request and the supporting documents will be forwarded to the Governors of that school for their decision regarding the request.

The decision from all relevant admission authorities will be sent to the parent from the local authority and this decision is final.

- **DEFINITIONS**

Parent

Parent is defined under S576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

Sibling

Refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.

Designated areas/catchment areas

Maps showing the designated area of a school are available to view on the Bracknell Forest website, at the school in question, at the main Bracknell library or at a council office on request.

Parents can also find their designated area school on the Bracknell Forest website via 'findmynearest' and entering their road name or postcode.

ADMISSIONS TO JUNIOR SCHOOL

All information in the admission to primary and/or infant school above also relates to junior applications other than the oversubscription criteria.

Information regarding the scheme and the admissions arrangements will be published in the LA's composite prospectus. This is entitled A Parent's Guide to Junior School Admissions in Bracknell Forest for children starting at a junior school in

the school year 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018 for children born on or between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2010. This guide will be available from 12th September prior to the admissions year.

Any parents wishing to apply for a place at a junior school, will do so at the same time as for first admission for school, ie. by 15 January 2017 for entry in September 2017. The LA will issue all offers and refusals. Parents will be offered the right of appeal if necessary.

• **OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

In circumstances where more applications than places are received for Bracknell Forest maintained junior schools the following criteria will be used.

○ **Oversubscription Criteria for community junior schools**

The LA is the admission authority for community junior schools and the following criteria apply to these Bracknell Forest community junior schools:

Holly Spring Junior
College Town Junior

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health & Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school. After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children¹⁴ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted¹⁵ (or became subject to a child arrangements order¹⁶ or special guardianship order¹⁷) immediately following having been looked after.
- (B) Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school. This evidence must set out the particular reason why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- (C) Children who live in the designated area of the school.

¹⁴ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

¹⁵ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

¹⁶ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

¹⁷ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

- (D) Children who have siblings, brother(s) or sister(s), at the school, and who will still be attending the school at the time of the child's admission.
- (E) Children who are attending the infant school with close links to the paired junior school. If this criterion is used then the relevant pairs of Junior and Infant Schools are Holly Spring Junior School and Holly Spring Infant School and College Town Junior School and College Town Infant School.

In some cases a **tie-breaker** will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria (categories) will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling will take precedence over one who fulfils designated area only.

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

Distances are measured using direct distance calculations within a computer system. The measurement of each distance has been calculated using Pythagoras' Theorem. The way in which this is done is to calculate the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing co-ordinates for each location. The measurement in metres is then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert this measurement to miles. The same method of calculation is used for each direct distance measured.

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school (for example for families living in flats) and there are fewer places available then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the Council.

Where demand exists, schools admit up to their admission number and no places are reserved for pupils moving into their designated area.

- **Oversubscription criteria for voluntary controlled junior schools**

The LA is the admission authority for this school and the following criteria apply to this junior school:

Ascot Heath Junior

If the number of requests for places is equal to or less than the number of places available, then all applicants could be offered a place at that school.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health & Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school. After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children¹⁸ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted¹⁹ (or became subject to a child arrangements order²⁰ or special guardianship order²¹) immediately following having been looked after.
- (B) Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school. This evidence must set out the particular reason why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- (C) Children who live in the designated area of the school.
- (D) Children who have siblings, brother(s) or sister(s), at the school, and who will still be attending the school at the time of the child's admission.
- (E) Children whose parents choose the school on denominational grounds.
- (F) Children who have attended the infant school with close links to the paired junior school. If this criterion is used then the relevant pairs of Infant and Junior Schools are Ascot Heath Infant School and Ascot Heath Junior Schools.

In some cases a **tie-breaker** will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria (categories) will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling will take precedence over one who fulfils designated area only).

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

Distances are measured using direct distance calculations within a computer system. The measurement of each distance has been calculated using Pythagoras' Theorem.

¹⁸ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

¹⁹ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

²⁰ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

²¹ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

The way in which this is done is to calculate the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing co-ordinates for each location. The measurement in metres is then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert this measurement to miles. The same method of calculation is used for each direct distance measured.

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school (for example for families living in flats) and there are fewer places available then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the Council.

Pupils do not just have to be in an infant school to be able to apply for a place at a junior school. However, the LA would not encourage parents to move a child who was already settled, out of a primary school into a junior school, unless they had a very good reason.

Junior waiting lists will be re-ordered at the end of the school year 2016/17 as the infant to junior feeder criteria will no longer be a valid criteria.

If a child has left the infant school the feeder infant school criteria will not be valid.

TIMETABLE FOR THE PRIMARY AND JUNIOR CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME 2017/18

Date	Action
By 12 th September 2016	Composite prospectus for Bracknell Forest primary and junior transfers to be published on the council's website
Oct half term 2016	Application information posted to parents who have registered
1 November 2016	Online application site open
15 January 2017	Closing date for paper applications
midday on 15 January 2017	Closing date for online applications
5 February 2017	Information exchange with neighbouring authorities completed
By 12 February 2017	SEN Team to inform parents of statemented pupils of their allocated school
By 3 February 2017	Latest date for accepting applications for those moving into the area
By 8 February 2017	Transfer of information to Bracknell Forest own admission authority schools

24 February 2017	Closing date for receipt of supplementary information forms by own admission authority schools where applicable
By 3 March 2017	Own admission authority schools to advise the local authority of their ranked list
28 February 2017	Appeal timetable to be published on council's website. Own admission authorities to publish their own
By 1 April 2017	Final co-ordination with other local authorities
12 April 2017	Advise schools of indicative numbers
18 April 2017	Offer emails sent. Letters sent using second class post
By 2 May 2017	Deadline for parents to accept offers. Second round begins
By 17 May 2017	Appeals should be submitted by this date to be heard together.
Summer Term 2017	Local authority to advise schools of final allocation details Schools to send out registration forms. Appeals to be heard

PUBLISHED ADMISSIONS NUMBERS FOR 2017/18

School	2017/18 PAN
Primary Schools:	
Ascot Heath CE Junior	
Ascot Heath Infant	
Binfield CE Primary	
Birch Hill Primary	
College Town Infant	
College Town Junior	
Cranbourne Primary	
Crown Wood Primary	
Crowthorne CE Primary	
Fox Hill Primary	
Great Hollands Primary	
Harmans Water Primary	
Holly Spring Infant	
Holly Spring Junior	
Jennett's Park Primary	
Meadow Vale Primary School	
New Scotland Hill Primary	
Owlsmoor Primary	
Pines Primary	

Sandy Lane Primary	
St Joseph's RC Primary	
St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary	
St Michael's CE Primary (Sand.)	
St Michael's (EHP) CE Primary	
Uplands Primary	
Warfield CE Primary	
Whitegrove Primary	
Wildmoor Heath Primary	
Wildridings Primary	
Winkfield St Mary's CE Primary	
Wooden Hill Primary	

* May be increased but subject to building work being completed.

