

Central
Bedfordshire
Council
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**TO EACH MEMBER OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

10 January 2019

Dear Councillor

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Tuesday 22 January
2019**

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following additional report(s) for information purposes only:-

16. Children's Services: Customer Feedback Annual Report 2017-18

This report fulfils the council's statutory duty to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and produce an annual report for Children's Social Care. The report provides statistics on the number of compliments complaints received; complaint causes; complaint outcomes (upheld/not upheld); performance; and learning and improvements resulting from complaints for 2017/18.

17. Consultation on the Council's Admission Arrangements, 2020-21

The report outlines proposed changes to the admission arrangements for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact Scrutiny on Tel: 0300 300 4193

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Preen
Scrutiny Policy Adviser
email: Rebecca.preen@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Children's Services: Customer Feedback – Complaints, Compliments Annual Report 2017/18

Report of: Cllr Steven Dixon,
(Steven.Dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Sue Harrison,
(Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report is for information

Purpose of this report

This report fulfils the council's statutory duty to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and produce an annual report for Children's Social Care. The report provides statistics on the number of compliments complaints received; complaint causes; complaint outcomes (upheld/not upheld); performance; and learning and improvements resulting from complaints for 2017/18.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Note the content of the report at Appendix A**

Issues

1. The Customer Relations Team managed the council's customer feedback procedures. These procedures detail how customer compliments, comments and complaints are handled. There are three procedures. Two of the procedures are statutory and are governed by regulations relating to adult social care services and children's social care services. The third procedure covers all other council services. If customers remain dissatisfied with the council's handling of the complaint they can refer to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSO). The LGSO is an independent body that can consider complaints about the council.
2. There was a slight decrease in the number of compliments and a slight increase in the number of complaints recorded in 2017/18 compared to the previous year for children's social care. Compliments moved from 19 to 18 and complaints from 57 to 60.
3. Complaints were important customer feedback and a means of identifying how practices may be changed for the better. Services were receptive to customer views and complaints with 52% of complaints either upheld fully or in part.
4. The top reason for complaints across children's social care in 2017/18 relating to incorrect action being taken (i.e. procedure not being followed).
5. The good practice of using alternative dispute resolution to resolve ongoing dissatisfaction continued in 2017/18. The approach focuses on resolution of complaints through Head of Services Reviews; assessments by Customer Relations; and face to face meetings which were successful in remedying six cases without the need for lengthy formal investigations.
6. There may be occasions where financial redress is offered through the complaints procedure. Financial remedies can be provided to acknowledge avoidable distress; harm; risk; or other unfair impact. As injustice of this nature cannot generally be remedied by a payment, the amount is usually symbolic to acknowledge the impact of fault on the complainant. Financial remedies can be recommended during the council's procedure and following investigation by the LGSO.
7. In 2017/18, the LGSO recommended a financial payment of £500 in one complaint case to recognise distress and the time and trouble to pursue the matter. The council also recommended a financial payment of £70 through its own process as a goodwill gesture to a relative who experienced financial difficulties collecting a child from another area of the country. Whilst benchmarking data is not available for all similar sized authorities the decision notices available on the LGSO website indicate that in the same period financial remedies for other councils ranged up to £15,200.

Council Priorities

8. The report supports Central Bedfordshire's Five-Year Plan 2015/2020 and the specific priorities of great resident services; protecting the vulnerable and improving

wellbeing; and a more efficient and responsible council.

Legal Implications

9. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Financial and Risk Implications

10. Complaints are assessed at the point of receipt to ensure risks are managed e.g. child protection issues; risk to reputation; exclusions.
11. Effective management of complaint issues focuses resource on resolution and reduces the risks of financial remedies being paid. The complaints procedure also provides for alternative dispute resolution which is used as an effective alternative to costly independent investigations.
12. Effective complaints management ensures service failings are identified and remedied, thereby reducing the risk of public reports from the LGSO. There were no public reports about children's social care complaints in 2017/18.

Equalities Implications

13. The report contains statistical analysis of monitoring information where it has been recorded.

Conclusion and next Steps

14. The production of an annual report is a statutory requirement and should be made available to anyone on request. The report will be posted on the council's website.
15. Members are asked to note the content of the report at Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A: Children's Social Care Services:
Customer Feedback – Complaints, Compliments Annual Report
2017/18

Background Papers

None

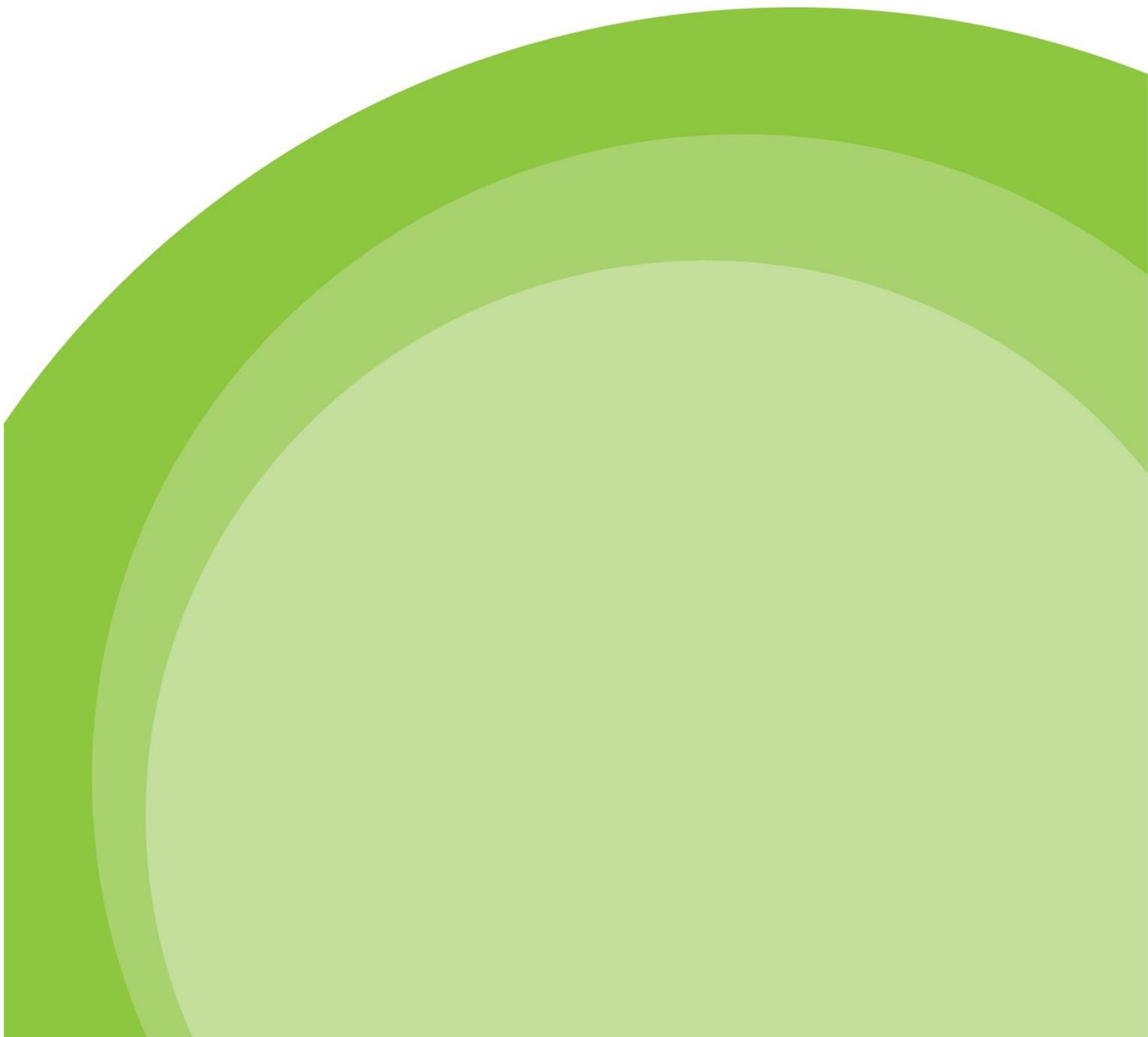
Report author(s): Paula Terry

Customer Relations Manager

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Children's Social Care Services

Customer Feedback – Compliments/Complaints
Annual Report (1st April 2017 – 31 March 2018)
Not Protected



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If you have any comments on this report, please contact Paula Terry, Customer Relations Manager on 0300 300 6077 or Paula.Terry@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Introduction

This report fulfils the council's statutory duty to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and produce an annual report for children's services social care complaints.

This report provides statistics for 2017/18 on the number of compliments and complaints received; a summary of complaint causes; the number of complaints that were well founded (upheld fully or in part); performance; the actions taken to improve services because of complaints; complaints considered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman; and the effectiveness of the complaints procedure.

The report will be presented to the relevant local authority committee and will be made available on the Council's website.

The Complaints Procedure

The Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (as amended by the NHS & Community Care Act 1990) requires us to establish a procedure for considering complaints in relation to the discharge of, or failure to discharge, any social services functions in respect of a qualifying individual. The Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 provides the legal framework for the procedures in relation to social care functions.

The regulations require the local authority to attempt to resolve complaints as soon as reasonably practicable and within specific timescales. The procedure has three stages, which are set out below, however where appropriate and with the agreement of the complainant the local authority may arrange for conciliation, mediation or other alternative dispute resolution to help resolve matters.

- Stage 1 (local resolution by manager) – 10 working days or up to 20 working days for complex cases
- Stage 2 (investigation by someone outside of the service area complained about) - 25 working days with maximum extension to 65 working days
- Stage 3 (independent review) – 30 working days to convene and hold a review panel; then 5 working days for the panel to issue its findings; and a further 15 working days for the local authority to respond to those findings

All complaints are triaged to ensure they are suitable for the process. This ensures matters are managed through the correct procedures, should an alternative process be in place. Any matters which are not suitable for the complaints process are filtered out and passed to the appropriate channel.

If customers remain dissatisfied with the council's handling of the complaint they can refer to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSO). The LGSO is an independent body that can consider complaints about the Council.

Executive Summary

Children's Social Care

18 compliments were received in 2017/18 for children's social care services with instances of customers telling us that services were getting it right and having a positive impact on their lives.

There were 60 new complaints received, 42 of which were managed through the complaints procedure (10 from children and young people). The remaining issues related to matters which were not suitable for the children's statutory procedure i.e. matters relating to management or insurance processes; legal matters; no consent to act on behalf of the service user/person affected; not someone who may complain under the regulations; or where matters were not about the council. These cases were filtered out and where appropriate passed to alternative channels already in place to manage those issues.

38 stage 1 complaints were concluded. Complaints were important feedback for services and a means of considering how to improve. Managers listened to customers' views with 52% of stage 1 complaints either upheld fully or in part. The main reason for complaints this year related to complainants feeling that incorrect action had been taken in their case (i.e. not following procedure).

Performance in complaints handling has fallen since last year in that 69% (compared to 72%) of complaints received a stage 1 response within 20 working days or less. Individual cases had specific remedies put in place and most of the wider service improvements resulted in the complainant's experience being shared with staff to improve practice.

There was no stage 2 or stage 3 complaints.

The LGSO considered four complaints about Central Bedfordshire Council's children's social care services during the period. The LGSO decided not to investigate in three of those cases as the issues raised were outside of their jurisdiction. The remaining case progressed to investigation by the Ombudsman and was upheld. The Ombudsman made several recommendations for children's services to undertake to remedy the complaint, all of which have been complied with.

Effectiveness

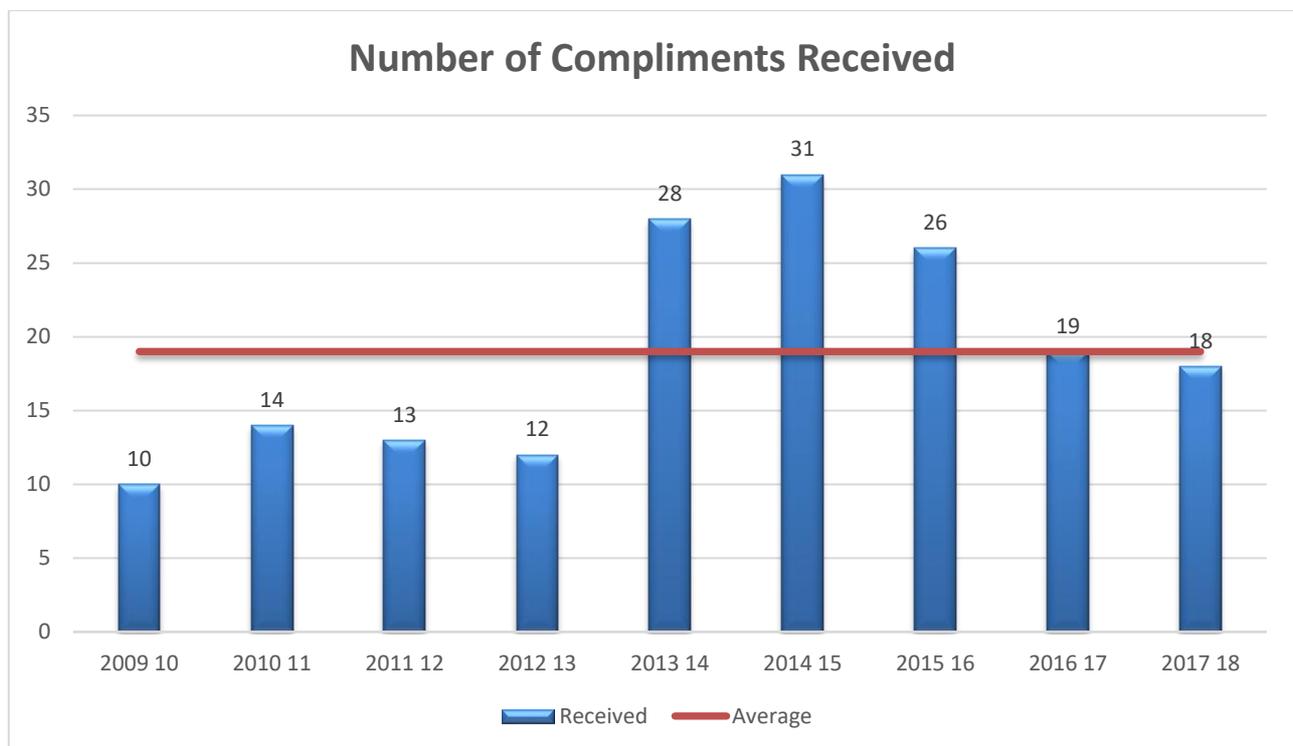
The activity for this reporting period shows the complaints procedure has been effective at resolving customer complaints at a local level. Learning from the customer experience through complaints has led to improvements to practices however there is some room for improvement in managing complaints to timescales and to establish the root-cause of complaints to identify further learning for services.

