

Nottingham City Council

DRAFT Service Specification or Service Level Agreement (2015/2016 Financial Year)

Fair Access Panel and Pupil Placements

1. INTRODUCTION

A key function of the local authority and schools (primary and secondary) is ensuring that a Fair Access Protocol is in place, which ensures that access to education is secured quickly, especially for the most vulnerable, thereby minimising the amount of time any child is out of school.

Fundamental to the implementation of the Fair Access Protocol are our schools in the local area, working in partnership to admit their fair share of the most vulnerable children, including those with challenging behaviour; it is therefore essential for the management and process of the Fair Access Panel (FAP) to be robust, effective, transparent and consistent.

1.2 Background

Fair Access Protocols are a legal requirement for all local authorities and schools in line with the Schools Admissions Code 2014 (Paragraph 3.9 to 3.15).

Following a review of the Fair Access Panel and pupil placements for secondary schools, it was recommended that the NCSEP partnership model of developing the policy and delivery process be continued for the **2015/2016 financial year**; this must be compliant with the School Admissions Code 2014 and other relevant legislation which requires that the Local Authority monitor the effectiveness of the Fair Access Protocol and regularly review how well existing and proposed admissions arrangements meet the needs of children and parents/carers.

Nottingham City Council therefore wishes to commission a provider who shares the value of “Supporting achievement and academic attainment of Children and young people, including the most vulnerable, enabling them to achieve their full potential”. The provider’s responsibilities will include the **operational management of the Fair Access Panel** and **monitoring and tracking of pupil placements** in partnership with Nottingham City Council.

2. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

National and Local context

2.1 **The School Admissions Code 2014** stipulates that Local Authorities have a statutory duty to have a Fair Access Protocol, agreed by the majority of schools.

Key provisions of the local protocol are:

- Local Authorities (LAs) duty to have an agreed protocol for both primary and secondary phases of education.
- Ensure that there is an equitable distribution of pupils placed through the fair access process.
- That all secondary phase schools and academies work together to uphold the principles of fair access and work as equal stakeholders in supporting these pupils and participating in the process.
- Considering the needs of the individual pupil to ensure that an appropriate placement is offered.

2.2 Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) 2015/2016

Priority 1 – Safeguarding and supporting children and families

The fair access protocol ensures that pupils are placed in a safe educational environment. The fair access panel and follow up ensures that pupils are placed and on roll at an Ofsted registered educational provision. It also allows early support and multi-agency work to ensure that appropriate support is put in place to overcome difficulties, including ensuring pupils fleeing domestic violence are placed quickly.

Priority 3 – Supporting achievement and academic attainment

The protocol ensures that pupils considered hard to place are offered a place at school and support offered to help them achieve. The fair access protocol is a key driver in the reduction of exclusions and to help support the improvement of attendance.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of key local or national policy drivers.

3. SERVICE DESCRIPTION – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the Fair Access Panel and Pupil Placements are for the 2015/2016 financial year:

- To have a fair, equitable and transparent process which has the confidence of secondary schools, enabling them to participate in a process which is binding on them;
- The panel will ensure that children identified for FAP are offered an education place appropriate to their needs as soon as possible.

Ensure an equitable distribution of pupils across the city schools and academies, whilst considering the location of pupils and their families, pupil needs and school based factors. Schools and academies can not cite oversubscription as a determining reason for not admitting a pupil-the aim of the agreement must be to ensure that pupils who have no school place and, in particular, those who have particular or challenging circumstances are able to access a school place without delay and that their needs are taken into account in arranging the place beyond oversubscription. This may mean admitting over the normal planned admission number (PAN) in certain circumstances. This would aim to protect certain schools in challenging circumstances from taking more than their ‘fair share’ of challenging pupils. This should be upheld and challenged where appropriate.