**Coordinated Scheme for Admission to
Secondary Schools, incorporating the
admission policy for community schools
For entry to schools in 2017-2018**

DRAFT

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR SECONDARY ADMISSIONS 2017/2018

BACKGROUND

Legislation requires Local Authorities (LA) to draw up a statutory scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in its area (excluding special schools, but including aided schools and academies).

The purpose of a co-ordinated scheme is to ensure that every parent of a child living in Bracknell Forest area who has applied for a place in the normal admissions round receives an offer of only one place on the same day. Any scheme should also aim to ensure that parents are treated fairly and consistently regardless of the status of the school for which they make an application.

When drawing up admissions arrangements, admissions authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are clear, fair and objective, for the benefit of all children, including those with special educational needs, disabilities or in the care of a LA including those children who were previously in care. Bracknell Forest Local Authority's admissions criteria for its maintained schools reflect these requirements. Admissions arrangements should also enable parents' preferences for schools to be met to the maximum extent possible.

MAIN DETAILS OF THE CO-ORDINATED SCHEME

- **Equal preferences**

The DfE (Department for Education) states that a co-ordinated scheme is based on equal preferences. In other words all preferences are treated as equal initially. If more than one place can be offered, the single offer will be for the school the parent/carer has ranked highest. If a place cannot be offered at any of the preference schools, then a place will be offered at the next nearest school with available spaces.

This system allows each preference that parents/carers give to be considered separately. If a child could be allocated a place at two or more of its preference schools, then the parents' ranking will be used as a tie breaker.

The scheme will not affect the duty of the Governors of Aided Schools or Academies to set and apply their own admissions arrangements. These schools will continue to be able to operate their own over subscription criteria and these **must** be clear, fair and objective and they **must** comply with the School Admissions Code.

- **Information for parents**

Information regarding the scheme and the admissions arrangements will be published in the LA's composite prospectus. This is entitled A Parent's Guide to Secondary School Admissions in Bracknell Forest for children starting at a secondary school in the school year 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018 for children born on or between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2006. This guide will be available on the Bracknell Forest website from 12th September prior to the admissions year and hard copies will be available for those who do not have access to the internet.

- **Making an Application**

Bracknell Forest residents can apply for a place for secondary school either on line or using a Common Application Form. It must also be used if residents wish to apply for a school outside the Borough. All applications will be recorded by the home LA and then sent to the maintaining LA for each of the preference schools in accordance with the co-ordinated scheme's timetable.

If Non Bracknell Forest residents wish to apply for a Bracknell Forest school they should use their home LA form or internet access site of their home LA to apply. That request will then be transferred electronically by that Local Authority to Bracknell Forest by the date in the scheme.

- **Common Application Form**

All applicants living in Bracknell Forest can use the LA's Common Application Form (CAF). These forms will be available to the parents of those Bracknell Forest pupils in Bracknell Forest schools. Arrangements will also be made to ensure that parents of Bracknell Forest pupils in neighbouring LA's schools will also receive information on how to apply. Parents of pupils in Bracknell Forest schools who are not Bracknell Forest residents will receive secondary information from their home local authority.

The form will allow parents to name three schools and parents are encouraged to do this. Parents will be asked to rank their preferences. It will also allow them to give reasons for each preference, referring these to the admissions criteria.

Any Supplementary Information Forms issued by an Aided School or an academy can either be returned to the school or to Bracknell Forest School Admissions Team. These forms are available on the Bracknell Forest website, the school website or on request from the School Admissions Team.

Applications made on the Bracknell Forest Common Application Form for children within a Bracknell Forest primary school may be returned to the child's current Bracknell Forest primary school by 31 October 2016. The primary school will forward the form on to the LA's Admissions Team.

Bracknell Forest parents whose child attends a school in another LA and who wish to submit a paper application, can return their form either to their child's current school or directly to the Bracknell Forest Admissions Team by 31 October 2016. Bracknell Forest parents whose child attends an independent school will need to send their application form directly to Bracknell Forest's Admissions Team by 31 October 2016 or apply on line.

If applicants wish for one or more of their preferences to be considered under the designated area criteria then they will have to send in a copy of their current council tax statement with their application in order to prove their residency. If an applicant does not have a copy of their council tax statement then they should contact their council tax office to obtain a copy. Service families should refer to the General Information section below. Service families should refer to the General Information section below.

- **On Line Applications**

Parents can also complete an on-line application. Parents will be able to apply for a secondary school place on line via the Council's website. The site will be open for applications from 12 September to midday on 31 October 2016. On line applications have to be submitted by midday 31 October 2016.

If applicants wish for one or more of their preferences to be considered under the designated area criteria then they will have to send in a copy of their current council tax statement with their application in order to prove their residency. Service families should refer to the General Information section below.

If Non Bracknell Forest residents wish to apply for a Bracknell Forest school they should use their home LA form or internet access site of their home LA to apply. That request will then be transferred electronically by that Local Authority to Bracknell Forest by the date in the scheme.

- Applications for Aided Schools or Academies

Aided Schools or Academies can prepare a Supplementary information Form (SIF) to be completed with the on line application/common application form if they require further information in order for them to allocate places at their school against their admissions criteria. Governing Bodies of VA schools and academies and the Local Authority will make the SIF available to parents/carers both in hard copy and as a document on their school website. The forms will be available from and can be returned to either the individual schools or the Local Authority.

The LA will process all the applications for the Aided schools and academies and then transfer the information electronically to schools. On Line applicants who name a school that may require the completion of a SIF will be prompted by the system to complete and return the form in addition to their on line application if necessary.

The Governing Bodies of Aided schools and academies will need to meet within the timescales defined in the scheme in order to advise the LA of their ranking of their applications. The LA will require the Governors to produce a brief statement which will explain to applicants (and future appellants) how and why places have been ranked. The LA will make this statement available on their website. Hard copies can be request for those who do not have access to the internet.

- **Applications made after the closing date of 31 October 2016**

- **Late Application**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could have been made by the closing date of 31 October 2016 the application will be processed by the School Admissions Team in the second round which begins on 15 March 2017.

- **Moving into Bracknell Forest**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could **not** have been made by the closing date of 31 October 2016 (for example if they have just moved into Bracknell Forest) but the application form is submitted before 31 December 2016 the application will be considered on time. However evidence to support the reason for the late application will be required by the Local Authority. If the application is

received on or after 31 December 2016 it will be processed in the second round which begins on 15 March 2017.

- **Moving within Bracknell Forest**

If parents move house within Bracknell Forest after the closing date of 31 October 2016 and before 31 December 2016 they must contact the Local Authority to discuss any changes they may be able to make to their preferences. They will be accommodated if at all possible. If parents move house after 31 December 2016 the request will be processed in the second round which begins on 15 March 2017.