1. Representations Made to Central Bedfordshire Council

1.1 Compliments Received

Compliments from service users and/or their representatives about service delivery are recorded under the Customer Feedback Procedure. Whilst children's services may seek and receive positive feedback from families and professionals via other mechanisms, the Customer Feedback Procedure captures compliments where the service user and/or representative has gone out of their way to provide praise and appreciation for the service provided to them.

18 compliments were recorded across children's social care services relating to good customer care and the quality of support to children and their families.

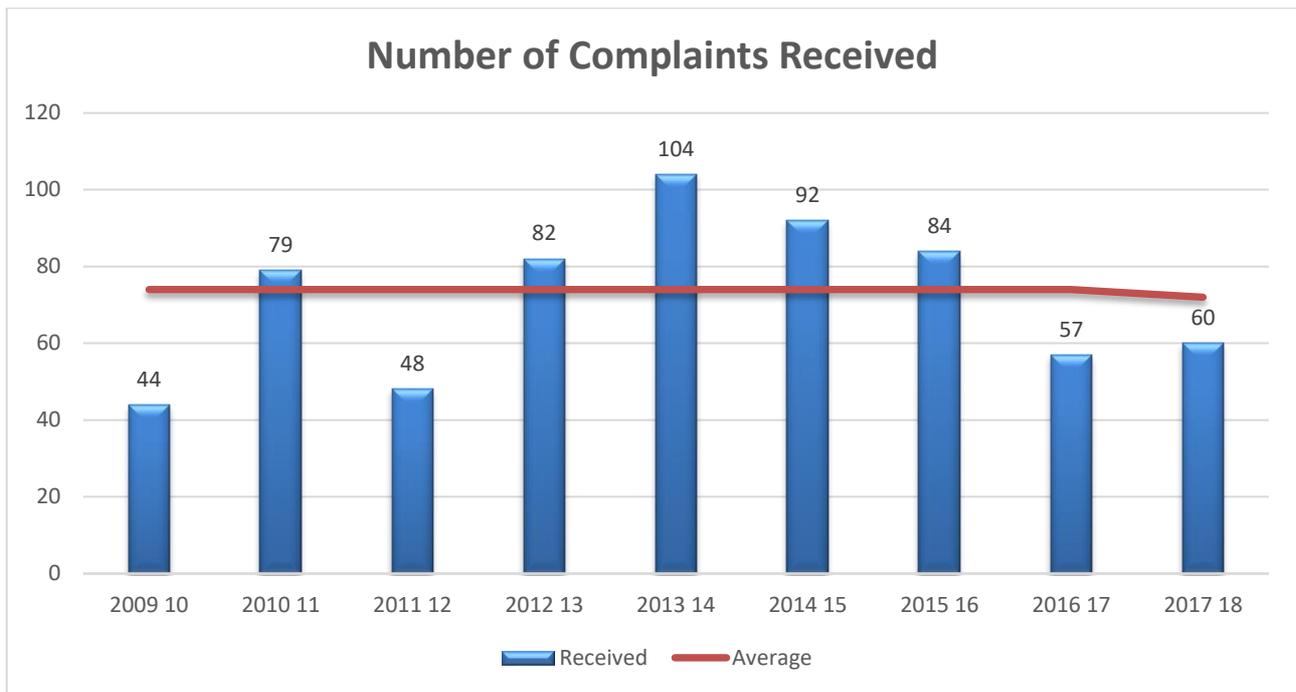


The number of compliments received in 2017/18 reduced by one, from the number received in 2016/17 (by 5%). The number received in this period is below the average number of compliments received across children's social care services in previous years.

1.2 Complaints Received

A complaint may be generally defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response.

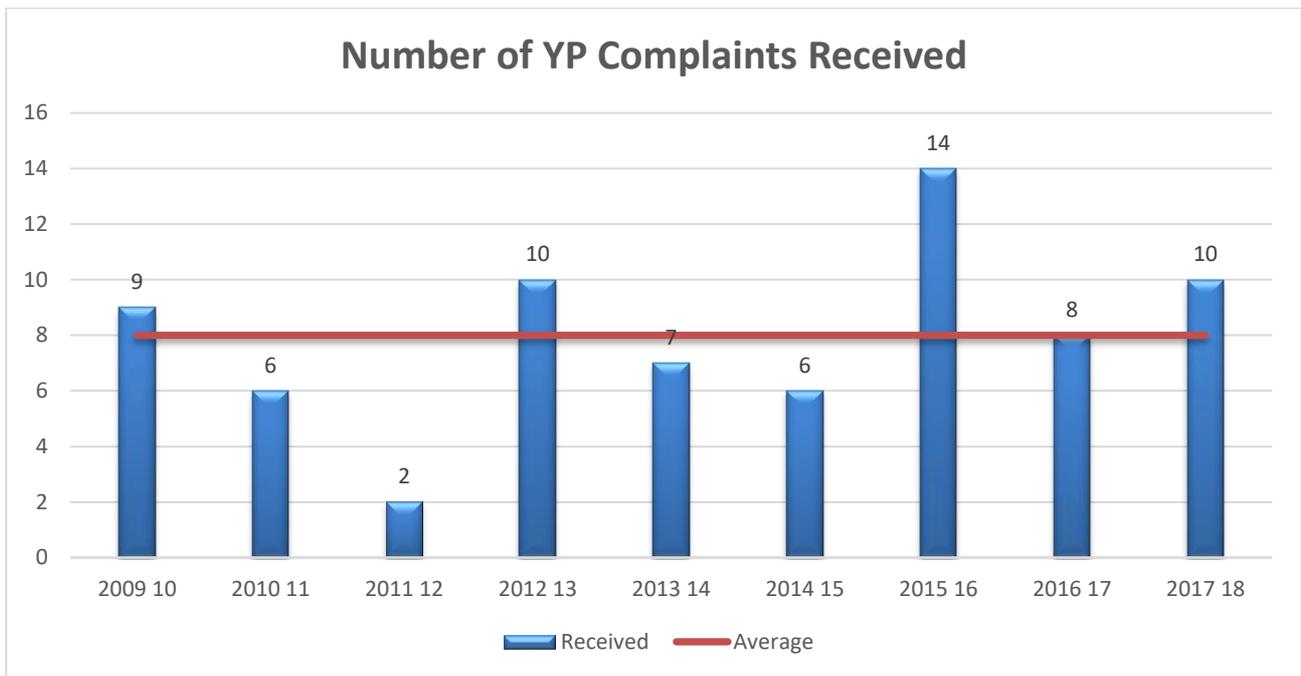
60 new complaints were received across children's social care services in 2017/18.



The number of new complaints received in 2017/18 has increased from the number received in 2016/17 (by 5%). The number received in 2017/18 remains below the average number of complaints received across children’s social care services in previous years.

Of the 60 new complaints received, 42 were managed through the children’s statutory complaints procedure at stage 1. The remaining complaints related to matters which were not suitable for the children’s statutory complaints procedure i.e. matters relating to management or insurance processes; legal matters; no consent to act on behalf of the service user/person affected; not someone who may complain according to the regulations; or where matters were not about the council. These cases were filtered out and where appropriate they were passed to alternative channels already in place to manage those issues.

Of the 42 new complaints suitable for the children’s statutory complaints procedure at stage 1, 10 were specifically about the service to a child/young person. Six were raised on behalf of the child/young person with their consent and four were received directly from child/young person.

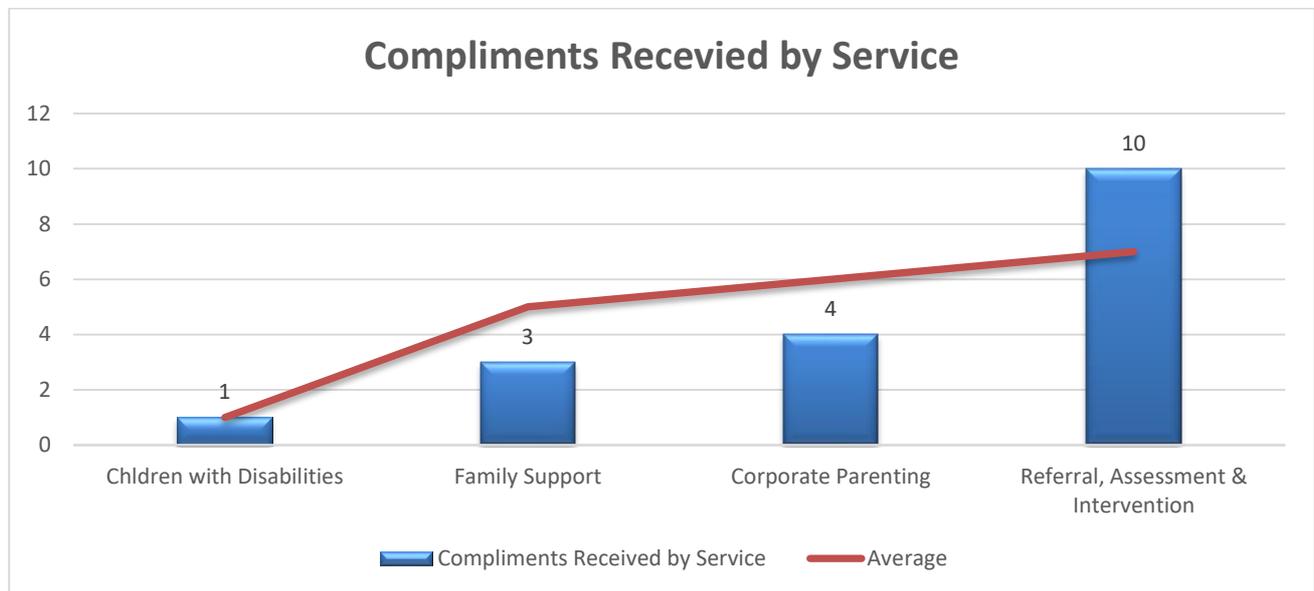


The number of complaints received in 2017/18 from children/young people has increased from those received in 2016/17 (by 20%). The number received in 2017/18 is above the average number of complaints received from children/young people across children's social care services in previous years.

2. Compliments Received Analysis

2.1 Compliments by Service Area

The below chart shows how the 18 compliments received across children’s social care in 2017/18 were distributed by service area:



The compliments received by the Referral, Assessment & Intervention Team were above the average number they had received in previous years.

A breakdown of compliments received by service is detailed below along with a table which provides a general overview of the work each area undertakes.

