



Co-ordinated Secondary School Admission Arrangements 2018-2020

Consultation Document 2016

A fairer, more equitable system of allocating school places in Cardiff

Consultation Period:
5 December 2016 – 23 January 2017

This document can be made available in Braille.
Information can also be made available in other community languages if needed.
Please contact us on 029 2087 2720 to arrange this.

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Introduction:

This consultation is an opportunity for people to learn about the proposed introduction of co-ordinated secondary school admission arrangements for Cardiff. It is your chance to ask questions and make comments that will be considered when the Council decides how to proceed.

What is the Proposal?

The proposal is to:

- Pilot the implementation of a co-ordinated secondary school admissions process for the Year 7 age group for intakes in September 2018, September 2019 and September 2020.

The proposal to pilot a coordinated admissions system would not remove the rights of Admission Authorities to control their own admissions and therefore which children would be offered places at their schools. It would not have any impact upon the admissions policies currently being operated by the various Admission Authorities, nor impose any change to schools' governance.

Co-ordinated secondary school admission arrangements are to be kept under review. Subject to a decision to make the arrangements permanent, a further consultation would be undertaken. In the event a decision is made not to make co-ordinated secondary school admission arrangements permanent, existing arrangements would continue.

Your Views Matter:

Your views matter and we want you to tell us what you think about the proposal. You can do this by:

- attending one of the drop in sessions:

| Date/Time | Venue |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Tuesday, 13th December 2016 9:00am – 11:00am | Llanishen Leisure Centre |
| Tuesday, 10th January 2017 4:00pm – 6:00pm | Grangetown Hub |
| Wednesday, 11th January 2017 4:00pm – 6:00pm | Llanrumney Hub |
| Thursday, 12th January 2017 4:00pm – 6:00pm | Fairwater Hub |
| Tuesday, 17th January 2017 4:00pm – 6:00pm | Central Library Hub |

- completing the online response form at www.cardiff.gov.uk/admissionarrangements or
- contacting the School Organisation Planning Team on (029) 2087 2720, by e-mail to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk or by post to Room 422, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is **23 January 2017**. Unfortunately responses received after this date will not be considered by the Council.

Explanation of Acronyms & Terms used:

Admission Authority – The body responsible for setting and applying a school's admission arrangements.

Admission Forum – A statutory local body charged with co-ordinating the effectiveness and equity of local admission arrangements. The Forum comprises representatives of admission authorities and schools, dioceses, the local community and parent governors.

Governing Bodies – The body corporately responsible for conducting schools with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement; through setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability, monitoring and evaluation.

Community Schools – a maintained primary or secondary school for which a Local Authority has staffing, premises, and admissions responsibilities.

Foundation & Voluntary Aided Schools – a maintained primary or secondary school for which the school's Governing Body has staffing, premises and admissions responsibilities.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) – a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.

CW – Church in Wales

EAL - English as an Additional Language

HS – High School

RC – Roman Catholic

SEN - Special Educational Needs

Background to the Proposal:

Co-ordinated admission arrangements were introduced in England under the terms of the School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2007.

There are currently no formal co-ordinated admission arrangements in Wales despite there being recognition of the challenges of implementing effective arrangements for admissions in Cardiff which has 30 Admission Authorities.

School Admissions:

Admission Authorities in Cardiff are committed to equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. In respect of admissions to schools, all pupils and prospective pupils are treated equitably, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, language, ability/disability or religious belief. However, there are various exceptions for schools of a religious nature. Steps are taken to ensure that admission procedures do not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any groups through the application of rules or conditions that cannot be complied with equally by all.

What are the Current Arrangements & Issues with the Current Allocations System?

At present, parents apply for their child to transfer from primary to secondary education by submitting a school admission form to the Admission Authorities of their preferred schools. Parents applying for a community school can complete and submit their application online, while parents applying to other schools complete and submit a paper application form.

Following consideration by the Admission Authorities for each preference school, parents receive the result of their application from each Admissions Authority.

Whilst parents inform the Council of which community schools are their preferred option(s), they are not required to confirm which community; voluntary aided or foundation school is their higher preference. As a result, parents could be offered more than one school place for their child.