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

Within Bracknell Forest there are 6 secondary schools. Of these, one is an academy and sets its own admission criteria. The remaining 5 are community schools and the LA sets the admission criteria for these schools. The criteria for all of these schools can be found in the 'Guide to Secondary Admissions within Bracknell Forest', on the Bracknell Forest website or from the school. However to make an application for any school (including schools outside of Bracknell Forest) they must be listed as a preference.

In circumstances where more applications than places are received for Bracknell Forest maintained schools the following criteria will be used.

- **Oversubscription Criteria Bracknell Forest community schools:**

Bracknell Forest is the admission authority for community schools and sets the oversubscription criteria.

The following criteria apply to these five Bracknell Forest community schools:

Easthampstead Park School
Edgbarrow School
Garth Hill College
Sandhurst School
The Brakenhale School

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health & Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school. After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children²² and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted²³ (or became subject to a child arrangements

²² A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

²³ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

order²⁴ or special guardianship order²⁵) immediately following having been looked after.

- (B) Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school. This evidence must set out the particular reason why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- C) Children who live in the designated area of the school.
- (D) Children who have brother(s) or sister(s) at the school (including sixth form), and who will still be attending school at the time of the applicant's admission. This will be checked as necessary before an offer is made. These siblings include children living as siblings in the same family unit and at the same address as the child and for whom the applicant has parental responsibility.

Children must be living in the designated area at the closing date of 31 October 2016 to be considered under these criteria.

In some cases a tie-breaker will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling will take precedence over one who fulfils just designated area.

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

Distances are measured using direct distance calculations within a computer system. The measurement of each distance has been calculated using Pythagoras' Theorem. The way in which this is done is to calculate the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing co-ordinates for each location. The measurement in metres is then multiplied by 0.000621318 to convert this measurement to miles. The same method of calculation is used for each direct distance measured.

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school (for example for families living in flats) and there are fewer places available then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the Council.

²⁴ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

²⁵ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

As soon as all applications have been received, including those submitted on line and from outside Bracknell Forest, the LA will consider all applications equally for its maintained schools and apply the admissions arrangements as published.

Faith-based school with a religious character

A faith-based school with a religious character is required to offer every child who applies, whether of the faith, another faith, or no faith, a place at the school if there is a place available. However, faith-based schools are popular and often over subscribed. Such schools are permitted to use faith-based oversubscription criteria and allocate places by reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.

○ Academies

Within Bracknell Forest there is one academy secondary school. Own admission authority schools can prepare a Supplementary information Form (SIF) to be completed if they require further information in order for them to allocate places at their school against their admissions criteria. The form can be found on either the schools website, the council's website or from the school direct and can be returned to either the school or the LA by the required deadline to be considered as part of the application.

The academy within Bracknell Forest is as follows:

Ranelagh Church of England Academy School

THE ALLOCATION PROCESS

As soon as all applications have been received, including those submitted on line and from outside Bracknell Forest, the LA will consider all applications equally for its maintained schools and apply the admissions arrangements as published.

Offers will be sent to parents by their home LA on 1 March 2017. The home LA will advise all parents of the result of their application. If they have been refused a place at one of their preference schools they will be informed of the reasons for refusal and the details of how to make an appeal. Parents will be required to accept their offer of a place by 15 March 2017. Failure to do this could result in the offer being withdrawn. Parents will also be required to send a copy of their child's birth certificate at this time to the School Admissions Team.

The Governors of an aided school or an academy will make their decisions based on the information received from applicants on the common application form or on line and the SIF where necessary.

The Governors will rank all the applications for their school and advise the LA at the beginning of the spring term 2017 of the results. Their ranked list will include all on time applications. The Governors will provide a statement explaining how places have been ranked and (where appropriate) the reasons why all the preferences have not been met. This statement will be published by the home LA on 1 March 2017 on their website. Hard copies will also be available.

On behalf of the Governors of the Aided school or academy the home LA will advise all applicants of the results of their application. The home LA will advise those

applicants who are refused a place of their right of appeal and of the arrangements in place for making an appeal.

If the LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools then an offer will be made to the parent for a place for their child at the next nearest school to the home address of the family, this may not necessarily be their designated area school and it may be some distance from their home address.

- **The allocation process – non Bracknell Forest schools**

Parents who have applied for schools outside Bracknell Forest will be sent the results of their application by their home LA on 1 March 2017. In order to do this the maintaining LA will inform the home LA whether they are able to allocate a place at any of the preferred schools by the middle of January 2017. The home LA will then consider all the preferences and possible offers. The home LA will offer a place at the school that was ranked the highest by the parent/carer.

If the home LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools then an offer will be made to the parent for a place for their child at the next nearest school to the home address of the family, this may not necessarily be their designated area school and it may be some distance from their home address.

All non Bracknell Forest admissions authorities will be expected to provide the home LA with a detailed statement explaining how places have been allocated and (where appropriate) the reasons why all the preferences have not been met in order to inform the applicant where necessary.

- **The Allocation Process - Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs**

Admission of SEN pupils to school will be managed by the Special Needs Team in accordance with the Code of Practice for Pupils with Special Educational Needs. The parents will be informed of their child's allocated secondary school by 14 February 2017 by the SEN Team.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Multiple Births**

Where the LA has received applications for twins or other multiple births and when one of the siblings is the last child to be admitted the other sibling(s) may be admitted as an exception.

- **Child arrangements order (previously shared residence orders)**

It is increasingly common that parents are agreeing, and courts are endorsing, child arrangements orders (previously called shared residence orders) under Section 8 of The Children Act 1989. Further advice on this matter can be obtained from the School Admissions Team. Any details regarding shared residency, or the child's living arrangements, must be submitted at the time of application. It is the parents' responsibility to provide this information. As a general rule shared residence is based (for admissions purposes) on the number of school nights a child spends at the home. The School Admissions Team may take legal advice on these matters as they

relate to a specific case. A main address will need to be used to process the application. If the second parent/carer's address is different from the first they will not receive any information/letters unless this is requested.

- **Home address**

The address where the child lives at the closing date of 31 October 2016 will be used to process the application. It is for the applicant to satisfy the Admissions Authority that they live at the address that they state. If fraud is suspected then further proof may be requested. If fraud is established then any offer of a school place will be withdrawn. If a parent/carer owns a property within the Borough which they do not occupy and/or rent out and then move into another property within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school the address of the property they own will be the address for determining their designated area, unless the owned house has been rented out for 12 months prior to the closing date for the return of the Common Application Form.

If an applicant already own a property within the borough which is in the process of being sold Bracknell Forest is able to accept the address of the new property on submission of the appropriate evidence in support eg exchange of contracts letter. The address must be a permanent address, temporary addresses are not acceptable. If applicants are in the process of moving house within Bracknell Forest they should contact School Admissions Team for further advice.

- **Protected Sibling Status**

Parents of children attending a school that was their designated area school at the time of processing the application but where the designated area has changed will have a protection for any younger siblings for the next six years. The younger sibling's application will be processed as living in the designated area of the same school as the older sibling is attending even though the designated area has changed.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the School Admissions Team on their application that that they fulfil this criterion. This information will then be verified by the School Admissions Team. Parents **must** enclose a copy of their current council tax notice.

