

**Review of the Fair Access Protocol delivered by  
Nottingham City Secondary Education Partnership (NSCEP)**

### **Options**

There are 3 options available to the local authority:

- 1) Retain and formalize through a service level agreement the current arrangements – NCSEP managing the Fair Access Panel Meetings and placement of pupils on behalf of Nottingham City Council.
- 2) The responsibility of managing the Fair Access Panel Meetings and placement of pupils returns to the local authority. Investigate if TUPE consideration is relevant or required;
- 3) Look to commission a new provider to deliver the management of Fair Access Panel Meetings and the placement of pupils, this option would require a procurement process.

### **Recommendations**

1. A service level agreement which clearly outlines the requirements for the management of Fair Access Panel Meetings and the placement of pupils, within the framework of the inclusion strategy defining expected outcomes, performance management data and information.
2. Nottingham local authority to consider the make-up of wards and their needs and allocate funding accordingly. An issue raised by a number of schools is funding for transport costs.
3. Improve the information provided to YP and families, also produce an easy read version of information in community languages.
4. Clarify and communicate the role/responsibility of social care teams and other support agencies who attend the panel.
5. Consideration of long-term funding for management of the Fair Access Panel Meetings and placement of pupils.
6. Outcomes of the review of the Re-integration process should be used to inform the SLA.
7. The outcomes of the Tiered funding pilot should be considered in relation to the future funding of the Fair Access Protocol.
8. Feedback the consultation information gleaned from the students to the IDEAL team highlighting the issues raised as part of the review, requesting them to respond as appropriate.

### **Outline of the service**

A Fair Access Protocol became a legal requirement for all local authorities for both primary and secondary schools. This was originally implemented fully by the local authority, but has always been in partnership with schools and academies to develop process and policy. In September 2012, NCSEP's proposal to take more responsibility for the Fair Access Panel Meeting and the placement of pupils was agreed and the responsibilities of these functions were delivered by NCSEP, although the overall strategy and legal requirements have remained within the local authority.

Therefore, on behalf of Nottingham City Council, NCSEP manage the Fair Access Panel Meetings and placement of pupils in Nottingham, which forms parts of the Fair Access Protocol and inclusion strategy to support young people who are hard to place.

Nottingham City Secondary Education Partnership is an established partnership of head teachers and principals of the following secondary schools: Oak Wood Academy, Bulwell Academy, Djanogly, Ellis

Guildford, Farnborough, Fernwood, Bluecoat Beechdale, Nottingham Bluecoat, Nottingham Emmanuel, Nottingham University Samworth Academy, Top Valley and Trinity.

All schools across Nottingham regardless of whether they are part of the NCSEP partnership are fully engaged with the Fair Access Protocol and participate in panel meetings.

Managed moves forms part of the fair access protocol, to provide an alternative to exclusions. This is termed as a “fresh start experience”.

NCSEP works in collaboration with the Fair Access Lead Officer and Fair Access Co-ordinator to coordinate the Fair Access Panel. The role of the panel is to provide an opportunity for heads/behaviour leads and partner agencies to determine a suitable educational placement and discuss Managed Move cases. Cases include pupils who have been out of education for over a term, reintegration from Learning Centres (PRU), pupils at risk of further exclusions, pupils fleeing domestic violence and looked after children.

The panel is currently chaired by NCSEP and works directly with the schools and academies to broker complex admissions and ensure that any funding is needs led and spent on the pupil to whom it is allocated.

NCSEP therefore undertake 3 clear roles:

1. Chair the panel – coordinates senior leaders in schools, directs the meeting and ratifies the decision;
2. Brokerage role – trying to agree placement for some cases prior to the panel meeting to increase efficiency and place pupils quickly.
3. Administration and Admissions support into school, which includes providing oversight of the admissions for the 1<sup>st</sup> x 4 weeks of engagement and attendance at the allocated school, liaising with parents and working with the family to ensure positive outcomes.

NCSEP are supporting the review of the Reintegration process paperwork in partnership with the local authority in order to address identified gaps and omissions in the paperwork.

The local authority monitors the equitable distribution of fair access admissions and an overview of schools and panel data, including producing the paperwork for the panel. NCSEP produce data on managed moves and information about pupils date on roll. All data is shared jointly between the local authority and NCSEP. However, there is duplication through the use of different systems and access restrictions.

### **Budget/funding**

The fair access protocol has an annual budget of £190,000 attached for its delivery. This works out as approximately £1000 per student.