Service Name	Description
Referral, Assessment & Intervention (10 compliments received)	Referral, Assessment & Intervention responds to all new referrals into children’s services from professionals and the public where there are concerns around the welfare of children. If there is information to support the referral concerns the service will undertake a child & family assessment and immediate child protection enquiries if children are deemed at significant risk. The service can also provide specialist support to manage risk in children’s lives.
Corporate Parenting (4 compliments received)	The Corporate Parenting Service provides services to looked after children and care leavers aged 0 to 25 years old. The aim is to ensure this group of children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes. The service recruits, assesses and supports adopters and foster carers; finds placements for looked after children coming into care or changing placements; supports

	<p>children subject to care proceedings; supports children in long term foster care; and supports those who are leaving care into independence.</p>
<p>Family Support (3 compliments received)</p>	<p>Family Support provides advice, assistance and services to vulnerable children and families in need of support and protection. This can be provided within the home or within the local community. Family Support may need to protect children as part of child protection plans and may need to initiate legal proceedings if risks escalate to safeguard the child. Family Support also works with children who are privately fostered, those families who have no recourse to public funds and various other areas of need where statutory support is required.</p>
<p>Children with Disabilities (1 compliments received)</p>	<p>The Children with Disabilities Service provides support for children with a permanent or substantial disability from birth to age 18. The service operates a specialist referral process and offers a pathway from assessment to provision of service. The service promotes the welfare of disabled children and to enable parents to complete day to day tasks to keep their child living at home and included as a significant family member. The service also provides a range of support which offers disabled children the opportunity to aspire, develop and achieve in the different stages of their lives and transfer into adulthood.</p>

Children with Disabilities

Thanks to social worker for fantastic support

Family Support

Caring social worker who listens and is thoughtful; praise for managing a difficult family dynamic to secure a good outcome for the child; amazing help and support for two years

Corporate Parenting

Praise following social event; praise for quality of training to foster carers; professional effective and reliable social workers

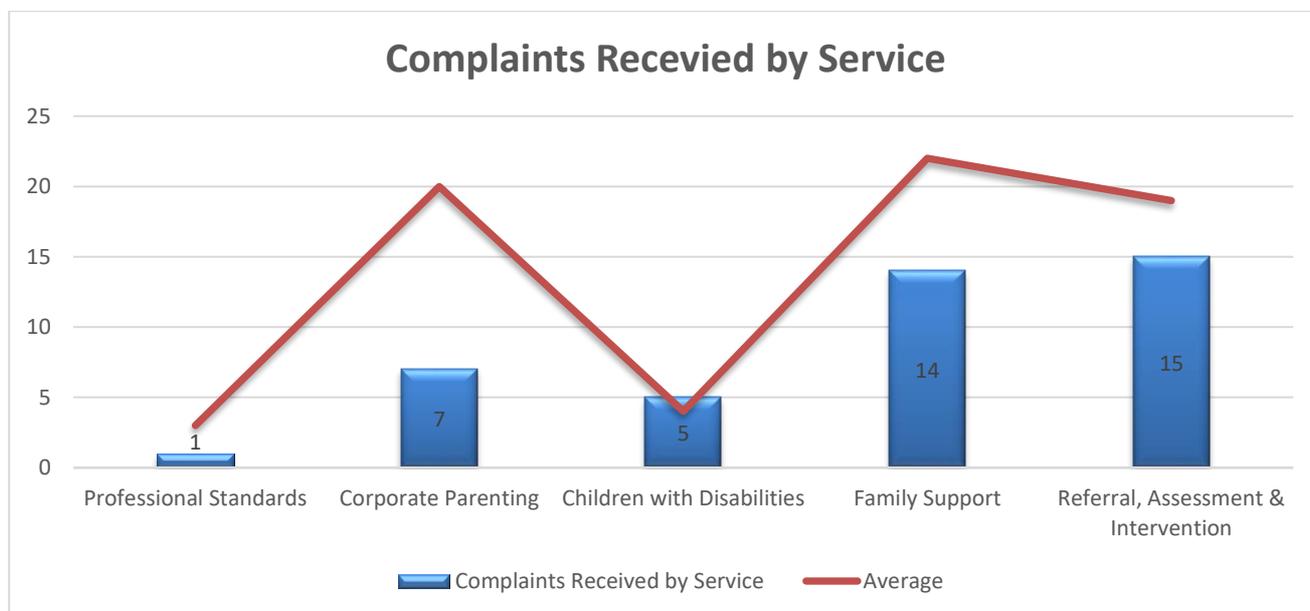
Referral, Assessment & Intervention

Thanks for support & advice; praise for support to children with ADHD & Asperger's; thanks for assistance in rehousing vulnerable family; shining example of what Children's Services is about; social worker going above and beyond; genuine; helpful and selfless;

3. Complaints Received Analysis

3.1 Complaints by Service Area

The below analysis on complaints received is based upon the 42 complaints accepted into the children’s statutory complaints process at stage 1 during 2017/18. The below chart shows complaints accepted into the process by service area.



The number of complaints managed at stage 1 by the Children with Disabilities Service exceeded the average number of complaints accepted into the process in previous years. The number of complaints managed by other service areas were below the average number accepted into the process in previous years.

The below table provides a general overview of the work each area undertakes.

Service Name	Description
Referral, Assessment & Intervention (15 Complaints received)	Referral, Assessment & Intervention responds to all new referrals into children’s services from professionals and the public where there are concerns around the welfare of children. If there is information to support the referral concerns the service will undertake a child & family assessment and immediate child protection enquiries if children are deemed at significant risk. The service can also provide specialist support to manage risk in children’s lives.
Family Support (14 complaints received)	Family Support provides advice, assistance and services to vulnerable children and families in need of support and protection. This can be provided within the home or within the local community. Family Support

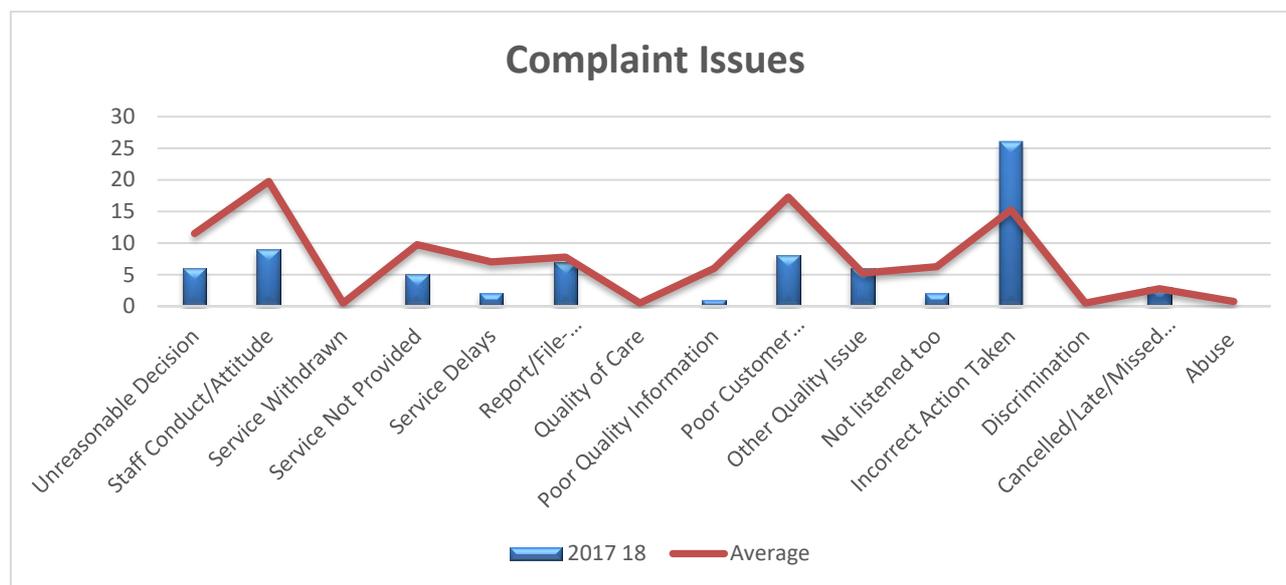
	<p>may need to protect children as part of child protection plans and may need to initiate legal proceedings to safeguard a child if risks escalate. Family Support also works with children who are privately fostered, those families who have no recourse to public funds and various other areas of need where statutory support is required.</p>
<p>Children with Disabilities (5 complaints received)</p>	<p>The Children with Disabilities Service provides support for children with a permanent or substantial disability from birth to age 18. The service operates a specialist referral process and offers a pathway from assessment to provision of service. The service promotes the welfare of disabled children and to enable parents to complete day to day tasks to keep their child living at home and included as a significant family member. The service also provides a range of support which offers disabled children the opportunity to aspire, develop and achieve in the different stages of their lives and transfer into adulthood.</p>
<p>Corporate Parenting (7 complaints received)</p>	<p>The Corporate Parenting Service provides services to looked after children and care leavers aged 0 to 25 years old. The aim is to ensure this group of children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes. The service recruits, assesses and supports adopters and foster carers; finds placements for looked after children coming into care or changing placements; supports children subject to care proceedings; supports children in long term foster care; and supports those who are leaving care into independence.</p>
<p>Professional Standards (1 complaint received)</p>	<p>The Professional Standards service chairs child protection conferences; chairs statutory reviews for looked after children; is responsible for undertaking quality assurance activity to support continuous service improvement; ensures that the voice of looked after children is effectively represented; provides independent advice to parents in respect of the education of children with special needs; and is responsible for the effective administration of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.</p>

Of the 10 complaints received from children and young people in 2017/18, three were for the Referral, Assessment & Intervention Service; one was for the Family Support Service;

two were for the Children with Disabilities Service; and four were for the Corporate Parenting Service.

3.2 Stage 1 – Complaint Issues

The below chart indicates the types of complaint issues received over the year at stage 1 during 2017/18. Each complaint received can have several aspects, so one complaint may cover several the types of complaint issues set out in the chart below.



The top complaint issue in 2017/18 was in relation to complainant feeling that incorrect action had been taken in their case (i.e. procedure not followed).

In 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 poor customer care/communication and staff conduct were the top reasons for complaint. The above chart shows that there has been some improvement in these areas during 2017/18 and that complaints about these issues are below the average received over previous years.

Of the 10 complaints received from children and young people, the common type of complaint issue was around incorrect action being taken. Complaints also reflected unreasonable decisions; staff conduct/attitude; service not being provided; poor customer care/communication; cancelled/late/missed appointment; and other quality issues.

The breakdown of complaints received overall is detailed in the below table:

Complaint Causes	Breakdown of issues raised
Unreasonable Decision	Unreasonable to not share safeguarding information; decision around contact arrangements is inconvenient; decision made to end placement was not in care plan and not agreed at a looked after child review; unreasonable to stop funding for sessions with therapist; unreasonable questioning of parents care of child due to false allegations; young person feels at risk and disagrees with placement move
Staff Conduct/Attitude	Verbally attacked by workers at a child protection

	conference; reluctant to allow parents back to the family home following child protection investigations; threatened parent with contacting the Police if they did not provide consent for social care involvement; phoned parent and then hung up; accused parent of abuse and spoke to child about inappropriate issues; rude; did not acknowledge parent when visiting; sent intimidating text messages; lied about a parent's refusal to make contact and meet; young person was made to feel silly and that claims and requests for assistance were invalid; lack of empathy; unhelpful advice; lack of sensitivity to mental health issues; creating tension; prejudice; bias; unprofessional behaviour
Service Not Provided	Referral assessment process is inadequate; no urgent provision available from the Family Intervention Service without completion of a child and family assessment; no support provided to 5-year-old child with disabled mother; lack of support/carers provided following child having spinal surgery; agreed tutoring was inadequate and funding was removed; Special Guardian not supported to furnish property; classes and counselling not provide to manage challenging behaviour
Service Delays	Delay in providing new social worker; five months taken to file a Section 37 Report with the Court
Report/File/Invoice/Integrity	Failure to ensure accurate information was gathered for assessments and reports for a child protection conference; incorrect information held; information provided to another local authority without checking details with parent; assessment report full of spelling mistakes and incorrect information; working agreement not held on file for new social worker to review; inaccurate recording of child protection abuse category; child's address shared when asked not to; child protection plan incorrect in terms of what support is required
Poor Quality Information	Failure to provide information on the child protection process and decision to move to a child protection conference
Poor Customer Care/Communication	No contact with parents before visiting; contact details not provided; no response to emails; subject access request not responded to on time; not told contact had been cancelled; not told about change in social worker; not informed of meeting dates
Other Quality Issue	Introduced to irrelevant workers; not prepared for support worker leaving; social worker only works part time so cannot assist appropriately; lack of support for young person moving from children's home to independent living; promised actions not followed through; not supported with mental health issues; not supported with contact; inadequate supervision of student social worker
Not Listened Too	Ignoring request to take child into foster care after absconding to stay with another young person who is a bad influence; concerns over child welfare ignored

Incorrect Action Taken	<p>Parents prevented from living with children following a referral of child protection; supervision unfairly implemented; step parent with parental responsibility not included in initial child protection discussions; told social care involvement may affect employment; not told child should be seen every 28 days; not taking correct action when concerns are raised by father; lack of clarity about referral information and sharing of concerns with other bodies; unqualified social worker contacted children at school without parental consent; failure to undertake assessment; information collected without parental consent; failure to take responsibility for young person who needed care/place to live; lack of support to find accommodation for a homeless young person; unsuitable handover and poor transition between teams; failure to challenge NHS re referrals/bullying/cooperation; not told about CSM being held; baby transported without proper car seat; young person did not receive a leaving care grant; increase in medication suggested; withdrawal of care provision suggested; diagnosis not documented; lack of education provision/tutor not provided; failure to act on reported breach of a working agreement; failure to follow up on task in child protection plan and failure to seek wishes and views of child; failure to safeguard children following concerns around money transfers; lack of financial support; emergency contact card for child does not include father's details; excluded from core group meetings; not supporting shared parenting and contact; not supporting child's needs; told to provide expenses to a child staying at friend's house in the knowledge the parent is on a low income; Family Intervention Service not invited to Core Group Meetings; change to child protection plan without consultation; only one parent required to do parenting assessment; pressured to take children whilst mother was in hospital; looked after child review minutes not provided</p>
Cancelled/Late/Missed Appt	<p>Follow up meeting not arranged; arriving on wrong dated to see child; failure to attend meetings; late for meetings</p>

4. Equality and Diversity Monitoring

The purpose of capturing equalities data is to monitor access to the complaints procedure; to ensure services are appropriate for all service user groups; and to check whether any issues relating to discrimination have been raised. Data relates to the service user affected by the complaint or a person who has been affected by the actions taken by the service. For example; where a complaint is made by an adult (usually a parent/carer) about their own experience of intervention, the adult's data is captured as the service user.

