



HILLINGDON

LONDON

Education and Children's Services Policy Overview Committee Review Scoping Report 2012/13

OBJECTIVE

Short title of review

Access to education for Hillingdon's vulnerable children

Aim of review

To review Hillingdon's current arrangements and future plans for ensuring that access to education for vulnerable pupils is timely and effective. The review will focus particularly on the key barriers facing vulnerable children and young people in accessing education outside of the normal admissions processes and, in so doing, will identify areas for improvement and future development.

Terms of Reference

- To review the process for in-year admissions to schools and learn about the In-Year Fair Access Protocol (IYFAP) and the Managed Move and Inclusion Panel (MMIP).
- To review local arrangements for pupils without a school place.
- To understand the local implications of statutory guidance relating to children's access to education.
- To understand pupil place planning in Hillingdon.
- To review the practice around pupils who are not admitted to a school within 20 school days.
- After due consideration of the above, to bring forward positive and practical policy recommendations (if needed), in relation to the Council's in-year admissions processes for vulnerable children.

Reasons for the review

The Local Authority is responsible for ensuring every child of statutory school age (currently 5-16) is receiving full-time education (School Admissions Code).

The focus of this review will be on the admission of pupils to education outside of the normal admissions processes meaning that it will not focus on those pupils moving into infant, junior or secondary school at the normal transfer time.

Supporting the Cabinet & Council's policies and objectives

The Council's practices and policies on access to education for vulnerable children will be reviewed and updated.

Definitions

For the purpose of this review, the following definitions will be used:

Vulnerable: Children and young people who, because of their additional needs, disability or personal circumstances are at risk of disadvantage and barriers in securing a place of their choice in a local school.

Access: The ease of entering and remaining in a suitable education provision.

Education: A provision offering the statutory entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum including the National Curriculum suitable to the individual's needs and age.

INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

Key Issues

A significant increase in the number of casual in-year move-ins to the Borough in the last few years has been noted. Most of these young people will apply for a school place through the normal admissions process and will be offered a school place accordingly. More vulnerable young people may require additional support to find a suitable placement. These include:

1. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), approximately 50-60 per year of which require an assessment and alternative provision in the first instance.
2. Pupils who, for a wide range of reasons, are not offered a place through the normal admissions process and are put forward to the Fair Access to Inclusion Panel, e.g those deemed to have behaviour difficulties, those who do not speak English (not UASC) and those with very difficult family issues (e.g DV or gang related behaviour in previous LA).

3. Pupils who are in Year 11 seeking a school place and are not placed in a school. These pupils often require assessments prior to placement.
4. Pupils who are 'off rolled' from Hillingdon schools, in particular from secondary academy schools, leaving the child without a school place and the parent with the responsibility to find one (this then requires LA support through the Children Missing Education statutory duty).
5. Pupils who are unsuccessful at obtaining a place in more popular schools in their area. There is significant pressure on places at the more popular schools and, in some parts of the Borough, parents will express a preference for up to six local schools but are unsuccessful as the schools are full.

Academy schools are responsible for their pupils' attendance. The removal from roll may only become apparent to the Council retrospectively, if at all, as the statutory duty for the LA to inspect school registers was removed in 2010. This raises safeguarding issues and a lack of knowledge about pupils without a school place.

Pupils out of school were raised and recognised as a safeguarding issue at the recent Local Strategic Children Safeguarding Board conference (it is a national issue).

Interim education arrangements

In response to the rising demand and complexity of pupils without a school place, a short-term provision was established at Brookfield Adult Learning Centre in February 2012 to provide full-time education for pupils awaiting a school place through the Borough's Pupil Support Team. This provision is still required and is being extended to pupils of a younger age group.

In addition, a separate process has been agreed with Schools not to place any Year 11 move-in pupil in a school setting. They are instead assessed and placed according to their academic needs and education preferences where possible; this has included colleges of Further Education.

EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

The Policy Overview Committee will receive reports, data and hear from witnesses about the issues relating to vulnerable pupils who are unable to access a school place in a timely manner.

The review will cover the activities of the full range of school in the Borough as well as the external companies which provide those schools with services.

Witnesses

The following is a list of witnesses that may be used to assist with this review:

- Council's Service Manager for Behaviour, Attendance and SEN
- Council's Interim Chief Education Officer

- Council's Performance and Intelligence Manager
- Head Teacher of a Hillingdon School
- Head Teacher of a Hillingdon Academy
- Chair of the Hillingdon Fair Access Panel
- Department for Education – policy expert

The above will include a site visit for a small number of members to Brookfield Adult Learning Centre to gather evidence from staff and children.

Intelligence

On 15 November 2012 the Guardian ran the article, “Illegal school exclusions: how pupils are slipping through the net” from which the following quote is taken:

[Councillor] David Simmonds, of the Local Government Association, estimates there have been 25% cuts to education welfare and admissions services.

“Despite a 25% reduction in government funding there has been no reduction in the statutory services we have to provide,” he says. “If anything, there is an increase as competing schools play pass the parcel with difficult children, with councils trying to ensure they get the education they deserve, which remains a core legal duty.”

The article can be found in full here:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/nov/15/illegal-school-exclusions?INTCMP=SRCH>

Additionally, in Lord Carlile’s report on the Edlington case published 22 November 2012 following the serious case review from Doncaster, mention is made of the risks and dangers associated with children out of school. More information on this can be found via the following links:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AllPublications/Page1/DF-E-00124-2012>

<http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/speeches/a00218062/david-laws-speech-to-the-lga-education-conference>

Key information required

In order to provide a full picture of the range of pupils being admitted to the Borough’s Schools in-year, it may be helpful to be provided with a further breakdown of these pupils. Subject to the availability of this information, this may include - but not be limited to - data on pupils who have transferred from out of Borough, pupils who have been excluded and need to be re-placed, pupils who have been off-rolled and are seeking a re-placement, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, etc.

LOGISTICS

Proposed timeframe & milestones

Meeting Date *	Action	Purpose / Outcome
16 January 2013	Agree Scoping Report	Information and analysis Council's Service Manager, Access and Inclusion
20 February 2013	Witness Session 1	Evidence & enquiry Council's Service Manager for Behaviour, Attendance and SEN Council's Interim Chief Education Officer Council's Performance and Intelligence Manager Department for Education – policy expert
20 March 2013	Witness session 2	Evidence & enquiry Head Teacher of a Hillingdon School Head Teacher of a Hillingdon Academy Chair of the Hillingdon Fair Access Panel <i>(to include site visit to Brookfield Adult Learning Centre)</i>
17 April 2013	Draft Final Report	Proposals – To consider draft recommendations and draft final report

** Specific meetings can be shortened or extended to suit the review topic and needs of the Committee*

Risk assessment

Failure to secure witnesses to provide evidence and advice to the Committee will impact on the thoroughness and completeness of the review.

This is an extensive area and the Committee may not be able to cover all the issues that they wish to examine within the time available.

Background Reading

- School Admission Code:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/school%20admissions%20code%20february%202012.pdf>

- In-Year Fair Access Protocol 2012:

<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media.jsp?mediaid=27377&filetype=pdf>

- Centre for Social Justice, “No Excuses: A Review of Educational Exclusion”:

<http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/publications/no-excuses>

- Children’s Commissioner: “They never give up on you” Office of the Children’s Commissioner School Exclusions Inquiry’:

http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_561