The child must still be living at the address within the original designated area from where the parents applied for the older sibling. If a child's address has changed then this criterion will not be applied.

The older sibling must also still be attending the school where the protected sibling status is being requested.

Note that in all cases the normal admission process will be followed and there will be no guarantee of a place at the school.

- **Applicants from abroad**

If families are moving (for the first time) into the Bracknell Forest area from abroad, then they (including the child) must be resident in Bracknell Forest before an application for a school place can be accepted. Proof of residency within Bracknell

Forest will be required. If they are living abroad and returning to a property that they own, in the local area, then they will need to produce written proof confirming the details and timing of the relocation. Further advice on the documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

- **Service Families**

Families of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the Bracknell Forest area (or Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in Bracknell Forest) will be able to make an application for a school place if it is accompanied by an official letter from the relevant service declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering address.

For those who already live in Bracknell Forest or are moving to live in Bracknell Forest a formal letter from their chain of command verifying their address would be accepted if they wish their application to be considered under the designated area criteria.

- **Looked After and Previously Looked After Children**

Criteria A includes Looked After Children²⁶ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted²⁷ (or became subject to a child arrangements order²⁸ or special guardianship order²⁹) immediately following having been looked after.

If a parent or LA (where relevant) wishes to apply under this criterion it is their responsibility to ensure that all relevant paper work is submitted with the application, for example of a copy of the relevant order issued by the family court. Should a parent not submit any relevant documentation with their application it will be assumed that the parent does not wish these circumstances to be taken in to account.

- **Social Grounds or Medical Need (category B)**

If a child or the parent/ carer of that child has a medical condition, that is a serious chronic health condition, or a social need that would cause significant hardship or risk if the child could not attend the preferred school it must be indicated on the Common Application Form as their highest preferred school.

All schools have the resources to work with special educational needs and common childhood complaints such as asthma.

²⁶ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

²⁷ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

²⁸ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

²⁹ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

If it is indicated on the Common Application Form that somebody wants their application to be considered on either social or medical need it is their responsibility to obtain a form which must be completed and returned to the School Admissions Team along with supporting written evidence from a professional by the relevant closing date. The supporting evidence should be from the relevant registered professional(s) involved with the child or family. Examples include registered health professionals, such as Consultant, GP, Psychologist, Psychiatrist; or registered social care professionals such as a Social Worker / Care Manager. Please note, evidence from childminders will not normally be accepted as sufficient evidence. All evidence must be on letter headed paper.

This evidence must set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the **only** suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. This evidence must be specific to the school in question; it must show why only that school is the most suitable; what facilities will benefit the child, and why no other school can offer the same support. Where relevant this school must be the most appropriate for the family circumstances. However it will not be possible to consider an application under this criterion if no supporting evidence is supplied. The Local Authority will **not** contact professionals involved with the family as it is for the applicant to supply this information when submitting the social/medical form. The LA reserves the right to ask parents to supply further evidence or clarification where the LA considers necessary. It is important that applicants seeking to rely on these grounds provide the fullest supporting evidence they can by the closing date. It is the parent's responsibility to produce this evidence. Where further evidence is required it will need to be supplied by the closing date so that the decision can be made alongside all other applications for places at the particular school. Evidence submitted after the closing date will not be considered. Only in exceptional circumstances the LA may apply its discretion to consider evidence submitted after the closing date. It is therefore very important to submit all relevant evidence together with the application to avoid possible delay. But in any event all the relevant evidence must be submitted by the closing date to ensure full and proper consideration.

- **Appeals**

If parents have been refused a place at one or more of their preferences they will be informed of their right of appeal. All appeals for Bracknell Forest schools must be submitted by 15 April 2017. Admissions authorities will then endeavour to hear all appeals submitted by this date within 40 school days.

- **Waiting lists**

Applicants not offered a place at one of their higher preference school than that offered are placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be constructed using the same order of priorities as set out in the admissions criteria. Parents should be aware that their child's name can go up or down the waiting list according to the priority of new additions to the list, for example someone moving into the area is placed on the appropriate place on the waiting list. The LA will maintain the waiting lists for all Bracknell Forest maintained schools for the school year for which they have applied. At the end of the school year the waiting list will end and parents will need to reapply for a place for the following year.

The LA will maintain the waiting list for Ranelagh Church of England Academy School until 1 September 2017 when Ranelagh will maintain their own.

- **Changes of preference**

Parents who wish to amend their paper application before the closing date will be allowed to do so as long as they put their request in writing to the Admissions Team by the closing date. Online applicants can amend their application online until the closing date.

Changes of preference after the closing date (31 October 2016) will only be allowed after 1 March 2017 in writing to the School Admissions Team and will be processed in the second round.

- **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents of gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group. If an application is received for a child outside of their normal year group the relevant admission authority must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and the parent will be informed of their right of appeal. This right does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.

Where a parent contacts the School Admissions Team with a request for their child to be admitted into a different year group than the relevant one according to their date of birth then the following will apply:

The parent will be required to put all information in writing to the School Admissions Team. It is for the parent to ensure that they have submitted all relevant documentation as no further request will be made to the parent. The paperwork must be submitted before the published closing date relevant to their child's date of birth.

If the application is for a school where Bracknell Forest is the admission authority the paperwork will be forwarded to the Principal Educational Psychologist who will advise the admission authority. This advice will then be discussed with the Headteacher of the relevant school(s) and a final decision will be made.

If the application is for a school that is their own admission authority (eg voluntary aided school, academies etc) then the request and the supporting documents will be forwarded to the Governors of that school for their decision regarding the request.

The decision from all relevant admission authorities will be sent to the parent from the local authority and this decision is final.

DEFINITION

Parent

Parent is defined under S576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with

whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

Sibling

Refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.

Designated areas/catchment areas

Maps showing the designated area of a school are available to view on the Bracknell Forest website, at the school in question, at the main Bracknell library or at a council office on request.

Parents can also find their designated area school on the Bracknell Forest website via 'findmynearest' and entering their road name or postcode.