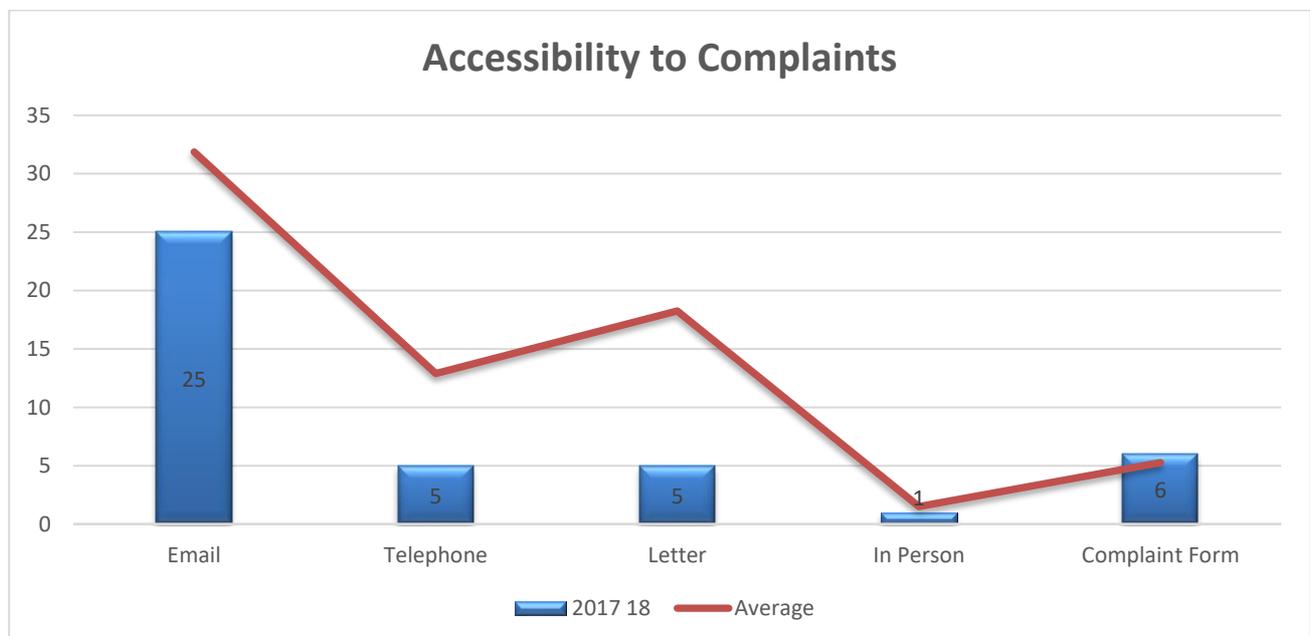
Whilst information is not always provided by a complainant the system used for complaints has the facility to capture the service user's gender, ethnicity, age group and whether the service user describes themselves as having a disability or not.

The below analysis on complaints received is based upon the 42 complaints accepted into the children's statutory complaints process at stage 1.

4.1 Accessibility to Complaints

By having a range of contact options for complainants to make their complaints the council aims to meet the needs of its service users in accessing the complaints procedure. People can make complaints in person; face to face; or via telephone (including a direct line to Customer Relations); in writing; via email; letter; or complaint form (a complaint form specifically designed for young people is available). Complaints can be made by a representative of the service user or an advocate.

The below chart shows which method of communication the 42 complainants used to contact the Council in 2017/18.



Email was the preferred choice for customers to contact the council in 2017/18 in relation to making complaints, with over half being received via this method. The averages detailed in the above chart show that email has consistently been the preferred option over previous years. 2017/18 also saw a higher than average number of complaints being received by complaint form.

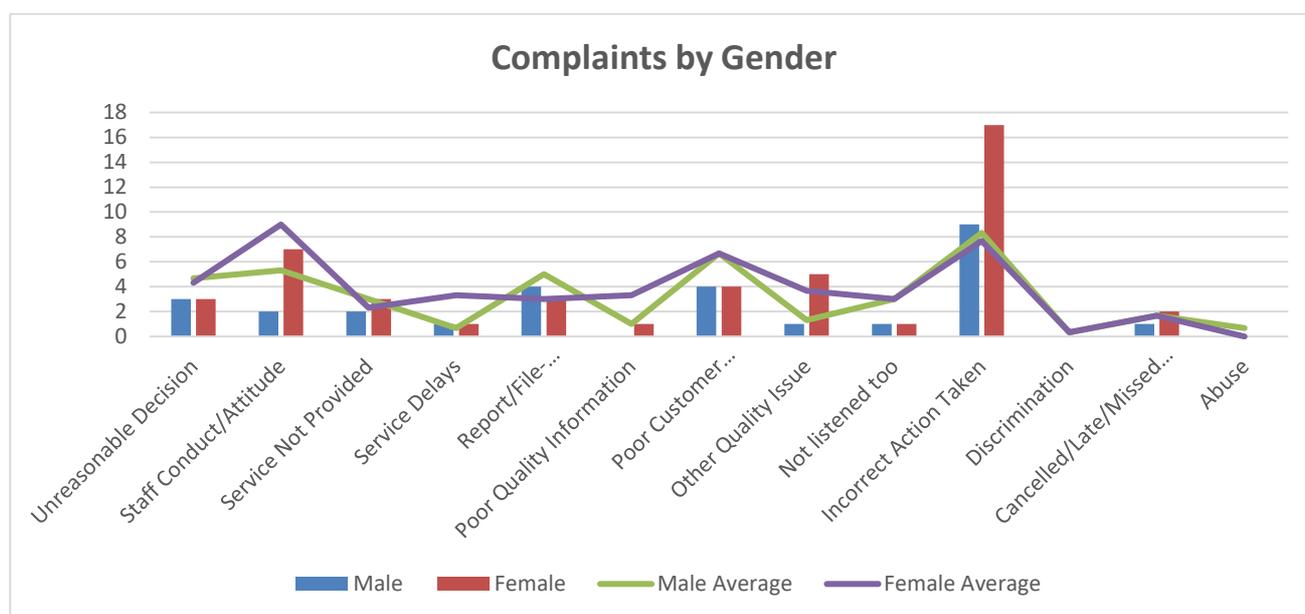
4.2 Social Care Complaints – Gender

In 2017/18 there were 2967 child records loaded by children’s social care services. Of those records 52% were male, 47% were female and 1% were unborn/unknown.

Of the 42 new complaints suitable for the complaints procedure in 2017/18, 10 were received from children/young people. Of those 10, 40% were male and 60% were female.

The remaining 32 complaints were raised by adults about their own experience (usually parents or carers). Of those 32, 37.5% were male and 62.5% were female.

The below chart shows that the top area of complaint for both males and females in 2017/18 was incorrect action being taken.



Incorrect action was also the top cause of complaint for males in 2016/17. For females in 2016/17, it was staff conduct/attitude. In 2017/18 complaints about incorrect action being taken, was higher than the average received about this cause for complaint over previous years for both males and females.

4.3 Social Care Complaints – Ethnicity

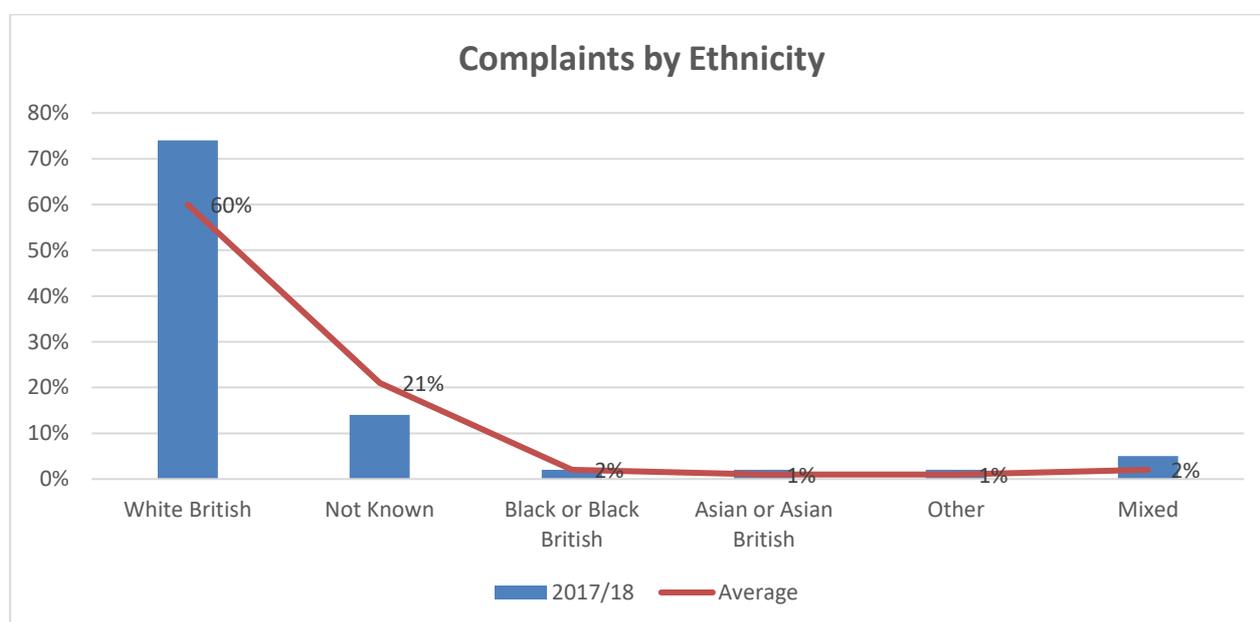
The last census on population by ethnic origin (2011) showed that 89.7% of the population in Central Bedfordshire were ‘White British’ and 10.3% were classified as ‘Other’.

Of the 2967 child records loaded by children’s social care services 81% were classified as ‘White’; 8% were classified as ‘Mixed’; 4% were classified as ‘Black’; 2% were classified as Asian; 2% were classified as ‘Other’; and the remainder were unrecorded.

The below table provides a breakdown of how ethnicity groups were represented in complaints made by young people; complaints made by adults and the total number of complaints made (young people and adults combined) during 2017/18.

Ethnicity Group	Complaints from young people (10)	Complaints from adults (32)	Total number of complaints (42)
White	70%	75%	74%
Mixed	20%	0%	5%
Black	0%	3%	2%
Other	0%	3%	2%
Asian	0%	3%	2%
Unrecorded	10%	16%	14%

Most of the complaints received in 2017/18 were raised by young people and adults who are of 'White British' ethnicity. This is to be expected as the population of Central Bedfordshire and the number of cases loaded by children's services are predominantly represented by those of 'White British' ethnicity.



The above chart demonstrates that in 2017/18 complaints from 'White British' and 'Mixed' ethnic backgrounds were above average compared to complaints received over previous years.

The issues affecting service users with a minority ethnic background were wide ranging but were like those raised by service users with a 'White British' background. There was no significant difference in themes.

4.4 Social Care Complaints – Age

The below table provides a breakdown of how age groups were represented in respect of complaints made by young people; complaints made by adults and the total number of complaints made (young people and adults combined) during 2017/18.

Age Group	Complaints from young people (10)	Complaints from adults (32)	Total number of complaints (42)
Under 18	70%	0%	17%
18 - 21	30%	3%	9%
22 - 64	0%	88%	67%
Not Known	0%	9%	7%

Most of the complaints were made by adults affected by the actions taken by children's social care services however, 10 young people did pursue their own complaints. As leaving care services can continue into early adult life, the term 'young people' refers to those still in receipt of social care services. Of the 10 complaints raised by young people, 7 were under the age of 18; and 3 were between the ages of 18 and 21.

During a child or young person making a complaint, the local authority should support them by actively providing information and advice. The child or young person is entitled to advocacy support that is independent and confidential. This is currently provided by the council's Family Meeting and Advocacy Service. Of the 10 complaints made directly by young people, 1 chose to be supported by an advocate.

4.5 Social Care Complaints – Disability

Of the 2967 child records loaded by children's social care services in 2017/18, 10% of service users were described as having one or more disability.

A significant proportion of complaints (81%) were recorded as 'unknown' in relation to disability of the service user. Where data was captured 10% of service users did not have a disability; 7% of service users were described as having multiple disabilities and 2% were described as having a long-standing illness or health condition.

There were five complaints related to the Children with Disabilities Service. The issues raised were like those raised in other areas of social care. There was no significant difference in themes.

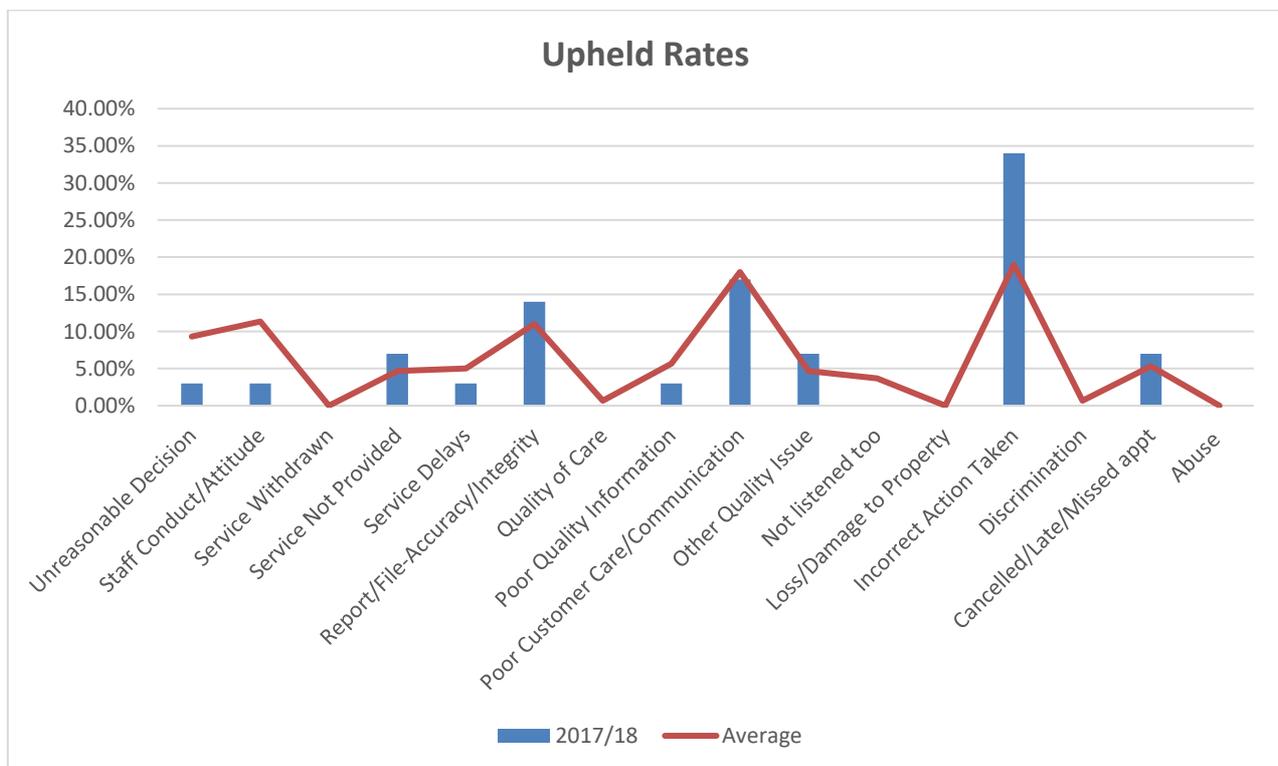
5. Outcomes from Concluded Complaints

There were 38 stage 1 complaints concluded in the period.