Where pupils are to be considered through the FAP the appropriate officer(s) from the Inclusion Team / NCSEP will make contact with the family and the appropriate schools, dependent on the preference list. Schools must ensure that they can respond rapidly to the request for discussion, so that there is no delay to the schedule for placement. The officer's discussions will take into consideration a number of factors including the following:-

- parent/carer preference and views
- level of family engagement
- pupil attainment/progress data
- the school's views
- availability of alternative places
- existing overcrowding in the year group/whole school
- transport/access from home issues
- peer group issues
- support issues
- previous personal and education history issues
- religious affiliation/preferences
- Agency involvement with the pupil and family

4. CORE VALUES OF THE SERVICE

The core values of the service will harness the following principles and best practice:

- To be inclusive of all pupils, parents and schools/academies across the city of Nottingham and wider partners;
- Work collaboratively with secondary schools and the local authority, taking into account the needs and best interest of the child;
- The individual circumstances of the pupil will be considered to ensure placements are in the best interest of the pupil;
- Placement of pupils will be executed as quickly as possible through pre-brokering and expeditious consideration at panel.
- Appropriate and sensitive handling of pupil information and fair access data, ensuring that information is kept confidentially and using secure systems for sharing information.
- Demonstrate best value
- Be delivered in accordance with Nottingham City Council's Equality and Diversity Policy
- Be delivered in accordance with relevant legislation and best practice by suitably qualified and and/or experienced staff.
- Uphold the principles and policies of the Fair Access Protocol. (Attached App 1)
- Be delivered in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014 and other relevant legislation.

5. SERVICE SPECIFIC DETAILS

The provider will undertake the following functions in line with the Fair Access Protocol for the **operational management of the Fair Access Panel** and **monitoring and tracking of pupil placements** for the financial year April 2015 to March 2016:

- a. To support the administration and coordination of the panel meeting – this will include preparatory and follow-up work for the panel meeting, preparing relevant information to be presented at the meeting and provided to the Inclusion Team;
- b. Brokerage - liaising with schools prior to the panel to gain agreement for placements, increasing efficiency and timeliness of placing pupils.
- c. Host and Chair the monthly panel meeting – directing the meeting and ratification of placement decisions, including informing schools and academies of the outcomes.

The functions will include the following activities:

- Ensure that pupils, parents, schools and other agencies and stakeholders are fully involved in the process, seeking their views and feedback of the process.
- To manage the chairing of the secondary Fair Access panel meetings, including facilitating pre-brokering of cases and agreeing possible offers with schools and academies.
- Be responsible for facilitating admissions, monitoring the initial placement and assisting with referrals to other agencies as required to overcome barriers and increase the chances of successful engagement.
- Assist in removing barriers to engagement to the fair access protocol for parents and schools.
- Share data and systems (with all stakeholders) for the effective tracking of pupils admissions from FAP and managed moves for performance monitoring at regular points(expected outcome)
- Be able to monitor the success of placements made through Fair Access procedures (FAP and managed moves) for all pupils considered (see below-expected outcomes)
- Provide administration required for the monthly secondary fair access meeting, this will include gathering information of managed moves, finance and pupil placement data to be presented at the panel in conjunction with Local Authority data;
- The chair will meet with the Inclusion Service (LA) on at least a monthly basis to review and support the preparation of all cases prior to distribution; ensuring that both LA and NCSEP agree that adequate information is provided to proceed with a placement and coordinate processes for the panel meeting, enabling proficiency.
- Chair the monthly secondary fair access panel and provide a suitably accessible venue ;
- The Chair will present and champion children at the panel for admission, to ensure their individual needs are known and can be met by the school;
- Facilitate discussion from panel members (schools and agencies) to contribute professional views of the appropriate placement of pupils.
- Monitor and support the attendance and engagement of partners and schools at the panel meetings, and take appropriate follow-up action for non-participation.
- Challenge and support secondary schools in fulfilling their fair access requirements.
- Inform schools and stakeholders of panel outcomes and decisions within 2 working days.
- Follow-up with schools to ensure pupils are on roll within 10 days, (or agreed timeline), in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol. This information will be provided to the Inclusion Service on a monthly basis.
- Monitor admissions of Fair Access pupils and their and attendance over the first 4 weeks of admission.