SECONDARY TRANSFER TIMETABLE SEPTEMBER 2017 ENTRY

Date	Action
By 12 September 2016	Composite prospectus for Bracknell Forest secondary transfers to be published on the council's website
By 12 September 2016	Application information sent out via pupil post where appropriate or to the home address
12 September 2016	Online application site open
31 October 2016	Closing date for paper applications
Midday 31 October 2016	Closing date for online applications
14 February 2017	SEN Team to inform parents of statemented pupils of their allocated school
31 December 2015	Latest date for accepting applications for those moving into the area.
Beginning of the spring term 2017	Own admission authorities to inform the local authority of their ranking
24 February 2017	Advise schools of indicative numbers
1 March 2017	Offer emails sent. Letters sent out using first class post

29 February 2017	Appeal timetable to be published on council's website. Own admission authorities to publish their own
15 March 2017	Deadline for parents to accept offers. Second round begins.
15 April 2017	Appeals should be submitted by this date to be heard together.
Summer Term 2017	Local authority to advise schools of final allocation details Appeals to be heard

PUBLISHED ADMISSIONS NUMBERS FOR 2017/18

Secondary Schools:	2017/18 PAN
Brakenhale	
Easthampstead Park	
Edgbarrow	
Garth Hill	
Ranelagh	
Sandhurst	

**Admission policy for sixth form community
schools**

For entry to schools in 2017-2018

DRAFT

SIXTH FORM ADMISSIONS 2017/18

- **Entitlement to sixth form education**

All secondary schools in Bracknell Forest have sixth forms and pupils in individual schools are entitled to be considered for entry into their school sixth form provided they meet the entry criteria for individual courses and that there are sufficient spaces to meet their requirements.

Bracknell Forest secondary schools must first offer places for sixth form to year 11 students within the school and then to external applicants provided an appropriate course is available for a suitably qualified student.

School governing bodies must set an admission number for Year 12 for external applicants. An admission number for Year 12 must be set and submitted to the local authority before 1 July 2016 for implementation in the following academic year (14 months later), after inclusion in the annual consultation on the authority's admissions arrangements, and to facilitate publication in the authority's composite prospectus for that year of entry.

- **Roles and Responsibilities**

The responsibility for determining the admissions policy for community sixth forms in secondary schools is that of the local authority. Administration of sixth form admissions is delegated by the local authority to the community secondary schools.

There is a Church of England Academy secondary school in Bracknell Forest; Ranelagh, which sets and administers its own admissions arrangements for the sixth form.

- **Start dates**

All students are required to start on, or the first school day after, 1 September 2017.

- **Published Admission Number**

This is the number of places that the admission authority must offer in each relevant age group for a school for which it is the admission authority.

For 6th Forms the published admission number must relate only to those being admitted to the school for the first time and should be based on an estimate of the minimum number of external applicants likely to be admitted, although it would be acceptable to exceed this if demand for available courses can be met. This Published Admission Number is separate from the main schools admission number and has no bearing on the capacity of the main school.

- **Applying for entry into sixth forms**

Applications should be made on the school's application form and forwarded to the school's Head of Sixth Form by 26 February 2017. The application form will also be submitted to the local authority to ensure that it meets the requirements of the School Admissions Code.

It is unlawful for schools to interview students or their families to determine a place; although meetings may be arranged to provide advice on options and entry requirements for particular courses.

Entry to courses in the sixth form must not be dependent on attendance, behaviour record, or perceptions of attitude or motivation as this is unlawful.

To ensure transparency; schools will publicise what courses are available; the entry requirements for each; and provide statistics about the number of internal and external applicants accepted and refused on each course, plus the number of applications received for each course in the previous year.

Schools will provide this statistical information to the local authority in September each year in order that a report may be prepared for the Schools Admissions Forum.

Parents may apply by the deadline given in the school prospectus and pass the application form to the nominated person on the application form.

Places allocated will be offered in accordance with the published admissions criteria. Parents should ensure that they read the admissions policy and complete the standard application form for admission to the sixth form.

Offers of places to external students are subject to the school confirming date of birth or right of abode by examination of the birth certificate and/or student's passport, as appropriate.

Applications will be considered by a committee of the Governing Body, or this may be delegated to the Headteacher or Head of Sixth Form plus at least one other member of staff nominated by the Governing Body.

Parents will be asked to declare that the address used will be their place of residence, the offer of a place may be withdrawn if false or misleading information is given.

- **Allocation of places (oversubscription criteria)**

In the case of oversubscription for a place on a particular course, places will be offered first to students within the school and then to external applicants.

The following criteria will be used to allocate the available places on those courses that receive more applications than can be accommodated:

Children with statements of special educational needs or an Education Health & Care Plan that name a school in the statement are required to be admitted to the school that is named and who meet the academic requirements for the course. The admissions authority does not have the right to refuse admission.

A Looked After Children³⁰ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so

³⁰ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

because they were adopted³¹ (or became subject to a child arrangements order³² or special guardianship order³³) immediately following having been looked after.

- B Students who meet the academic requirements for the level of course applied for, as published in the school prospectus.

Available places are those places available after existing students in the school have indicated their preference against their entitlement.

Tie Breaker

Priority will be given within any of the above oversubscription criteria to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to the school in terms of radial distance. Distances will be measured consistently, using the local authority computerised mapping system and the distance will be measured as a straight line between the Land Property Gazetteer address points for the respective home address and school.

Where the school is oversubscribed, further information will be required to verify the home address e.g. council tax or utility bill.

- **Waiting Lists**

A waiting list will not be held.

- **Late Applications**

If an application is received after the deadline and before the date parents are notified of places, this will be considered 'late'. Late applications will be considered after the allocation of places and notified after the main allocation date, unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. hospitalisation of a parent or a family has just moved into the area. In such instances, evidence will be required.

- **Applications received after the normal admissions round**

Applications received after the start of the school year will only be considered if places on the requested courses are available and the student meets the academic requirements of the course.

- **Multiple births or children with birth dates in the same academic year**

Application for places is based on meeting the individual requirements of the course. No guarantee of a place is given to students with either the same birth dates or children born in the same academic year from the same family.

³¹ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

³² Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

³³ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

- **Accepting or declining the offer of a place**

Places are offered on the understanding that there is a commitment to meet the academic requirements of the course.

Parents are required to accept or decline the allocated place using the form sent with the allocation letter. The form must be returned to the school within two weeks from the date of the offer letter. Failure to respond may result in the place being withdrawn. Parents are requested to advise the school at any stage, if they are not accepting the place for any reason.

- **Appeals** The student and/or the parents of students, internal or external, who are not offered a place, have the right to appeal against non-admission.

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Appendix E: Nursery Schools

To follow

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**In-Year Admission to Secondary School
and
Primary, Infant and Junior schools
For entry to schools in 2017-2018**

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BACKGROUND

There is no statutory requirement for a co-ordinated admissions process for in-year applications however Bracknell Forest will continue to co-ordinate all applications for **ALL** schools within the local authority. If an application is received after the academic year has started then it will be treated as an “in year” application. If a parent requires a school place within another authority then they must contact that authority in the first instance.

When drawing up admissions arrangements, admissions authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are clear, fair and objective, for the benefit of all children, including those with special educational needs, disabilities or in the care of the LA, including those children who were previously in care. The Admissions Arrangements must also comply with the relevant legislation, including the equalities legislation. Bracknell Forest Local Authority’s admissions criteria for its maintained schools reflect these requirements. There is no guarantee that a school place will be available at the school(s) chosen by the parents. However, the Admissions Authority will adhere to the parent’s expressed preference subject to availability of a school places and in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria.