The below chart indicates the outcomes from complaints at stage 1 in 2017/18. 18% of complaints were upheld in full and 34% were upheld in part. In total 52% of complaints were well founded either in full or in part.



The below chart indicates that the upheld rates in 2017/18 were impacted predominantly by incorrect action taken.



The above chart also demonstrates that upheld rates were above average compared to previous years in relation to services not being provided; report/file accuracy/integrity; other quality issues; and cancelled/late/missed appointments. In 2015/16 and 2016/17, poor customer care/communication was a top issue of complaint. This year sees some improvement in this area with complaints being just below the average being received over previous years.

6. Performance in Complaint Handling

6.1 Stage 1 Compliance

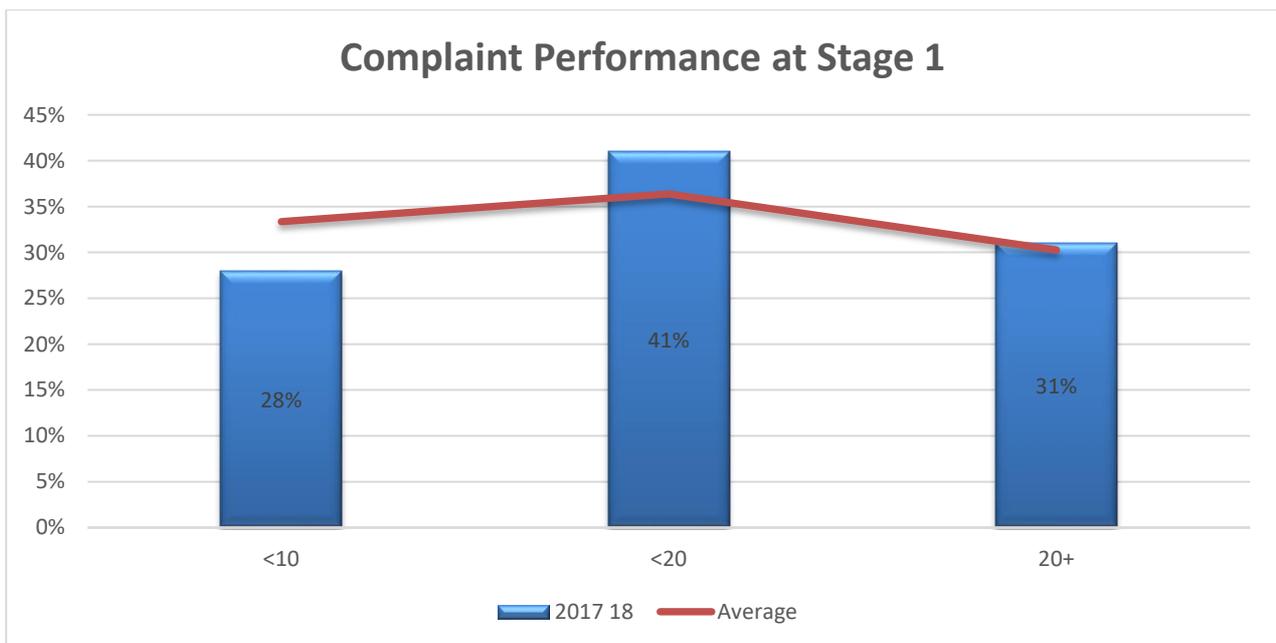
38 complaints were concluded at stage 1 in 2017/18.

The complaints procedure allows for 10 working days for completion of a stage 1 complaint with a further 10 working days for more complex complaints or if an advocate is required.

Of those 38 complaints concluded at stage 1, five were withdrawn and in one complaint the complainant disengaged with the process. Of the remaining 32 complaints:

- 9 were completed within 10 working days
- 13 were completed within 20 working days
- 10 exceeded 20 working days.

The below chart indicates the performance in handling complaints at stage 1 during 2017/18 in comparison to the average performance in handling complaints at stage 1 in previous years.



In 2017/18, 69% of the complaints concluded at stage 1 were done so within 10 or 20 working days. The number of complaints that took longer than the statutory 20 working days was slightly above the average number of complaints that have exceeded 20 working days over previous years, by 1%.

The below table indicates the reasons why complaints took more than 20 working days to conclude, in comparison to the previous two years. Extensions being agreed with the complainant was the top reason in 2017/18 compared to service delays and availability of key personnel in 2016/17; and complaints being detailed or complex in 2015/16.

Performance Delay Reasons	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Service Delay	3	4	1
Availability of Key Personnel	0	4	1
Complainant's Delay	0	2	1
Extension agreed	4	2	2
Detailed/Historical/Complex	2	1	3
Eligibility Query	1	0	2

6.2 Complaint Escalations (Stages 2 & 3)

Where a complaint is not resolved locally at stage 1, the complainant has the right to request consideration of the complaint at stage 2. Consideration of complaints at stage 2 is normally achieved through an investigation conducted by an externally commissioned investigating officer and an independent person. Where stage 2 has been concluded and the complainant is still dissatisfied, the complainant can request further consideration of the complaint by a review panel at stage 3. On conclusion of the local authority complaints process the complainant should be advised of their right to refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Whilst there are three stages to the complaints procedure the Customer Relations Team provides support and guidance to Children's Social Care Services to ensure responses at stage 1 are as robust as possible. Any requests for escalation under the complaints process will be assessed by the Customer Relations Team.

Nothing should preclude either the complainant or the local authority from suggesting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). There are significant cost savings by remedying cases without the need for externally commissioned investigators and the local authority should therefore explore this option. However, entering ADR should not restrict the complainant's right to escalate their complaint.

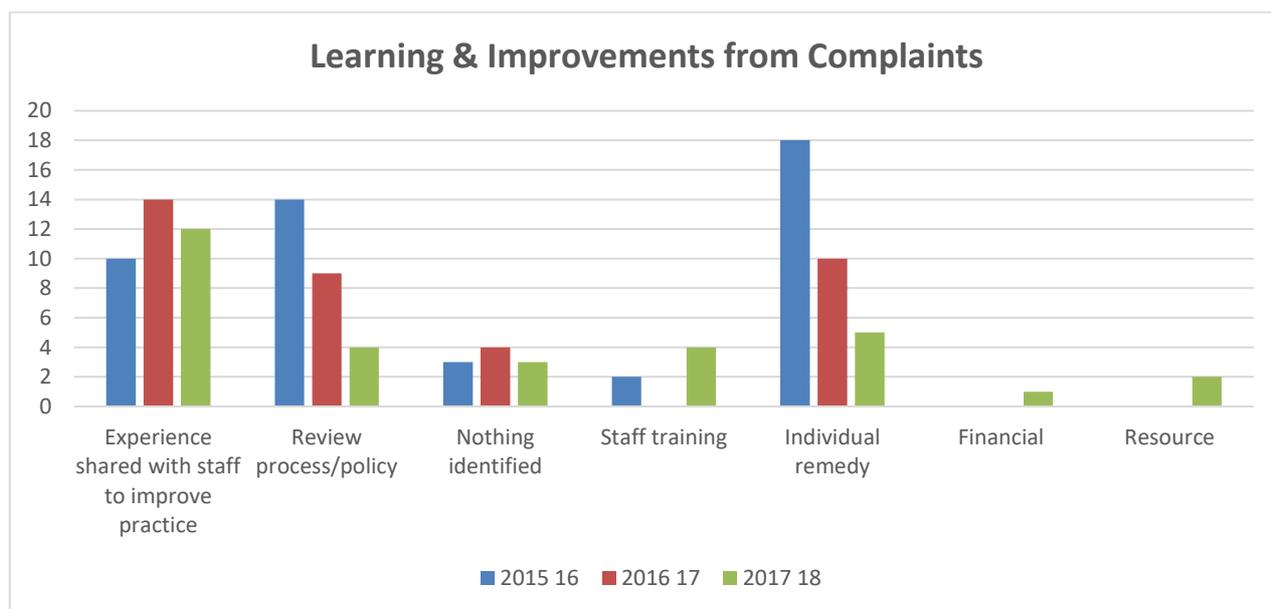
Of the 42 new complaints accepted into the process in 2017/18, six complainants sought to escalate their complaints. In one case, the Customer Relations Team facilitated a conciliation meeting between the service and the complainant. This approach successfully resolved that complaint. In the remaining five cases, the Customer Relations Team undertook an assessment and concluded the investigation process had been exhausted. A copy of the assessment was provided to the complainants to demonstrate why the complaint would not be investigated further and they were also advised of their right to refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

As a result of the actions taken to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, there were no stage 2 complaint investigations or stage 3 reviews during 2017/18.

7. Learning and Improvements from Complaints

Where complaints are upheld either fully or in part complainants will receive an apology. However, service areas are also expected to put in place a remedy which may be for the individual complainant or undertake wider learning across the service to ensure mistakes are not repeated.

The below chart shows the types of learning identified from complaints in 2017/18 compared to those identified in the last two previous years.



The above chart shows that much of the improvements identified in 2017/18 resulted in the complainant's experience being shared with staff to improve practice. This was also the case in 2016/17 however in 2015/16 much of the improvements resulted in individual remedies for complainants.

Key improvements to Children's Services included:

- Training for staff in relation to considering the law and balancing that with making decisions necessary to safeguard children in emergency situations
- Staff reminded of the importance of not assuming whether an adult holds parental responsibility and to always ensure checks are made
- Written information about timescales of visits put into place and provided to families at the first visit
- Refresher training for staff in the Access & Referral Hub regarding the role of the father in the work Children's Services undertake
- Research undertaken on the matter of safeguarding children with chronic fatigue syndrome to establish a stronger baseline for checks and balances
- A review of the way parents are communicated with about panel making decisions and the commissioning process will be reviewed
- A new commissioning framework put into place to open up the pool of agencies available to support children with disabilities

- Virtual School to undertake a review of how tutors are recruited
- Children's addresses to be cross referenced by three separate people before documents are distributed

8. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSO)

6.1 Complaints Received and Decision Notices

The LGSO annual statistics show that they received 17,452 complaints and enquiries about local authorities in 2017/18. In comparison, the LGSO considered four complaints about Central Bedfordshire Council's Children's Social Care Services.

The table below sets out the complaints received and any Ombudsman decisions reached:

Complaint	Ombudsman Decision
<p>The council failed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow proper procedures and properly manage the transition and departure of a foster child to adopting parents preventing the foster family from saying goodbye; Properly consider complaints about the handling of the transition, record keeping and the actions of social workers involved; Follow through with promises of a letter box for the foster family to say goodbye to the baby 	<p>The council acted with fault when managing the transfer of a foster child between foster parents and in its response to a proposal to adopt the child. The Ombudsman recommended the following to remedy the complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologise for the failings identified Pay £500 in recognition of the distress caused and the time and inconvenience expended in taking up the issues with the Council Follow up offer of family counselling Invite the complainant to consider mediation funded by the Council to see if there is a way back for them to continue their careers as foster carers
<p>The complainant complains that the council has systematically shown bias in favour of his children's mother when considering matters relating to his children's welfare</p>	<p>The Ombudsman will not investigate the complainant's complaint that the council has shown favouritism to his children's mother. An investigation would not achieve anything significant for the complainant and the part of his complaint which related to evidence given at court is outside jurisdiction.</p>
<p>The complainant says that his children were unfairly taken into care seven years ago; and that the council has refused to consider what the complainant considered to be new evidence regarding his medical issues at the time.</p>	<p>The Ombudsman cannot investigate this complaint about the decision to take the complainant's children into care. This is because the decision was taken by a court and is out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.</p>
<p>The complainant says that social workers involved in care proceedings for her daughter were untruthful in court.</p>	<p>The Ombudsman cannot investigate this complaint about the actions of the council's social services department. This is because the actions were in preparation for, and during, court proceedings and are therefore out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.</p>

Two LGSO cases reported as received in a previous year received decision notices in this period:

- A court is currently considering the care arrangements for the complainant's child. The Ombudsman will not investigate his complaint about the council's involvement in his child's care as it is too inextricably linked to be separable from the court's consideration.
- The council has correctly identified certain shortcomings in the way a social worker carried out an assessment into the circumstances and welfare of a child. The council has provided appropriate remedies to put right fault.

9. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

9.1 Effectiveness of Complaints Handling

Service users, their representatives and people affected by the actions of children's social care services can access the council's complaints procedure and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Customer Relations Team monitors the operation and effectiveness of the complaints procedure as well as how information about complaints is being used to improve services and delivery.