£32k is currently utilised for the running and administrative tasks for the FAP as follows:

<b>Role and Responsibilities</b>	<b>Number of days per week</b>	<b>Cost per month</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>
Inclusion Co-ordinator Chairing and Brokerage	One day per week	£833 pcm	£10,000
Placement Co-ordinator Admission and Family Support, Monitoring and Case management	Three days per week	£1,583	£19,000
Administration	One day per week	£250	£3,000

Total:	5 Days A Week		£32,000
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A pilot was agreed by Executive Board in September 2012 with additional funding to support the increased staffing (£46,000 over the 2 academic years) at the Schools Forum in March 2013. Subsequently, NCSEP have implemented a tiered funding method based on pupils need. This method of funding pupils through the Fair Access funding is to enable a person centred approach and the right funding to be available and spent on the young person to meet their needs ultimately achieving personalised positive outcomes. NCSEP pupil funding model has a four tiered allocation process as follows:

- A – No funding allocated. Needs to be met by mainstream school/Academy
- B – Assessment to be funded
- C – Part funding of AP package over a maximum of 5 terms
- D- Agreed one-off payment towards costs in extraordinary circumstances

### Stakeholder feedback

- 6/14 schools responded to a stakeholder questionnaire; the overall feedback of the delivery of FAP is good; of the individuals who responded they considered the delivery of the FAP as fair and equitable and worked well. Responses shared that the relationship and trust between the schools, the local authority and NSCEP is good and aids an effective, coherent, and capable process. All schools were given a number of opportunities to respond and share their views in relation to the FAP as delivered by NSCEP.
- 4 parents were consulted about the process and feedback overall was good, particularly because of the relationship which harnesses trust and confidentiality undertaken by Allocations officer, who is also proactive with tackling issues.
- 7 students from Bluecoat Beechdale and the IDEAL team were consulted about their experience of being placed in their current situ and the communication and process they underwent. The overall feedback regarding the FAP was indifferent, however the role of the Allocations officer's role was a lynchpin to making the experience a good one that had a successful outcome. Students had a range of experiences including Fresh Start, Moving to the City or English as a second/third language. Most of the students experiences centred on the lack of communication regarding the process, either having received none, or the information not being accessible. Students feel that they were not respected as a stakeholder within the process therefore lacked any form of control. It would appear the parent and school took decisions and updates were dependent on the parent or family member who spoke English to communicate what was happening. One student shared their experience of requiring a Fresh start also their involvement with the CAMHS which resulted in being out of school a considerable length of time. The lack of communication and opportunity to have a phased in approach.
- A number of issues were raised by the IDAEL students which were outside of the scope of the review; however their perspectives related to confusion over their identity as students within the Beechdale campus and rules and regulations. Overall the students could understand why the IDEAL team was the best option for them due to the language barrier but missed being in their local school with family and friends. A feedback report will be provided for the IDEAL service.

### **Quality of outcomes achieved**

1. All Nottingham schools are actively engaged with the fair access protocol and attend panel, ensuring equitable allocations
2. Brokering individual cases with schools prior to panel enables barriers to engagement to be discussed and allocations of funds made available appropriately, this has led to improved information for all stakeholders, i.e. knowledge of exclusions from the PRU are accurate enabling better support to be agreed and in place.
3. NCSEP have worked with all schools to ensure there are streamlined processes e.g. Behavioural strategies with partnership schools.
4. 75% of students are admitted within 10 day period. This has increased from 64% in 2013/2014.

### **Value For Money**

The tiered funding model (pilot) enables funding to be allocated on an individual needs led basis. The outcomes of the pilot will need to be reviewed in light of the option taken following this review.

NCSEP fund two roles that of a Chair and Admissions coordinator to ensure a smooth transition process.

NCSEP support the streamlining of processes and paperwork, to enable the wider inclusion strategy to work more seamlessly.

### **Equality and diversity considerations**

The Fair Access Protocol has had to deal with an increased number of cases due to the increased number of migrants moving into the city who have been out of education for over a term. This can raise challenges regarding cultural expectations, language barriers and NEET issues.

This has had a larger impact on some central schools such as Djanogly City Academy and Nottingham Academy as placing students in alternative schools within 3 miles of where they live has proved difficult. However, these issues have had an impact across the city.

### **Impact of options**

In consideration the only viable options are option 1 and option 2, as commissioning to another provider may be prolonged and expensive. Additionally there is already capacity within the local authority and NCSEP to continue to deliver the Fair Access Panel and pupil placement.