MAIN DETAILS OF THE CO-ORDINATION

The Local Authority (LA) will manage all in year applications for **ALL** schools within Bracknell Forest. Applicants who wish to apply for a place within a Bracknell Forest school will need to contact the School Admissions Team at the council to obtain a form or apply using the council's online application process.

The Governors of a voluntary aided school or an academy set and apply their own admissions arrangements. A list of academies and voluntary aided schools within Bracknell Forest can be found in the Guide to In Year Applications. These schools will continue to be able to operate their own published over subscription criteria. The over subscription criteria **must** be clear, fair and objective and they must comply with the School Admissions Code.

However applications for these schools along with any applications for maintained schools must be made on the Common Application Form available from the School Admissions Team at Bracknell Council.

Voluntary aided (VA) schools or academies can prepare a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) to be completed if they require further information in order for them to allocate places at their school against their admissions criteria. Governing Bodies of VA schools and academies and the Local Authority will make the SIF available to parents/carers both in hard copy and as a document on their school website. The forms will be available from and can be returned to, either the individual schools or the Local Authority.

The LA will process all the applications for aided schools and academies and then transfer the request for a school place and all relevant information electronically to schools.

The LA will process and apply the relevant criteria to applications received for all maintained school within the borough.

It will be necessary for all schools to inform the LA at regular intervals of their numbers on roll. This information may be collected electronically.

If a parent wishes to apply for a school that is not within Bracknell Forest then they must contact the maintaining local authority in which the school is situated for advice on their procedure.

- **Making an Application**

Where a family is applying for a Bracknell Forest school then they can obtain a copy of the common application form (CAF) from the School Admissions Team or can apply using the online application form on the Council's website. This must be submitted to the School Admissions Team who will process applications for all schools within the borough. Both formats will be treated in the same way.

The form will allow parents to name three Bracknell Forest schools and parents are encouraged to do this. Parents will be asked to rank their preferences. It will also allow them to give reasons for each preference.

If the application is for a place in year 10 or 11 it is important that the child visits the school to ensure that they can meet their requirements for GCSE before making an application. This is important even when there are available school places.

If applicants wish for one or more of their preferences to be considered under the designated area criteria then they will have to send in a copy of their current council tax statement with their application in order to prove their residency. If an applicant does not have a copy of their council tax statement then they should contact their council tax office to obtain a copy. (Service families should refer to General Information section below). In order to accept the offer of a place, applicants will need to provide a copy of their child's short birth certificate.

Those children who are currently in a Bracknell Forest school and wish to change to another Bracknell Forest school can obtain a copy of the form from their current headteacher.

- **Information for parents**

If an application is received after the academic year has started then it will be treated as an "in year" application. For further information and guidance please refer to the booklet 'Guide to In Year Applications Bracknell Forest' This can be found on the Bracknell Forest website or a hard copy can be requested.

An application for a school place will only be accepted up to a half a term before the parent wishes the child to start.

Where demand exists, schools admit up to their admission number and no places are reserved for pupils moving into their designated area.

An application will normally be processed within 5 school days of receipt. This may take longer if it has to be forwarded to another admission authority for consideration (for example a VA school or an academy). The application may also be delayed if there is a need to refer to another agency or if it is to be referred to the Fair Access Panel (see General Information).

If the application is for the following academic year then the application can only be accepted after 1st July. Please refer to 'new academic year applications' section below for further information.

SECONDARY SCHOOL IN YEAR APPLICATIONS 2017/18

Within Bracknell Forest there are 6 secondary schools. 5 of these are community schools (see list below) maintained by Bracknell Forest and one, Ranelagh School, is an academy and sets its own admission criteria, this can be obtained direct from the school or from the school's website.

However to make an application for any of the 6 schools they must be listed on the CAF available from Bracknell Forest School Admissions Team or via the online site.

In circumstances where more applications than places are received for Bracknell Forest maintained schools, or if a year group has already reached its admission number then the application will be refused and ranked on the appropriate waiting list in the following criteria order

- **Oversubscription Criteria Bracknell Forest community schools:**

Bracknell Forest is the admission authority for community schools and sets the oversubscription criteria for the following five schools.

Easthampstead Park School
Edgbarrow School
Garth Hill College
Sandhurst School
The Brakenhale School

If an application is received for one of the schools listed in the table above the following criteria will apply:

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health & Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school.

After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children³⁴ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted³⁵ (or became subject to a child arrangements order³⁶ or special guardianship order³⁷) immediately following having been looked after.
- (B) Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school. This evidence must set out the particular reason why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- (C) Children who live in the designated area of the school.
- (D) Children who have brother(s) or sister(s) at the school (including sixth form), and who will still be attending school at the time of the applicant's admission. This will be checked as necessary before an offer is made. These siblings include children living as siblings in the same family unit and at the same address as the child and for whom the applicant has parental responsibility.

³⁴ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

³⁵ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

³⁶ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

³⁷ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

In some cases a tie-breaker will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area will take precedence over one who fulfils sibling and feeder primary; an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling, will take precedence over one who fulfils sibling and feeder primary etc)

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

Distances are measured using direct distance calculations within a computer system. The measurement of each distance has been calculated using Pythagoras' Theorem. The way in which this is done is to calculate the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing co-ordinates for each location. The measurement in metres is then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert this measurement to miles. The same method of calculation is used for each direct distance measured.

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school (for example for families living in flats) and there are fewer places available then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the Council.

PRIMARY, INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL IN YEAR APPLICATIONS 2017/18

Within Bracknell Forest there are 25 primary schools, 3 infant schools and 3 junior schools. Of these, 6 primary schools are voluntary aided schools and set their own admission criteria. These criteria can be obtained direct from the schools or on the school websites.

However to make an application for any of the 31 schools they must be listed on the CAF available from Bracknell Forest School Admissions Team or via the online site.

- **Application For Maintained Infant, Primary and Junior Schools**

If an application is received for any of the maintained primary infant or junior schools within Bracknell Forest the following will apply:

In circumstances where more applications than places are received for Bracknell Forest community schools, or if a year group has already reached its admission number then the application will be refused and ranked on the appropriate waiting list in the following criteria order

- **Oversubscription Criteria for Infant, Primary and Junior Community School**

Bracknell Forest is the admission authority for community schools and sets the admission criteria.

The following criteria apply to these Bracknell Forest community schools:

Ascot Heath Infant	Harmans Water Primary	Uplands Primary
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Birch Hill Primary	Holly Spring Infant	Whitegrove Primary
College Town Infant	Holly Spring Junior	Wildridings Primary
College Town Junior	Meadow Vale Primary	Wildmoor Heath Primary
Cranbourne Primary	New Scotland Hill Primary	Wooden Hill Primary
Crown Wood Primary	Owlsmoor Primary	
Fox Hill Primary	The Pines Primary	
Great Hollands Primary	Sandy Lane Primary	

If an application is received for one of the schools listed in the table above the following criteria will apply:

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health & Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school.