Stage 1 of the complaints procedure has generally been an effective means of dealing with complaints during 2017/18 with there being no stage 2 investigations or stage 3 reviews.

Four complaints were considered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman this year. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate in three of those cases as the issues raised were outside of their jurisdiction. The remaining case progressed to investigation by the Ombudsman and was upheld. The Ombudsman made several recommendations for children's services to undertake, all of which have been complied with.

Complaints were important feedback and a means of identifying how practices may be changed for the better. The customer experience in complaints has led to some improvements to practice. Last year we reported that there was room for improvement in understanding the root cause for complaints at a local level to fully identify learning opportunities. Customer Relations continues to support services to improve in this area.

9.2 Financial Implications

There are a number of ways in which the local authority can incur costs as part of the statutory complaints process for children's social care services.

Stage 2 is normally achieved through an investigation conducted by an investigating officer and an independent person. The investigating officer may be employed by the local authority or be externally commissioned. The investigating officer however cannot be in direct line management of the service complained about. Due to the nature of the complaints that tend to escalate to stage 2, usual practice is to externally commission an investigating officer specifically for that piece of work. The independent person however must not be an employee of the local authority and is therefore always externally commissioned.

Stage 3 requires the local authority to arrange a panel hearing which must consist of three independent people, which means they cannot be employees of the local authority. This requires the panel members to be externally commissioned.

In addition, there may be rare occasions where financial redress is offered through the complaints procedure. This can be through local settlement following investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman but can also be recommended during the local authority three stage process.

Any financial costs incurred are the responsibility of children’s social care services. To assist in minimising the risk of costs the Customer Relations Team is actively involved in quality assuring stage 1 responses to reduce escalation, proactive in offering alternative dispute resolution where appropriate and consistent in assessing whether complainants are eligible to use the statutory complaints procedure.

The below table details the total costs incurred during 2017/18:

Reasons for Cost	2016/17 Spend
Stage 2	£0.00
Stage 3	£0.00
Financial Redress	£570.00 (£70 through CBC process & £500 through LGSO recommendation)
TOTAL	£570.00

10. Customer Relations Team – Supporting Children’s Social Care

The Customer Relations Team supports Children’s Social Care Services by:

- ✓ Providing guidance, advice and support to staff on the management of complaints
- ✓ Supporting staff involved in all stages of the complaints procedure
- ✓ Quality assurance of complaint responses
- ✓ Managing challenges to complaint handling and responses
- ✓ Liaison with the Local Government Ombudsman
- ✓ Overseeing the arrangements for communicating and publicising the complaints procedure
- ✓ Evaluating and reporting on the numbers, types, outcomes and trends of complaints to inform practice, development and service planning
- ✓ Providing a means to capture the learning from complaints to contribute to practice development, commissioning and service planning

During 2018/19 the Customer Relations Team will focus on a number of initiatives:

- Continue to ensure the complaints procedure is accessible (particularly to young people) and introduce an online complaint form for customers
- Continue to promote the Customer Relations root-cause analysis tool to help managers with identifying systemic improvements
- Continue to promote the Customer Relations toolkit for handling persistent customers consistently and fairly
- Continue to ensure complaints are handled responsively promoting alternative dispute resolution where appropriate
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to achieve a reduction in levels of complaints upheld
- Maintain the low levels of complaint investigations by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and where the LGSO finds fault
- Introduce a performance scorecard for complaints to improve visibility of complaints and their outcomes
- Introduce a rolling programme of staff briefing sessions on good complaint handling



A great place to live and work

Contact us...

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Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Central Bedfordshire Council

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny

22 January 2019

CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21

Report of: Cllr Steven Dixon Executive Member for Families,
Education and Children
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. To outline the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and seek the views of the Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Support the Council's proposed Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020/21
2. Provide a response for the consultation to help shape strategy

Council Priorities

2. The Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme and admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary schools supports the Council's priority to improve educational attainment.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

- 3 As the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area, the Council is required by Section 88C(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (“the 1998 Act”) to determine, on an annual basis, the admission arrangements which are to apply to such schools for the next-but-one school year. Accordingly, for September 2020 admissions, the Council is required to determine the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- 4 Before determining admission arrangements, the Council is required by Section 88C(2) of the 1998 Act to carry out such consultation about the proposed arrangements as may be prescribed in regulations (in this case, the School Admissions Regulations, Chapter 3 of which prescribes, amongst other matters, the persons who must be consulted, the manner of consultation and the time for consultation and determination of admission arrangements).
- 5 As Section 88C of the 1998 Act and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Regulations impose statutory duties on the Council, a failure to consult on and determine the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area would amount to a breach by the Council of these duties, the possible implications of which include legal challenges by interested parties and intervention by the Secretary of State for Education, who has the power under Section 497 of the Education Act 1996 to give such directions as appear to him to be expedient to a local authority which has failed to discharge a statutory duty imposed on it under the Education Acts.
- 6 Accordingly, it is imperative that the Council consults on and determines the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area in accordance with Section 88C of the 1998 Act and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Regulations.

Financial and Risk Implications

- 7 There are no financial implications for this report.

Equalities Implications

- 8 The School Admissions Code sets out the duty on Local Authorities and Admission Authorities to produce admission arrangements which are fair, clear and objective, which can be easily understood by parents. Admission arrangements must comply with regulations and legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 9 Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex

and sexual orientation. As part of the consultation on the Admissions Arrangements the Council will check that the proposed changes do not have a disproportionate or negative impact on vulnerable groups.

Appendices

The following Appendices are provided through an electronic link:

- 10 Appendix A – Executive report of 4 December 2018; Consultation on the admission arrangements for the academic year 2020/21
- 11 Appendix 1 – Proposed Community and Voluntary Controlled schools Admissions Policy and PANs 2020/21.
- 12 Appendix 2 – Lower, Primary and Middle 2020/21 co-ordinated admissions scheme.
- 13 Appendix 3 – Secondary and Upper 2020/21 co-ordinated admissions scheme.
- 14 Appendix 4 – Confirmation of Religious Affiliation form.

Background Papers

None

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive

4 December 2018

CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020

Report of: Cllr Steven Dixon,
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director: Sue Harrison ,
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. To approve the commencement of the Council's consultation on admission arrangements to ensure the statutory requirement for admissions consultation is met. The Council is the admissions authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.
2. Outline the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for all Central Bedfordshire Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. **Approve the commencement of consultation for the proposed changes to the Council's admission arrangements for the academic year 2020/21.**

The proposed changes to the Council's admission arrangements:

- **Include children of staff priority to the following schools' oversubscription criteria;** Dunstable Icknield Lower, Fairfield Park Lower, Greenleas School, Heathwood Lower, Shefford Lower, Southcott Lower and Thomas Johnson Lower

- **Include priority for children previously in state care outside of England for all community and voluntary controlled schools**
2. **Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services with the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children to determine the Council's admission policy for 2020, which they would do so by 28 February 2019, as required by legislation.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

3. The Council's proposed Admission Arrangements for the academic year 2020-21 will be considered by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2019 as a consultee to the process if the Executive approve the recommendations of this report.

Issues

4. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that admissions are co-ordinated for all admission authorities in the local authority's area for all children being admitted into the normal year of entry, and only 1 offer of a school place is made.
5. The Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for the academic year 2020/21 fulfils this requirement, setting out the timeframes for processing admission applications.
6. In addition, as the Council is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, it must also undertake consultation on its own admission arrangements where changes are proposed. The admission policy for these schools sets out the criteria in which applications will be considered if the school is oversubscribed. This report explains the rationale for the proposed changes for seventeen Community and Voluntary Controlled schools' admission criteria.

Central Bedfordshire Council's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Academic Year 2020-21

7. Legislation contained within the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements (England) Regulations 2012 ("the School Admissions Regulations") requires Local Authorities to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme for their area where parents can apply on a common application form for a place in the normal year of entry at a mainstream maintained school or academy.
8. The Council is required to co-ordinate the admissions for children in their area so that only 1 offer of a school place is made per prospective pupil. The co-ordinated

Appendix A to OSC Consultation on the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020

admissions scheme must be formulated by 1 January in the relevant determination year and must be consulted on with the admission authorities in the area if it is substantially different from the previous year.

9. Central Bedfordshire's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme sets out the arrangements and timetable by which applications will be processed. The scheme details the processes and procedures that the Council and other admissions authorities need to work to in order to process the applications by the offer date for the normal year of entry at a school or academy.
10. The Council acting as the local authority must have a co-ordinated admissions scheme in place for all mainstream maintained schools and academies in the area.
11. Admissions for the normal year of entry for Secondary schools (which in Central Bedfordshire includes Upper and Secondary schools) are subject to a national closing date of 31 October for receipt of applications and a national offer date of 1 March.
12. Admissions for the normal year of entry for Primary schools (which in Central Bedfordshire include Lower, Primary and Middle schools) are subject to a national closing date of 15 January and a national offer date of 16 April.
13. The proposed co-ordinated scheme for 2020/21 is attached for Lower, Primary and Middle at Appendix 1 and the proposed co-ordinated scheme is attached for Secondary and Upper at Appendix 2.
14. The proposed co-ordinated scheme is not substantially different from the previous year's, and has been updated with the relevant dates for the academic year 2020/21. This scheme therefore is not subject to formal consultation as per the requirements of the School Admissions Regulations but will be circulated for information to all relevant parties.

Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools

15. Admission arrangements are the procedures and processes that determine how children will be admitted to a school and include the oversubscription criteria which will be applied if more applications are received than there are places available.
16. The School Admissions Regulations require Admission Authorities (i.e. the Council in relation to Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area, the governing bodies of Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools and the relevant Academy Trust in relation to academies) to consult where changes are proposed on their admission arrangements, including any supplementary information form that will apply for admission applications for the following academic year. The confirmation of Religious Affiliation form is a supplementary form to the Council's common application form for point of entry admissions and is attached at Appendix 4 for information. The Religious Affiliation form is for all Central Bedfordshire schools

who prioritise applicants on faith grounds for both Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided schools.

17. For admission arrangements determined in 2019 for entry in September 2020, consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October 2018 and the 31 January 2019. The Admission Arrangements must then be determined by 28 February 2019. The Council will conduct its consultation between the 5 December 2018 and 29 January 2019 to gather the views of all consultees.
18. Admissions Authorities are required to consult with the following parties:
 - i. Parents of children between the ages of 2 and 18 who are resident in the relevant area;
 - ii. Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admissions authority have an interest in the proposed admission arrangements;
 - iii. All other admission authorities within the relevant area;
 - iv. The Governing Bodies of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools;
 - v. Adjoining neighbouring local authorities;
 - vi. The body or person representing religious denomination schools.
19. From 2020/21 changes are proposed to the admissions criteria of all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Central Bedfordshire.
20. As part of the Schools for the Future programme, the Council is currently working with each cluster to co construct a cluster plan for each area which will outline the shape of education provision for the next 15-20 years in line with housing and population growth. Until each plan is finalized and agreed, the Council is not seeking to make any significant changes to admission arrangements for Community or Voluntary Controlled schools.

Including priority for children previously in state care outside of England

21. School admission authorities have been required to give looked after children highest priority in their oversubscription criteria since 2007, and this was extended to previously looked after children in 2012.
22. The Minister of State for School Standards wrote to all Local Authorities and admissions authorities in December 2017 encouraging them to give children who have been adopted having been in state care from outside of England to have the second highest priority for admission to school as soon as possible.
23. The Minister has stated that it is his intention to propose further changes to the School Admissions Code to amend the current mandatory highest priority criterion so that this also includes children who have been in state care outside of England and have since been adopted. Any changes to admissions legislation are subject to national consultation and the will of Parliament, which would result in a new School Admissions Code being issued. Prior to that taking place he is keen for all admission authorities to include this as the second highest priority in the interim as soon as possible.

Appendix A to OSC Consultation on the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020

24. The majority of local authorities in the area will be consulting on implementing this change to the admission arrangements for community and Voluntary Controlled schools in their authority and are encouraging own admission authority schools within their area to do the same.
25. Applicants applying under this criterion will be required to provide documentation to evidence that their child meets this criterion. The School Admissions Team would liaise with the Virtual School to determine if applicants meet the criterion based on the evidence provided by parent. The Department for Education has stated that the number of pupils who will meet this criterion is small so it is not anticipated that many applications will be considered under this priority.
26. The proposed oversubscription criteria for all community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Central Bedfordshire would have the following first two criteria, the first being mandatory and the second in response to the Minister's request;
- 1) All 'looked after' children and children who were previously 'looked after'
 - 2) Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
27. It is therefore proposed that the Local Authority consults on including priority to these pupils, as requested by the Minister of State for School Standards, ahead of the planned change to the admissions legislation so that the Local Authority is ahead of national policy change.