Consequently, there is uncertainty as to which pupils will start at which schools as the order of parental school preferences is unclear at the time of application:

- Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools provide the Council with their admission decisions by a date agreed by the Cardiff Admissions Forum, but the Council is unable to use the information to reallocate places at community schools before offer date as Admissions Authorities do not know the order of parents' preferences.
- The Council cannot provide reciprocal information to Governing Bodies regarding the allocation of community school places under the current arrangements due to Data Protection Act constraints. Furthermore, allocation lists for every school would have to be sent, which is impractical.

Admission Authorities continue to administer statutory waiting lists and arrange statutory appeal hearings, many of which are time consuming, costly and unnecessary for parents.

Table 1 below indicates the number of Year 7 appeals that proceeded to an Independent School Admission Appeal Hearing for the September 2016 intake. Based on calculations for cases against the Local Authority, it is estimated that each appeal costs approx. £650 and 9 hours of officer time.

Table 1: Number of Appeal Hearings for Admission into Year 7 from September 2016

| School | No. of Year 7 Appeals |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Community Schools | 100 |
| St Teilo's CW HS | 42 |
| Bishop of Llandaff CW HS | 32 |
| St Illtyd's RC HS | 18 |
| Corpus Christi RC HS | 16 |
| Whitchurch HS | 15 |
| Mary Immaculate RC HS | 11 |
| Total | 234 |

Why is the Change Proposed?

Some parents applying for their child's admission to secondary education have been offered places at multiple schools, whilst other parents have been unsuccessful in securing their child a place at any one of their school preferences.

Based on the initial allocation for transfer into Year 7 from September 2016, a total of 192 children were holding a total of 397 places. That means 192 families were holding 205 places they were not planning to take up and preventing their allocation to others. At the same time 360 other children received no offer.

Many families therefore missed out on their higher preferences or received no place at all.

Table 2 below indicates the number of successful applicants per school, who were also offered an additional one or more school places elsewhere:

**Table 2: Number of Successful Year 7 Applicants
Issued at least 2 School Place Offers (1 per Admissions Authority)**

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Admissions Authority | Governing Body | Bishop of Llandaff CW HS | 52 |
| | | Corpus Christi RC HS | 53 |
| | | Mary Immaculate RC HS | 27 |
| | | St Illtyd's RC HS | 35 |
| | | St Teilo's CW HS | 22 |
| | | Whitchurch HS | 47 |
| | Local Authority | Community Schools | 161 |
| Total Number of Offers: | | | 397 |

Some parents choose to 'hold' offers for more than one school, preventing other children being offered these places, which causes undue stress upon families but also difficulties for both primary and secondary schools planning for the children's transition.

A co-ordinated secondary school admission arrangements process would provide more parents with a single school place offer for their child, which would be a fairer, more equitable system of allocating school places in Cardiff. Children would have a better experience and more effective start to their secondary school education.

What are the Benefits of the Proposal?

The Council aims to offer a co-ordinated admissions process with the voluntary aided and foundation sectors, which provides parents/carers with a clear picture of the school place choices available to them and the likelihood of securing first preferences. This proposal would contribute towards this aim.

The following benefits would be expected to result from this proposal:

- More pupils would secure a higher school preference;
- More pupils would have peace of mind having secured a secondary school place;
- More parents would be able to plan work and childcare commitments much earlier;
- Fewer would need to worry about their child being on multiple school waiting lists;
- Fewer families would need to submit further admission applications or undertake the Independent Appeal process and
- Children going into Secondary School for their first time will have a better experience as a result of the staff being able to maximise on the efficiencies of the admissions process to provide a more effective start for children to allow them to realise their maximum potential earlier rather than later.

What are the Disadvantages of the Proposal?

The current system allows for parents to apply to multiple Admission Authorities with the potential for their child to be offered multiple school places. This system provides those families that apply to and secure offers for more than one school, with a further decision stage at which they can choose which school offer to accept.

Implementing a co-ordinated secondary school admission arrangements system between all Community; Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools would reduce the number of school offers to one; the advantage being that more pupils would be offered their preferred school as a consequence. A minority of parents may feel disadvantaged as a result, albeit they still would retain the right to parental preference and the opportunity to rank order their school preferences.

If nothing changes, what happens?

Retaining existing arrangements would further increase the inefficiencies within the current pupil allocation system. Many pupils would receive multiple offers of places whilst others may receive lower preference offers or none at all.