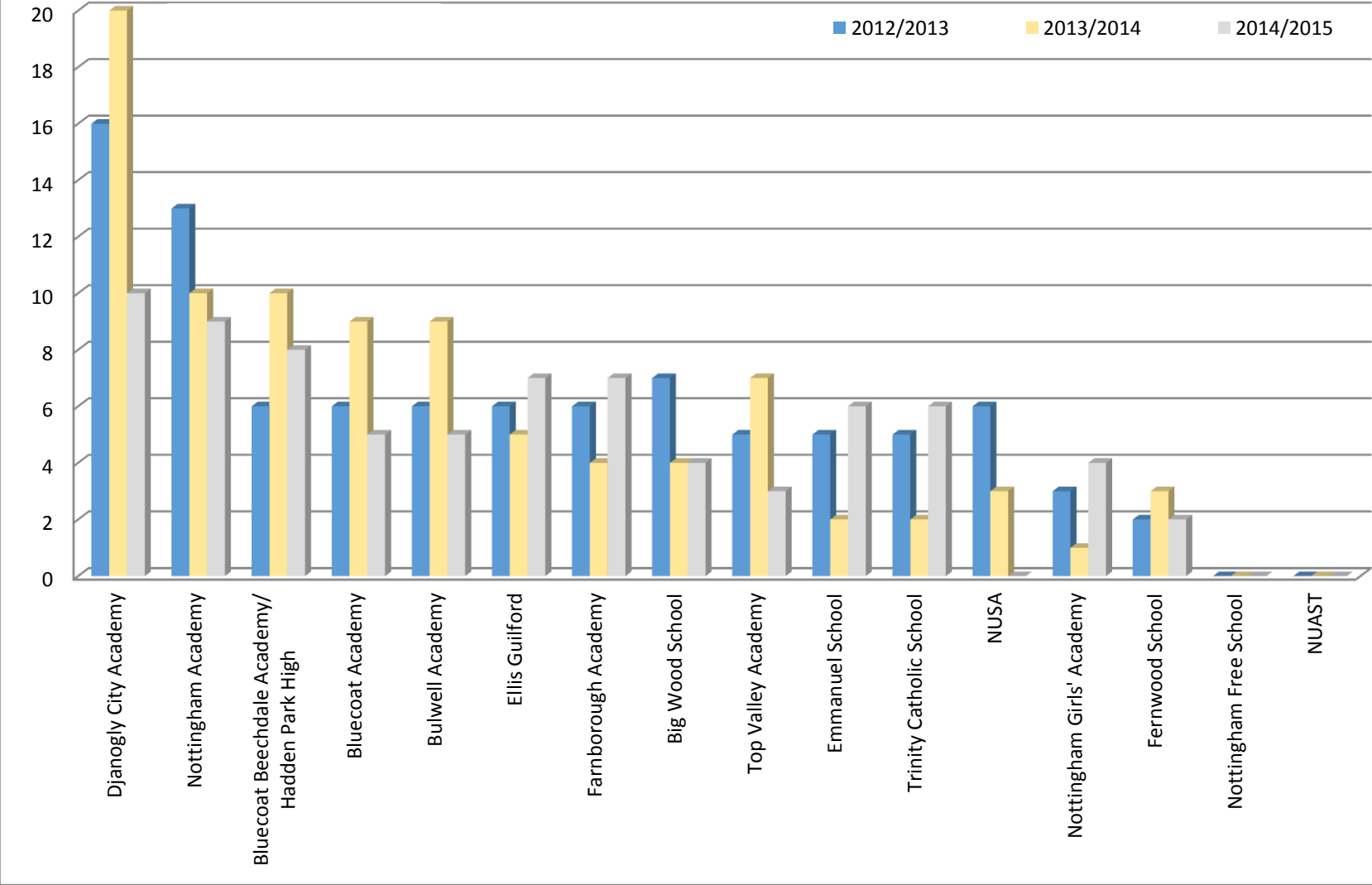
Currently the chair of the panel is well respected and the brokerage prior the panel was determined to be well valued increasing the trust and the work around fair access and allocations.

If the current arrangement is maintained, there would be a need to formalise the agreement and expectations, as well as currently respected chair and others. If fair access returns to the local authority there will be a need to consider what capacity would be required and possible benefits of centralised systems.

The table below demonstrates the Equitable allocation (Appendix 1) for the last 3 years 2012 -2015.

Appendix 1

Equitability of Fair Access Panel Admissions by School - 2012 to 2015



Information provided by the Inclusion and Disability Service. Accurate as of 12.03.2015