Including priority for children of staff

28. The Governing Bodies of the following schools have requested that children of staff be given priority within their oversubscription criteria; Greenleas School, Southcott Lower, Heathwood Lower, Dunstable Icknield Lower, Fairfield Park Lower, Thomas Johnson Lower and Shefford Lower.
29. Many schools have had difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, and therefore wish to include the priority as an incentive to attract high quality staff.
30. The School Admissions Code, the statutory code which underpins the admission process, permits admission authorities to give priority to children of staff within a school's oversubscription criteria in either or both of the following circumstances; where the member of staff has been employed at the school for at least two years when the application is made and/or where they have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
31. The proposed oversubscription criteria for the schools that wish to include this priority is
- 1) All 'looked after' children and children who were previously 'looked after'

Appendix A to OSC Consultation on the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020

- 2) Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
- 3) Children living in the catchment with siblings at the school
- 4) Children living in the catchment area
- 5) Other children with siblings at the school
- 6) Children of staff*
- 7) Any other children

For Leighton Buzzard lower schools who have requested this priority be added to their oversubscription criteria, this would be as follows;

- 1) All 'looked after' children and children who were previously 'looked after'
- 2) Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
- 3) Other children with siblings at the school
- 4) Children of staff*
- 5) Children for whom the school is the nearest lower/primary school to their home address
- 6) Any other children

*A clear definition would be required to set out how a parent/carer would be eligible for this criterion. The proposed definition would be;

Permanent full or part-time staff who have either been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of application or recruited to fill a vacant post where there was a demonstrable skill shortage. The relationship to the child is defined as by blood or adoption or with legal parental responsibility and living with the child in the same house Monday – Friday.

32. A third of Central Bedfordshire schools and academies who are responsible for their admission arrangements include children of staff priority within their oversubscription criteria. Therefore, supporting these schools' requests would enable the schools to operate as many of the other schools already are. The number of children of staff applications for schools with this criterion has been very low, on average there is one application per year that meets this criterion and therefore the impact on other applicants is minimal.
33. Last year following the required consultation, the Council included the priority for children of staff to the oversubscription criteria for Leighton Middle School, following a request from the school. In that consultation the majority of respondents were supportive of the proposal and the general consensus was that it was a pragmatic way of supporting schools attract and retain quality staff.
34. The possible disadvantages to the proposed criterion is that as admission authorities cannot give priority to children based on their parents' occupations, except for children of staff it could be viewed as unfair to other parents as their occupation cannot be considered. However it is permissible by the School Admissions Code and therefore an acceptable criterion. As a result of the children of staff criterion it may result in children from outside the local area gaining a place

Appendix A to OSC Consultation on the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020

at the school ahead of local children if staff living in a distance to the school opt to apply for a place for their child at the school at which they work. However the number of applicants expected to meet this criterion is so low and not all school staff want their child attending the school at which they work.

35. It is therefore proposed to include the children of staff priority criterion within the oversubscription criteria for the schools listed to support these Governing Bodies in attracting high quality staff to join their school and bring the school in line with a number of academies and own admission authority schools who already include this criterion within their admission policies.

Published Admission Number for Linslade Lower

36. Following a request from the Governing Body of Linslade Lower School the Council has requested a variation to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to reduce the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) from 45 per year group to 30 with effect from September 2019. Should the request not be granted, the Council would be required to consult on reducing the school's admission number in the normal way.
37. At the time of writing this report the Council is awaiting a decision from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator and therefore will consult on the change for 2020 as required.

Reason for decision

38. As outlined above, the Council is required to consult on changes to its admission arrangements where these are proposed and is required to consult within the statutory timescales set out in the School Admissions Regulations. A decision is therefore required from the Executive to approve the commencement of the Council's consultation on the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for all Central Bedfordshire Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Council Priorities

39. The Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme and admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools supports the Council's priority to improve educational attainment.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

40. As the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area, the Council is required by Section 88C(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ("the 1998 Act") to determine, on an annual basis, the admission arrangements which are to apply to such schools for the next-but-one

school year. Accordingly, for September 2020 admissions, the Council is required to determine the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

41. Before determining admission arrangements, the Council is required by Section 88C(2) of the 1998 Act to carry out such consultation about the proposed arrangements as may be prescribed in regulations (in this case, the School Admissions Regulations, Chapter 3 of which prescribes, amongst other matters, the persons who must be consulted, the manner of consultation and the time for consultation and determination of admission arrangements).
42. As Section 88C of the 1998 Act and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Regulations impose statutory duties on the Council, a failure to consult on and determine the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area would amount to a breach by the Council of these duties, the possible implications of which include legal challenges by interested parties and intervention by the Secretary of State for Education, who has the power under Section 497 of the Education Act 1996 to give such directions as appear to him to be expedient to a local authority which has failed to discharge a statutory duty imposed on it under the Education Acts.
43. Accordingly, it is imperative that the Council consults on and determines the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area in accordance with Section 88C of the 1998 Act and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Regulations.

Financial and Risk Implications

44. There are no financial implications for this report.

Equalities Implications

45. The School Admissions Code sets out the duty on Local Authorities and Admission Authorities to produce admission arrangements which are fair, clear and objective, which can be easily understood by parents. Admission arrangements must comply with regulations and legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
46. Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. As part of the consultation on the Admissions Arrangements the Council will check that the proposed changes do not have a disproportionate or negative impact on vulnerable groups.

Conclusion and next Steps

47. It is a necessary requirement for the Council to consult on its admission arrangements where changes are proposed and to formulate a co-ordinated scheme for admission by 1 January in the determination year.
48. The proposed co-ordinated admissions scheme has been drawn up with regard to the national closing and offer dates for the academic year of 2020/21, taking into account the necessary timescales to process and allocate places working with the schools and academies in Central Bedfordshire to meet the deadlines
49. The next steps are for the Council to undertake the consultation within the statutory timeframes engaging with all the relevant parties to ascertain views on the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools of which the Council is the admissions authority for.
50. The consultation will run from 5 December and conclude on 30 January 2019, for a total of eight weeks, six of which are during term time, to ensure that it meets the statutory consultation duration. The legislation states that the Council must determine its admission arrangements for admissions in 2020/21 by 28 February 2019, which would not allow sufficient time for the responses to be analysed and reported back to Executive during February 2019. Therefore, responses to the consultation will be reported in February 2019 to the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children to determine the Council's admission arrangements for the academic year 2020/21 alongside the Director of Children's Services before 28 February 2019 as required by the regulations.

Appendices

The following appendices are attached through an electronic link:

51. Appendix 1 – Lower, Primary and Middle 2020/21 co-ordinated admissions scheme.
52. Appendix 2 – Secondary and Upper 2020/21 co-ordinated admissions scheme.
53. Appendix 3 – Proposed Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools Admissions Policy and PANs 2020/21.
54. Appendix 4 – Confirmation of Religious Affiliation form.

Background Papers

N/A

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PROPOSED Community and Voluntary Controlled schools Admission Arrangements for Academic Year 2020/21

If there are fewer applications than places available at a school all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places available, the criteria outlined in this document will be used to prioritise applications. The admissions criteria will be applied separately and sequentially until all places are filled. Priority is not given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.

Tiebreaker

Straight line distance will be used as a tiebreaker in each criterion where required to determine the allocation of places. The distance the pupil lives from the school which is measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The Local Authority will measure the distance from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the governing body of the school, which is known as the designated measuring point. In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the Synergy Admissions database to allocate the place.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, children with an Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the academy/school named in the Plan and will be allocated a place ahead of those without an Education, Health and Care Plan in the allocation process. Thereafter the admissions criteria for each academy/school will apply to those children without an Education, Health and Care Plan. After allocations have been made, if an application is made late or is received as part of the in-year process, pupils who have an Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the Plan, even if the school is full.

Fair Access Protocol

All Local Authorities must have a Fair Access Protocol which operates outside of the arrangements of co-ordinated admissions (i.e. those children being admitted to the point of entry at an academy/school) to ensure unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable are offered a suitable school place. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will be admitted even if the school is full.

Unsuccessful applications

Waiting List

All unsuccessful applicants will be added to the waiting list which will run until the end of the academic year (July 2021). Waiting lists are ranked solely by the published oversubscription criteria for the school. The list will be ranked each time a child is added to the waiting list.

Appeals

If a place cannot be offered at a Central Bedfordshire Community or VC school the applicant(s) have the right of appeal. All appeals are heard by an independent panel. Information regarding the appeal process will be sent to all unsuccessful applicants when notified of the outcome of their application.

Definitions of Admissions Criteria:

'Looked after' children

A 'looked after' child is a child in the care of a local authority as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school.

Previously 'looked after' children

A previously 'looked after' child is a child who was 'looked after', but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or a special guardianship order.

Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Catchment area

A catchment area is a geographical area from which children are given priority for admission to the particular school. Please see www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions for more information on school catchment areas.

Sibling

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, adopted brother or sister or fostered brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority or the child of the parent / carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission. In the scenario where one twin or a child from multiple birth has an EHCP, the other twin or children from multiple birth will be considered as a sibling once the school named on the EHCP has been finalised.

Any other children

Pupils who do not meet any of the higher criteria will be prioritised by the distance with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. Using their computerised measuring system, the Local Authority will measure the straight-line distance from the address point of the pupil's home to the designated measuring point for the school, as agreed with the school's governing body.

Children of staff

Permanent full or part-time staff who have either been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of application or recruited to fill a vacant post where there was a demonstrable skill shortage. The relationship to the child is defined as by blood or adoption or with legal parental responsibility and living with the child in the same house Monday – Friday.

Nearest school

The nearest school will be identified by measuring the distance the pupil lives from the school which is measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the governing body of the school, which is known as the designated measuring point. In the unlikely event that a pupil lives equidistant to the nearest two schools then the parent's preferred school will be classed as the nearest school.

Pulford VA Lower School will not be considered as a pupil's nearest school for the purposes of this policy as admission to Pulford is predominantly based on faith grounds rather than a pupil's address.

The oversubscription criteria for the majority of Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools in Central Bedfordshire is as follows:

- 1) All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
- 2) Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
- 3) Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
- 4) Children living in the catchment area
- 5) Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
- 6) Any other children

School	Published Admission Number	Designated measuring point
Aspley Guise Lower	27	Main gate
Caddington Village (Primary)	60	School medical room
Campton Lower	22	Main gate
Chalton Lower	15	School gate
Flitwick Lower	60	Main office
Hawthorn Park Primary	60	Front door of school
Haynes Lower	24	School front door
Houghton Conquest Lower	20	Headteacher's office
Houghton Regis Primary	45	Centre of school field
Husborne Crawley Lower	12	Main entrance
Kingsmoor Lower	45	School gate
Lawnside Lower	60	Main entrance to school
Linslade Lower	30	Pupils entrance gate
Maulden Lower	30	Main pedestrian gate
Ramsey Manor Lower	58	Front door
Ridgmont Lower	15	Headteacher's office
Roecroft Lower	90	Main entrance door
Russell Lower	90	School gate
Shillington Lower	30	Headteacher's office
Silsoe VC Lower	60	Front door
Slip End Village (Primary)	24	Main gate
Southill Lower	15	Main entrance
Stanbridge Lower	24	Front gate
Stondon Lower	30	Main gate
St. Swithun's VC Primary	30	Main door
Studham VC Lower	15	Main door
Swallowfield Lower	60	Front door
Templefield Lower	60	Main door
Thornhill Primary	30	School main gate
Tithe Farm Primary	60	Main gate
Watling Lower	30	Main school gate entrance
Woburn Lower	12	Main entrance
Potton Middle	90	School office

Variations to the standard admissions policy:

Biggleswade cluster schools:

Dunton VC Lower School	Published admission number: 15
Designated measuring point: Headteacher's office	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
7.	Any other children

Edward Peake VC Middle School	Published Admission Number: 150
Designated measuring point: Headteacher's office	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
7.	Children attending Dunton VC Lower, Northill VA Lower, Sutton VA Lower and Wrestlingworth VC Lower
8.	Any other children

St. Andrew's VC Lower School	Published Admission Number: 180 (West site 90, East site 90)
Designated measuring point: West site: Front entrance door East site: Front entrance door	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
7.	Any other children

Wrestlingworth VC Lower School	Published Admission Number: 13
Designated measuring point: Front door	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
7.	Any other children

*A Christian Church is defined as one which is a member, or is eligible for membership, of Churches Together in England or the Evangelical Alliance. Applications in this category will need to ask their priest or minister to complete the relevant section of the local authority common application form.