Continuing this would mean Admission Authorities are unable to allocate more places to children in the initial allocation round.

If the proposal is implemented, how would schools be affected?

The proposal, which allows for parents to express their community/voluntary aided/foundation school preference on a Common Application Form, does not have any impact upon a school's admissions policy nor impose any change to its governance.

It is therefore anticipated that the proposed co-ordinated secondary school admission arrangements would have little or no effect on the number of pupils that will be on roll at English-medium community/voluntary aided/foundation schools or Welsh-medium community schools in the city.

It is the Council's view that this proposal will assist schools to plan their budgets; class organisation and staffing arrangements, as all schools will have a clearer idea of which pupils they will be admitting.

What are the Proposed Arrangements and how would they work?

Co-ordinated secondary school admissions for the Year 7 age group would follow the timetable as outlined below (for the September 2018 intake):

October 2017 – Monday, 4 December 2017

- ▶ Parents would complete a Common Application Form and would express up to three preferences for Community and/or Voluntary Aided and/or Foundation Schools.
- ▶ Parents applying for a Voluntary Aided or Foundation school would also complete a supplementary application form for the individual school, which is returned direct to the school's Governing Body along with references; documentary evidence and any other information required.

Monday, 4 December 2017

- ▶ Closing date for submission of the Common Application Form.

December 2017 – February 2018

- ▶ Voluntary Aided schools and the Foundation school would determine which applicants qualify for their admissions criteria by ranking **all** applicants accordingly, confirming their decisions having prioritised their list of applicants and detailing each pupil's grounds for admission.
- ▶ The Central Admissions Database would then allocate a single school place at the highest preference to which the child qualifies for admission.

Thursday, 1 March 2018

- ▶ A single offer or notification refusing all preferences, is communicated from the Council on behalf of Admissions Authorities to the parents.
- ▶ Decisions are made available online and posted (if required) 1st class on Thursday, 1 March 2018.

Friday, 16 March 2018

- ▶ Parents respond to the Council regarding the offer of a school place or decision to refuse all preferences; these responses being accessible to the schools.
- ▶ Parents who have not responded to an offer of a school place by this date, will have the offer withdrawn for reallocation to another pupil.

Further Information

Quality and Standards:

The Council has in place policies to support school improvement e.g. 'High Achievement for All' and 'Achievement for Inclusion.' It is working to respond to the key principles of the 'School Effectiveness Framework' to secure better learning outcomes and well-being for all children.

It is not anticipated that there will be any negative impact on the quality of standards of education or the delivery of Key Stage 3 and above curriculums as a result of this proposal.

The Council would continue to work with the leaderships of all schools to continue to ensure a rigorous whole school approach to improvement planning and secure good relationships with parents and other partners in order to ensure pupils receive a high quality education.

It is anticipated that there will be little to no risk of distraction or disruption to leadership and governance that could impact on educational outcomes.

How would SEN and EAL provision be affected?

A child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) if he or she has a learning difficulty which requires special educational provision. A learning difficulty means the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age or that the child has a disability that needs different educational facilities for those that the school generally provides for children.

Schools in Cardiff receive delegated funding to enable them to provide extra support and focussed interventions for pupils who have SEN.

There is no information available that suggests that the proposals would have a negative effect on SEN provision at the schools and the schools would continue to provide SEN support for pupils appropriate to the level of need.

There is also no information available that suggests that the proposals would have a negative effect on provision for any group including those who are from minority Ethnic groups or in receipt of Free School Meals and the schools would continue to provide support appropriate to the individual needs of each pupil.

Admissions and Catchment Area Arrangements:

There are no proposed changes to catchment areas as part of this proposal.

There are no plans to change any Admission Authority's policy (over-subscription criteria) on the admission of children to schools as a result of this proposal.

Detailed information regarding admission arrangements is contained in the Council's Admission to Schools booklet, which can be downloaded from the Council's website (www.cardiff.gov.uk).

Financial Matters:

It is the Council's view that schools will be better able to plan their school budgets for forthcoming academic years as they will have a clearer idea of which pupils they will be admitting. It is also the Local Authority's view that as a result of implementing this proposal, there would be fewer Independent School Admission Appeal Hearings than if the arrangements were not implemented, saving approx. £650 per case.