After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children³⁸ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted³⁹ (or became subject to a child arrangements order⁴⁰ or special guardianship order⁴¹) immediately following having been looked after.
- (B) Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school. This evidence must set out the particular reason why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- (C) Children who live in the designated area of the school.
- (D) Children who have statutory (compulsory) school age siblings, brother(s) or sister(s), at the school, and who will still be attending the school at the time of the child's admission.

In some cases a **tie-breaker** will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria (categories) will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling will take precedence over one who fulfils designated area.

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

³⁸ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

³⁹ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

⁴⁰ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁴¹ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school (for example for families living in flats) and there are fewer places available then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the Council.

○ **Oversubscription Criteria for Infant, Primary and Junior Voluntary Controlled School**

Bracknell Forest is the admission authority for their voluntary controlled schools and sets the admission criteria.

These criteria apply to the following schools:

Ascot Heath CE Junior Crowthorne CE Primary	Warfield CE Primary Winkfield St Mary's CE Primary
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If an application is received for one of the schools listed in the table above the following criteria will apply:

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health & Care Plan that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school.

After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children⁴² and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted⁴³ (or became subject to a child arrangements order⁴⁴ or special guardianship order⁴⁵) immediately following having been looked after.
- (B) Children who have either medical or social grounds for admission to a particular school. This evidence must set out the particular reason why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- (C) Children who live in the designated area of the school.
- (D) Children who have statutory (compulsory) school age siblings, brother(s) or sister(s), at the school, and who will still be attending the school at the time of the child's admission.
- (E) Children whose parents choose the school on denominational grounds.

⁴² A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

⁴³ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

⁴⁴ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁴⁵ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

In some cases a **tie-breaker** will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria (categories) will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling will take precedence over one who fulfils designated area)

After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants or if they do not fulfil any of the above criteria, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

If in the event that two or more children live at the same distance from school (for example for families living in flats) and there are fewer places available then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The process will be drawn and scrutinised by people who are independent of the Council.

- **Denominational Grounds**

Where an application is submitted on the basis of denominational grounds for a **voluntary controlled school**, it will be necessary for at least one of the parents/carers of the child concerned to regularly attend a church that is part of the group of Churches Together in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. This group includes the following category of churches - Church of England, all the protestant non-conformist churches (e.g. Baptist, Methodist, United Reform) and Roman Catholic or any other Christian denominational church.

At least one of the parents/carers, who live at the same address as the child, must attend worship on at least two occasions in each calendar month for at least 8 months of the year in the 12 months prior to the date of application. Attendance does not include services of marriage, funerals or christenings (except for the christening of the child seeking entrance to the particular school).

Applicants will need to complete the relevant form in order to confirm that they are applying to the school on denominational grounds. In addition it will then be necessary for the form to be passed onto their local clergy for verification before it is sent to the School Admissions Team.

Faith-based school with a religious character

A faith-based school with a religious character is required to offer every child who applies, whether of the faith, another faith, or no faith, a place at the school if there is a place available. However, faith-based schools are popular and often over subscribed. Such schools are permitted to use faith-based oversubscription criteria and allocate places by reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.

- **Voluntary Aided or Academy Schools**

Within Bracknell Forest there are 6 voluntary aided/academy primary schools and they are each their own admissions authority. These schools will continue to be able to operate their own published oversubscription criteria. **However applications for these schools must be made on the Common Application Form available from the School Admissions Team at Bracknell Council or via the council's online service.** Some of these schools require

Supplementary Forms to be completed. Further information and a copy of the form can be found on either the schools website, the council's website or from the school direct.

The 6 voluntary aided/academy primary schools within Bracknell Forest are as follows:

Binfield Primary CE School	St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School
Jennett's Park CE Primary School	St Michael's East'd CE Primary School
St Joseph's RC Primary School	St Michael's Sandh't CE Primary School

ALLOCATION OF PLACES

- **Applications for community and voluntary controlled schools**

The LA as the admissions authority for community and voluntary controlled schools will consider all applications and apply the admissions arrangements as published. The LA will advise all parents of the result of their application.

- **Application for Aided Schools or Academies**

The LA will process all the applications for the Aided schools and academies and the requests for a place in their school will be forwarded to the Governors for their decision. The Governing Bodies of Aided schools and academies will advise the LA of their decision.

- **Allocation of all school Places**

Bracknell Forest School Admissions Team will offer places for all schools within Bracknell Forest. Where an application has been forwarded to the Governors of a school that is its own admission authority, the Governors will inform the LA of the outcome. A letter will be sent to the parent with the offer and start date and the parent will be asked to contact the school to arrange the start. They will issue refusals if necessary and give details of the appeals process and details regarding education transport.

If the LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools a decision will be made to either:

In cases where a child is out of school or not attending a local school then an offer will be made to the parent for a place for their child at the next nearest school with vacancies to the home address of the family, this may not necessarily be their designated area school and it may be some distance from their home address.

In cases where a child is currently attending a local school a refusal will be sent and no alternative offer will be made.

- **Offers to non Bracknell Forest residents**

If an offer is made for a Bracknell Forest school to a child who is not a Bracknell Forest resident then we will ensure that we inform the relevant local authority of this offer.

NEW ACADEMIC YEAR APPLICATIONS

Where an application is for the start of the following academic year (ie to start in September of the new academic year) then this will not be processed until after 1st July. Parents will still be able to visit schools and obtain all of the necessary information and supplementary forms (as required) before this date.

Applications will then be processed in 'rounds'.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PRIMARY, INFANT, JUNIOR AND SECONDARY IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS

- **Child arrangements orders (previously shared residence orders)**

It is increasingly common that parents are agreeing, and courts are endorsing, child arrangements orders (previously known as) shared residence orders under Section 8 of The Children Act 1989. Further advice on this matter can be obtained from the School Admissions Team. Any details regarding shared residency, or the child's living arrangements, must be submitted at the time of application. It is the parents' responsibility to provide this information. As a general rule shared residence is based (for admissions purposes) on the number of school nights a child spends at the home. The School Admissions Team may take legal advice on these matters as they relate to a specific case. A main address will need to be used to process the application. If the second parent/carer's address is different from the first they will not receive any information/letters unless this is requested.

- **Home address**

It is for the applicant to satisfy the Admissions Authority that they live at the address that they state. Providing an address where the child does not live permanently in order to secure a place at a school may amount to a fraudulent act. If fraud is suspected then further proof may be requested. If fraud is established then any offer of a school place will be withdrawn. If a parent/carer owns a property within the Borough which they do not occupy and/or rent out and then move into another property within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school, the address of the property they own will be the address used for determining their designated area, unless the owned house has been rented out for 12 months prior to the date the form was received.

If an applicant already owns a property within the borough which is in the process of being sold Bracknell Forest is able to accept the address of the new property on submission of the appropriate evidence in support eg. a solicitor's letter showing exchange of contracts. The address must be a permanent address, temporary addresses are not acceptable. If applicants are in the process of moving house within Bracknell Forest they should contact School Admissions Team for further advice.