- Provide intervention and support to pupils, families and schools for Fair Access Panel admissions.
- Manage the fair access budget to ensure that they comply with the funding agreement and other LA practices.
- Have a shared reporting system to regularly report Fair Access panel funding allocations to the LA and panel members.

6. CITIZEN FOCUS

Improving the quality and outcomes of services for young people who are looked after is of paramount importance. Providers are therefore expected to solicit the views of all young people about the quality, quantity and appropriateness of services available on an annual basis.

The views of parents/carers, pupils and schools must be sought and used to inform the improvement of the services and influence relevant services.

7. PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND SOCIAL VALUE

Working in partnership to support pupils, in particular those who are vulnerable and/or have challenging behaviour or complex needs, is a priority for Nottingham City and is viewed as a shared responsibility. The provider will be expected to promote this **shared responsibility**, encouraging schools and agencies to **work together** to play their part in meeting the needs of pupils and supporting them to achieve the **best possible outcomes** in life.

Services are expected to contribute to the wider community to assist in the development of the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the local area.

Sharing Information with schools, partners, agencies and all stakeholders must be in line with Nottingham City's Information sharing protocol (appendix 1), which outlines how information will be shared and how it will be recorded and used. Examples of information to be shared might include;

- parent/carer preference and views
- level of family engagement
- pupil attainment/progress data
- the school's views
- availability of alternative places
- existing overcrowding in the year group/whole school
- transport/access from home issues
- peer group issues
- support issues
- previous personal and education history issues
- religious affiliation/preferences
- Agency involvement with the pupil and family

If risk assessment information is passed to agencies, the provider must be assured that they will take appropriate action to keep information safe and will not be used to negatively discriminate against that young person.

8. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

The Provider must ensure all staff have an awareness of the possibility of abuse, the possible signs and symptoms of abuse to both adults and children, and know their responsibilities to respond to and report allegations of abuse or harm appropriately.

The Provider must ensure staff have access to an up-to-date version of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Multi Agency Policy and Procedures for safeguarding adults and separate children's policy and that staff / managers are clear about the process of reporting any concerns about suspected abuse.

The provider must include the safeguarding of adults and children in induction and training at a level appropriate to staff members' roles in the Safeguarding Children process of alerting in the case of suspicion of abuse.

The provider must ensure that staff understand and know the requirements to make accurate, factual records at the time of concern and to date and sign all written records / entries.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The provider is expected to meet all requirements of the Health and Safety at Work, Act 1974 (as amended), including all risk assessment duties.

10. WORKFORCE

The provider is expected to support their staff to fulfil the following roles responsibilities:

- The Fair Access panel will be chaired by an experienced appropriately qualified individual, who understands the requirements of the Fair Access Protocol.
- Placement Co-coordinator will provide support for the pupil and their family, and liaise with the schools to ensure smooth admissions process, monitoring attendance.
- Administrator who will coordinate and distribute information, ensuring that the Fair access panel runs smoothly and successfully.

The provider will ensure all staff roles receive appropriate, regular supervision and an annual personal development review, support them to deliver a professional continuously improving service.

11. OUTCOMES

Nottingham City Council's work with children and families is underpinned by achieving five outcomes for children and young people, identified in the Government's 'Every Child Matters' agenda. We are working for a future where all our children and young people can:

- Be healthy;
- Stay safe;
- Enjoy and achieve;
- Make a positive contribution; and
- Achieve economic well-being

12. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTRACT MONITORING

The Provider will be monitored on an ongoing basis against contract, legislative and good practice standards. The service provider should monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. Monitoring activities should be designed to improve and maintain a high quality of service provision. (See Appendix 2 for Outputs and Outcomes to be monitored)

This will be done through a combination of:

- Monthly meetings with the Inclusion Team
- Monthly reports presented at panel meetings
- Termly reports
- An annual report
- 6 monthly meetings with the commissioners to discuss current issues about the service;
- Feedback from and consultation with parents/carers, stakeholders and other professionals / advocates as appropriate.