Human Resources Matters:

It is the Council's view that this proposal is unlikely to impact on school staffing. Working practises would change, not reduce.

Transport Matters:

It is the Council's view that this proposal is unlikely to impact on traffic as it does not relate to any change with respect to supply of school places nor any change to school catchment areas.

Learner Travel Arrangements:

Under these proposals there are no plans to change the Council's policy on the transport of children to and from schools. The Council's transport policy for school children can be viewed on the Council's website (www.cardiff.gov.uk).

Impact of the Proposal on the Welsh Language:

It is not anticipated that there will be any differential impact on the Welsh Language as a result of this proposal.

The teaching of Welsh within an English-medium setting is subject to the requirements of the National Curriculum. This would not change.

This proposal does not seek to change the number of Welsh-medium school places available in the city.

Officers are monitoring birth rates; the yield from proposed housing and the patterns of take up in Welsh-medium provision at primary and secondary age with a view to bringing forward appropriate plans to meet any increased demand.

Equality Matters:

An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out. The assessment concluded that this proposal would not adversely affect a particular group in society. The assessment will be reviewed following consultation.

The proposal will have a positive impact on children in Cardiff achieving their full potential by promoting and improving access to learning in the city; giving children the best start by providing a better experience for children going into Secondary School for their first time. This will be as a result of school staff being able to maximise on the efficiencies of the admissions process to provide a more effective start for children to allow them to realise their maximum potential earlier than later.

The Council (Admissions Authority for Community Schools) and Governing Bodies (Admissions Authority for Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools) will continue to strengthen its partnership in delivering positive outcomes for the city and its citizens; working collaboratively with a shared agenda to achieve significant cost and efficiency savings.

The consultation process is compliant with the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code intended to engage stakeholders with the views put forward as part of the decision making specific to the proposed change.

Considering Community Impact:

There is a need for a fairer, more equitable system of allocating school places in Cardiff without impacting adversely on the community. It is the Council's view that this proposal is unlikely to negatively impact on any community in Cardiff. Officers would work with any community group to ensure that the proposal avoids negative impacts wherever possible.

The schools subject to the proposal are existing schools which offer a range of after school activities and may have community organisations offering services from the school facilities. It is not anticipated that there would be a negative impact on any of these activities.

What Happens Next?

Consultation Period – 5 December 2016 to 23 January 2017:

Please see page 3 for further details of how to respond and make your views known.

The feedback from consultees will be collated, with issues summarised and the Council's responses. This will form part of the Admission Arrangements Consultation Report that will be published on the City of Cardiff Council website for all persons to view prior to consideration by the Council's Cabinet. Hard copies of the report can be obtained on request by using the contact details in this document.

Determination of the Proposal & Decision Notification:

The City of Cardiff Council Cabinet will consider the Admission Arrangements Consultation Report at its March 2017 meeting and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal. Following determination of the proposal all interested parties will be informed of the decision, which will be published electronically on the City of Cardiff Council's website.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM
(Proposed Co-ordinated Secondary School Admission Arrangements)

Your views matter, please tell us what you think about the proposal by:

- Completing and returning this questionnaire to the address given at the bottom of the form or;
- Completing the online response form, which can be found at www.cardiff.gov.uk/admissionarrangements or;
- E-mail your views to: schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk

Please note that all comments sent in writing or by e-mail must contain the full name and full postal address of the person making the comments.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is 23 January 2017. Unfortunately responses received after this date are unable to be considered by the Council.

Responses received from consultees will be considered as part of the Admission Arrangements Consultation Report.

Any responses received can be requested under the Freedom of Information Act and may have to be made public, however any information that would identify an individual such as an e-mail address, name or postal address would be removed.

Do you support the proposal to co-ordinate secondary school admissions for the Year 7 age group?

Yes

No

If you do not support the proposal, please give your reasons together with any changes or alternatives that you would like to suggest.

Do you wish to make any other comments?

Name:

Address:

.....

Postcode:

E-mail Address:

Date:

Your status: Governor

Parent

Pupil

Staff

Other (please specify)

If Pupil/Parent: What year group are you/is your child in currently?

Thank you for your comments.

Please tick the box below if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report:

Please return this form to arrive by 23 January 2017 to:

School Organisation Planning Team

Room 422

County Hall

Atlantic Wharf

Cardiff

CF10 4UW