- **Appeals**

If an application is refused then with the refusal letter will be sent information on the right to appeal. The LA will also inform parents about the appeals process on behalf of the Governors of any own admission authority school. Appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

- **Waiting lists**

If there is not a place at the preferred school then the applicant will be asked if they wish their child's name to be placed on a waiting list of their preferred school. Parents should be aware that their child's name can go up or down the waiting list according to the priority of new additions to the list, for example someone moving into the area is placed on the appropriate place on the waiting list. This information will then be passed to the relevant admission authority for them to process according to their arrangements. The LA will

maintain the waiting lists on behalf of all primary schools within Bracknell Forest. Waiting lists requests for Ranelagh School, which is an academy, will be forwarded to them. A new application will only be required after 1st July each year to be placed back on a waiting list for the following academic year.

- **Applicants from abroad**

If families are moving from abroad, then they (including the child) must be resident in the UK before an application for a school place can be accepted. Proof of residency in the UK will be required. If they are living abroad and returning to a property that they own, then they will need to produce written proof confirming the details and timing of the relocation. Further advice on the documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

- **Service Families**

Families of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the Bracknell Forest area (or Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in Bracknell Forest) will be able to make an application for a school place if it is accompanied by an official government letter declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering address.

For those who already live in Bracknell Forest a formal letter from their chain of command verifying their address would be accepted.

Families **must** indicate on the application form if they are a service family and wish to be considered under this category.

Where a child of UK service personnel family moves into the area is unable to secure a place at a local school they **may** be admitted to that school as an excepted pupil. Proof of the posting and / or residence is the same as above.

Further information on the documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

- **Fair Access Protocol**

In line with the School Admissions Code Bracknell Forest has a fair access protocol which prioritises admission for certain categories of vulnerable children. The protocol takes priority on a school's waiting list and the LA may require a school to admit above their PAN. Further information on the Fair Access Protocol will be available on the website.

If an application is identified as being under the Fair Access Protocol then it will be heard at the next panel meeting and the applicant informed.

Social Grounds or Medical Grounds (criterion B)

If a parent has indicated on the Common Application Form that they wish their application to be considered on either social or medical need it is their responsibility to obtain a form which must be completed and returned to the School Admissions Team along with supporting written evidence from a professional by the given closing date. The supporting evidence for medical grounds should be from the relevant registered professional(s) involved with the child or family. Examples include registered health professionals, such as Consultant, GP, Psychologist, Psychiatrist; or registered social care professionals such as a Social Worker / Care Manager. Please note, evidence from childminders will not normally be accepted as sufficient evidence. All evidence must be on letter headed paper.

This evidence must set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the **only** suitable school and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school. This evidence must be specific to the school in question; it must show why only that school is the most suitable; what facilities will benefit the child, and why no other school can offer the same support. Where relevant this school must be the most appropriate for the family circumstances. However it will not be possible to consider an application under this criterion if no supporting evidence is supplied. The Local Authority will **not** contact professionals involved with the family as it is for the applicant to supply this information when submitting the social/medical form. The LA reserves the right to ask parents to supply further evidence or clarification where the LA considers necessary. It is important that applicants seeking to rely on these grounds provide the fullest supporting evidence they can by the closing date. It is the parent's responsibility to produce this evidence. Where further evidence is required it will need to be supplied by the closing date so that the decision can be made alongside all other applications for places at the particular school. Evidence submitted after the closing date will not be considered. Only in exceptional circumstances the LA may apply its discretion to consider evidence submitted after the closing date. It is therefore very important to submit all relevant evidence together with the application to avoid possible delay. But in any event all the relevant evidence must be submitted by the closing date to ensure full and proper consideration.

Medical

If a child or the parent/ carer of that child has a medical condition, that is a serious chronic health condition, or one that would cause significant hardship or risk if the child could not attend the preferred school it must be indicated on the application as their highest preferred school.

All schools have the resources to work with special educational needs and common childhood complaints such as asthma.

Social

If a child or the parent/ carer of that child has a social need that would cause significant hardship or risk if the child could not attend the preferred school it must be indicated on the application as their highest preferred school.

Also considered under this criterion on social grounds will be parents who have applied for a place at their designated area **primary, infant or junior school only (this is not for a secondary school place)** as their highest preferred school for an older child and the local authority have been unable to meet this preference and a place has been allocated to this older child at an alternative school. If the parent then wishes to apply for this alternative school by the published closing date for their younger child the applicant must notify The School Admissions Team on their application for that younger child that they consider this criterion applies and ensure all relevant information is supplied. This information will be assessed as published in the procedure for dealing with social or medical applications.

If a parent moves house or chooses not to accept the offer of a place at their designated area school then this information will have been recorded by The School Admissions Team at the time and will be used in the decision making process as to whether a younger child will be accepted as fulfilling this criterion.

- **Looked After and Previously Looked After Children**

Criterion A includes Looked After Children⁴⁶ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted⁴⁷ (or became subject to a child arrangements order⁴⁸ or special guardianship order⁴⁹) immediately following having been looked after.

If a parent or LA (where relevant) wishes to apply under this criterion it is their responsibility to ensure that all relevant paper work is submitted with the application., for example a copy of the relevant order issued by the family court. Should a parent not submit any relevant documentation with their application it will be assumed that the parent does not wish these circumstances to be taken in to account.

- **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents of gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group. If an application is received for a child outside of their normal year group the relevant admission authority must make a decision of the basis of the circumstances of each case and the parent will be informed of their right of appeal. This right does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.

Where a parent contacts the School Admissions Team with a request for their child to be admitted into a different year group than the relevant one according to their date of birth then the following will apply:

The parent will be required to put all information in writing to the School Admissions Team. It is for the parent to ensure that they have submitted all relevant documentation as no further request will be made to the parent. The paperwork must be submitted before the application will be processed outside their normal age group.

If the application is for a school where Bracknell Forest is the admission authority (community and voluntary controlled schools) the paper work will be forwarded to the Principal Educational Psychologist who will advise the admission authority. This advice will then be discussed with the Headteacher of the relevant school(s) and a final decision will be made.

If the application is for a school that is their own admission authority (eg voluntary aided school, academies etc) then the request and the supporting documents will be forwarded to the Governors of that school for their decision regarding the request.

The decision from all relevant admission authorities will be sent to the parent from the local authority and this decision is final.

Further detailed guidance is available separately.

- **Definitions**

⁴⁶ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

⁴⁷ This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

⁴⁸ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁴⁹ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Parent

Parent is defined under S576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

Sibling

Sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.

Designated Area/Catchment area

Maps showing the designated area of a school are available to view on the Bracknell Forest website, at the school in question, at the main Bracknell library or at a council office on request.

Parents can also find their designated area school on the Bracknell Forest website via 'findmynearest' and entering their road name or postcode.

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