The provider will be expected to demonstrate internal quality monitoring mechanisms that assist in the ongoing delivery of value for money, and maintain high standards, and innovative solutions.

13. SERVICE PRICING

The total value to deliver this service is £190,000 per annum, which includes the main funding to be allocated to support pupils in their educational establishments, as agreed by the Schools Forum during the financial year (April to March).

Any further funding secured through Schools Forum or any other means for the use of delivering the functions of the Fair Access Panel and placement of pupils, including staffing or resources will be included within the remit of this specification.

Appendix 2 Monitoring Report

NCSEP Output	Indicator	Method of Measurement & Frequency
Minimum of 80% of pupils admitted within the 10 day period (including managed moves and reintegration's) unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise agreed by the chair and LA	School Roll Report	Monthly and Termly Reports
Attendance and Engagement of stakeholders at Panel	FAP Register	Termly reports
Provider to discuss with schools who refuse to comply with the panel's decision to seek initial resolution and admission. If unsuccessful, inform Inclusion team outlining the course of action taken by NCSEP and proposals for remedial action by the LA-Where under the FAP procedure, a school is identified as the admitting school for a pupil, the school is expected to comply with the requirement. If there are difficulties, the authority and school must seek to resolve these without delay, but direction (in the case of a maintained or voluntary controlled school) or referral to the Secretary of State (in the case of a Academy or voluntary aided school) is an option available. The Director of Children and Family Services will have the final decision on the most appropriate response.	Fair Access Report	Within 24 hours of notification for non-compliance. Include in annual reports
Schools receive their ratified panel decision/s in writing regarding their admissions within 2 working days of the panel decision.	Review at monthly meetings	Termly report
Children are placed in accordance with the Fair Access Criteria at Panel (Para 4 FAP)	Fair Access Panel report	Monthly report
Work together to develop and evaluate feedback from stakeholder (children and their families, FAP members) about the service they receive.	Stakeholder feedback form	Annual report
11 Fair Access Panel meetings are scheduled for the academic year and chaired by the provider.	Schedule of Fair Access panel dates	Annual report

Headline Fair Access statistics information is made available	Fair Access panel information	Monthly report
Headline report on the outcomes of managed move placements across schools	Managed Move report	Monthly report
Fair Access Funding Financial Reports to be produced and reported at the beginning of each term. This can be used to track estimated costs at the panel meeting, if applicable.	Financial Fair Access Report	Termly and annual report (tracked at monthly FAP meetings)
Pupil Probation report providing details of inclusion and attendance (first 4 weeks)	Pupil Probation Report	Termly report
Review of Fair Access pupils Actual Outcomes to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance, progress, poor behaviour and interventions 	Attainment and Outcomes Report	Annual report to be developed with NCSEP and LA
Fair Access Workload Tracking to monitor demand on services and meetings attended	Meeting schedules and workflow tracking systems	Termly Report

LA Output	Indicator	Method of Measurement & Frequency
Case information is provided to Support services 5 working days before a panel	Report of the time frame for cases sent	Termly report
All schools and academies will be provided with Case information as outlined in the Fair Access Protocol before a panel meeting through secure File Transfer Protocols.	Report of the time frame for cases sent	Termly report
Tracking of at least monthly meetings between the Chair and the Inclusion Service (LA) and case preparation reviews	Meeting Tracker and Register	Annual report
Headline Fair Access statistics information is made available	Fair Access panel information	Monthly report
Review and challenge engagement of support services stakeholders and the core membership of the panel.	FAP Register	Annual Report
Parents/carers Fair Access ratified outcome letters sent out in writing within 2 working days of the panel decision.	Review at monthly meetings	Termly report