Cranfield cluster schools:

Thomas Johnson Lower School	Published Admission Number: 18
Designated measuring point: School gate	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children of staff
7.	Any other children

Dunstable and Houghton Regis cluster schools:

Dunstable Icknield Lower School	Published Admission Number: 60
Designated measuring point: School tower	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children of staff
7.	Any other children

Leighton Buzzard cluster community schools:

Leighton Middle School	Published Admission Number: 150
Designated measuring point: Centre of memorial garden	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children of staff
7.	Any other children

School	Published Admission Number	Designated measuring point
Greenleas School, Derwent Road	60	Front door
Greenleas School, Kestrel Way	60	Front door
Heathwood Lower School	30	Front door
Southcott Lower School	60	Main door
If the schools listed above are oversubscribed priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:		
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'	
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted	
3.	Children with siblings at the school	
4.	Children of staff	
5.	Children for whom the school is their nearest lower/primary school*	
6.	Any other children	

School	Published Admission Number	Designated measuring point
Beaudesert Lower School	55	Main pedestrian entrance
Clipstone Brook Lower School	75	School notice board at top of school drive
Doverly Down Lower School	30	Front door
Hockliffe Lower School	15	Front door
Leedon Lower School	90	Middle of school quadrant
Linslade Lower School	30	Pupils main gate
Stanbridge Lower School	24	Front gate
St. George's Lower School	30	Main front door
The Mary Bassett Lower School	60	Front door
If the following schools listed above are oversubscribed priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:		
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'	
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted	
3.	Children with siblings at the school	
4.	Children for whom the school is their nearest lower/primary school*	
5.	Any other children	

Shefford and Stotfold cluster schools:

Shefford Lower School	Published Admission Number: 90
Designated measuring point: War memorial in town centre	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children of staff
7.	Any other children

Fairfield Park Lower School	Published Admission Number: 90
Designated measuring point: Equidistant point between Dickens Boulevard and Ruskin Drive sites	
Applications for Fairfield Park Lower will be ranked according to the standard admissions criteria as mentioned above. Where a place can be offered, the following process will determine at which school site, either Dickens Boulevard or the Ruskin Drive site, the child will attend. Successful applicants will be notified at the time of offer which school site their child will attend.	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after' <i>Looked after children in catchment will be prioritised by which priority area they are in, with those out of catchment being prioritised by straight line distance from their home address to the nearest school site to them.</i>
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted <i>Allocated children will be prioritised by which priority area they are in, with those out of catchment being prioritised by straight line distance from their home address to the nearest school site to them.</i>
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school <i>Before applications in this criterion are allocated children will be prioritised for either the Dickens Boulevard or the Ruskin Drive site according to which site their sibling attends and will be ranked by their straight-line distance from the designated measuring point. If children are unable to obtain a place at the site at which their sibling attends they will be then ranked by their straight-line distance to the other Fairfield Park site. Places will be allocated in accordance with this distance after allocations have been made to those with siblings at that site taking precedence before those with siblings at the other school site.</i>
4.	Children living in the catchment area <i>Before applications in this criterion are allocated children will be prioritised for either the Dickens Boulevard or the Ruskin Drive site according to which priority area they reside in first and be ranked by their straight-line distance from the designated measuring point. If children are unable to obtain a place at the site within their priority area they will be then ranked by their straight-line distance to the other Fairfield Park site which is not in their priority area. Places will be allocated in accordance with this distance after allocations have been made to those in their priority area taking precedence before those from the other priority area.</i>
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school <i>Siblings will be prioritised for either the Dickens Boulevard or the Ruskin Drive site depending on which site their sibling attends and will be ranked by their straight-line distance from the designated measuring point. There will be no guarantee that a sibling can attend the same school site.</i>
6.	Children of staff <i>Where possible pupils will be allocated a place at the site at which their parent is based.</i>
7.	Any other children

Where possible pupils will be allocated a place at the site nearest to them, measured from their home address in a straight line, although if this is not possible a place will be allocated at the other site.

Priority areas for Fairfield Park Lower School catchment area

Address	Priority for Fairfield Park Lower site
Alfred Row	Ruskin Drive
Anderson Walk - properties 2,4,6	Ruskin Drive
Anderson Walk - properties 1,3,5,7	Dickens Boulevard
Beatrice Place	Ruskin Drive
Bronte Avenue - properties 1-21, 23,25,27	Ruskin Drive
Bronte Avenue - properties 22,24,26,28-155	Dickens Boulevard
Brunel Walk	Dickens Boulevard
Burton Close	Dickens Boulevard
Cavell Walk - properties 1,3,5,7,9	Ruskin Drive
Cavell Walk - properties 2,4,6,8,10	Dickens Boulevard
Charlotte Avenue	Dickens Boulevard
Connely Lane	Ruskin Drive
Copperfield Close	Dickens Boulevard
Dickens Boulevard - properties 1-23	Ruskin Drive
Dickens Boulevard - properties 24-74 inc Beeton Court	Dickens Boulevard
Disraeli Place	Ruskin Drive
Doyle Place	Dickens Boulevard
Earnshaw Drive	Dickens Boulevard
Edison Way	Dickens Boulevard
Emily Place	Dickens Boulevard
Fairfield Mews	Ruskin Drive
Faraday Gardens	Dickens Boulevard
Fleming Drive - properties 1-15, 17, 19,21	Ruskin Drive
Fleming Drive - properties 16,18,20,22-47	Dickens Boulevard
Franklin Place	Dickens Boulevard
Gaskell Place	Dickens Boulevard
Gladstone Drive	Ruskin Drive
Hardy Way	Dickens Boulevard
Heathcliff Avenue	Dickens Boulevard
Helena Crescent	Ruskin Drive
Hitchin Road - properties 153-167, inc East Lodge	Ruskin Drive
Hitchin Road - Icknield House	Dickens Boulevard
Kingsley Avenue	Ruskin Drive
Kipling Crescent	Dickens Boulevard
Leopold Corner	Ruskin Drive
Livingstone Way	Dickens Boulevard
Louise Rise	Ruskin Drive
Middlemarch	Ruskin Drive
Nickleby Way	Dickens Boulevard
Nightingale Way - properties 1-6,8,10,12,14	Ruskin Drive
Nightingale Way - properties 7,9,11,15,17,19	Dickens Boulevard
Palmerston Way	Ruskin Drive
Paxton Drive	Dickens Boulevard
Russell Walk	Ruskin Drive
Salisbury Close	Ruskin Drive
Shaftesbury Drive	Ruskin Drive
Stephenson Walk	Dickens Boulevard
Lower Wilbury Farm	Dickens Boulevard



PROPOSED

CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO: LOWER, PRIMARY AND MIDDLE ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2014 requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all academies and maintained schools in their area.
- 1.2 A school is here defined as any academy or maintained community, foundation, trust, voluntary aided or voluntary controlled school in the Central Bedfordshire Council area.
- 1.3 Central Bedfordshire Council, acting as the Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. The admission authority for academies is the academy trust. For foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools, the admission authority is the governing body.
- 1.4 This scheme will apply to all lower, primary and middle academies and schools for admissions in the Central Bedfordshire Council area from September 2020.
- 1.5 Any reference to Central Bedfordshire is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.
- 1.6 Central Bedfordshire Council uses the equal preference system to process admission applications, as outlined below:
 - 1.6.1 Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the admissions criteria. At this stage the Council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 120 places and there are 150 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

1.6.2 Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference school available for another pupil.

2. The Scheme

- 2.1. This scheme is for admissions in the normal year of entry for:
 - a) Lower Academies and Schools
 - b) Primary Academies and Schools
 - c) Middle Academies and Schools
- 2.2. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) available for parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire to apply online or by completing a hard copy application form.
- 2.3. The CAF will be used for the purposes of admitting children into the first year of a:
 - Lower or Primary academy/school (Year R), or
 - Middle academy/school (Year 5).
- 2.4. The CAF will enable parents/carers to:
 - express a preference for up to 3 academies/schools
 - rank their preferences
 - give reasons for their preferences
- 2.5. Information will be provided on the admissions process in the form of the admissions booklet and will contain information on:
 - a) the academies and schools in Central Bedfordshire
 - b) dates of open evenings (where applicable)
 - c) published admission numbers and admissions criteria
 - d) how to complete an application
 - e) how places are allocated
 - f) timetable for the application and allocation process
 - g) school transport
 - h) who to contact for advice
- 2.6. **Admissions for the normal year of entry into a Lower or Primary Academy/School (Year R):**
 - 2.6.1 Parents of all children born between **01/09/15 and 31/08/16** and living in Central Bedfordshire will be able to apply for an academy or school place online or by completing a hard copy of the Common Application Form (CAF). The CAF will be available from any local lower or primary

academy/school, from the School Admissions Team or it can be downloaded from the Council website.

- 2.6.2 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire who wish to apply for a primary or lower academy/school in another Local Authority must apply online or complete the hard copy of the CAF.
- 2.6.3 Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire but who wish to apply for a place at a Central Bedfordshire school or academy must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.6.4 **Deferred Entry:** Parents of children offered a place for admission in the reception year are offered a full time place to commence in the September following their child's fourth birthday. However parents may defer the admission of their child until later in the academic year or until their child becomes of statutory school age or request that their child takes up their place part time until they reach statutory school age. A place cannot be deferred beyond statutory school age nor beyond the academic year for which the place was offered. Therefore the following will apply, according to the child's date of birth for deferring entry to the Reception year:

Child born:	Term which place can be deferred until:
1 st September – 31 st December	Spring term (January)
1 st January – 31 st March	Summer term (April)
1 st April – 31 st August	Summer term (April)

2.7. Delayed admission for summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August).

- 2.7.1 Parents/carers can also request that their Summer born child is admitted to Reception in that year rather than to Year 1. However, parents/carers do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group, a decision will be made by the admission authority for the school in consultation with the Headteacher.
- 2.7.2 Parents/carers of Summer born children should make their application for a school place on the Common Application Form (CAF) by 15 January if their child will be 4 years old by 31st August of that year. They should make clear on the form that they wish to defer entrance to school for a year. They should apply for both entrance to their child's normal age group (Year R) and for entrance out of the year group.
- 2.7.3 In line with the School Admissions Code December 2014 ("the Code"), the Council, as the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, will consider a request on the basis of the individual circumstances of the case and the best interests of the child. To this end, the Council will liaise with the Headteacher and must take account of their professional opinion on the case. The Council will also take account of the parents'/carers' view. A written request, sent together with the CAF should be made by the parents/carers for the attention of the Admissions Manager

and should include the parents'/carer's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional and if applicable, details if the child was born prematurely including whether they would have been in a lower age group had they been born on their due date. Once determined, the decision will be communicated to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

- 2.7.4 For schools which control their own admissions (Foundation, Trust or Voluntary Aided), parents/carers need to make their request in writing, separately from the CAF, directly to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. The request should include such details as are outlined above. The Governing Body, along with the Headteacher, will then consider the request, making their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child in accordance with the Code. For Academies, parents/carers need to make their request in writing directly to the Academy Trust via the Principal. Academies must also follow the Code in making a decision.
- 2.7.5 Where the parents'/carers' request for a school place outside the normal age group is successful, the parents/carers can withdraw their application for a place within the normal age group. They will have to make a fresh application during the admissions round the following year. Where the request for a place outside the normal age group is unsuccessful, they may decide to continue with their application for a place within the normal age group or may withdraw it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.
- 2.7.6 Where a parent has more than one preferred school in their application, the relevant admission authorities will each consider the request and make their decision individually. There is no guarantee that all will come to the same decision.
- 2.7.7 Again at a future application or transfer point the decision to admit a child out of their normal age group rests with the admission authority and there is no guarantee they will come to the same decision as an earlier authority may have.
- 2.7.8 As set out above, if a request is granted, the parent will need to make an application as part of next year's normal admission round and this will be processed within the normal allocation process. A place is never guaranteed at a particular school and in the case of oversubscription, places are offered in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria. In short it would be delaying the application rather than an offer of a place.

2.8 Admission into the normal year of entry into a Middle/Extended secondary Academy/ School (Year 5)

- 2.8.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a lower academy/school in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.
- 2.8.2 Parents of children attending a lower academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.8.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a lower academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for a middle academy/school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and the Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

2.9 Admission of children outside their normal age group

- 2.9.1 Parents who want their child to transfer to the next phase of school out outside of their normal age group must make the request in sufficient time for it to be considered before the application deadline.
- 2.9.2 Where the preference is for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school the request should be made in writing for the attention of the Admissions Manager. The Council will liaise with the Headteacher accordingly and will support their professional opinion on the case. The request should include the parent's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development, including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant and whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group. Once determined the decision will be communicated to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.
- 2.9.3 For own admission schools (Foundation, Trust or Voluntary Aided) parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school who will then consider the request, making their decision on what they determine as in the best interests of the child. For Academies parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the academy trust via the Principal.
- 2.9.4 Requests which have been granted must be followed up by a formal application using the appropriate paper CAF within the admission timetable. The application will be considered within the normal allocation process under the relevant admission criterion.

3. Timetable for admissions into Lower, Primary and Middle academies and schools

Lower/Primary:

- 3.1. In **September 2019**, the Local Authority admissions booklet and the CAF will be available to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must apply to their home Local Authority.
- 3.2. Completed online applications and CAFs are to be submitted to the School Admissions Team by **15 January 2020**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Middle transfer:

- 3.3. In **September 2019** information is sent to parents of all children in Year 4 attending a lower academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.
- 3.4. Completed online applications are to be submitted and hard copies of the CAF are to be returned to the School Admissions Team by **15 January 2020**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Lower, Primary and Middle admissions

- 3.5. By **7 February 2020** all preferences will be logged on the database and the School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust school or voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools are sent to those authorities.
- 3.6. By **6 March 2020** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust or voluntary aided school will consider all applications, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 3.7. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies and schools nominated and:
 - where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference

- 3.8. Between **9 March 2020 and 20 March 2020** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 3.9. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.
- 3.10 On **9 April 2020** all middle academies and schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.
- 3.11. On **16 April 2020** the School Admissions Team will notify parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire of the outcome of their application, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be notified by their home Local Authority.
- 3.12 By **30 April 2020** parents are to notify School Admissions Team of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.
- 3.13 By **30 April 2020** parents who have applied on time and want to change their preference from their original offer need to have submitted a change of preference by this date.

4. Late Applications

- 4.1 The national closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **15 January 2020**. Applications received after this date will be considered late and will be processed after the initial allocation of places.
- 4.2. Late applications received from 16 January until 30 April will be processed as part of the initial late allocation round and will be logged onto the database by **1 May 2020**.
- 4.3. The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school by **1 May 2020**.

- 4.4. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies or schools will be sent to those authorities by **1 May 2020**.
- 4.5. By **8 May 2020** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school will consider all their initial late applications for their academy or school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 4.6. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies or schools nominated and:
 - where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.
- 4.7. Information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 4.8. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.
- 4.9. On **21 May 2020** the School Admissions Team will post letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their Middle School applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.
- 4.10. On **1 June 2020** the School Admissions Team will post letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their Lower and Primary School applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.

- 4.11. Late applications received on or after the 1 May will be processed from **22 May 2020 for Middle school applications** and **1 June 2020 for Lower and Primary school applications.**

5. Waiting Lists

- 5.1. Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference academy or school or at any of their preferred academies or schools are kept on a waiting list maintained by the admission authority to be re-allocated if places become available. Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the academic year for 2020/21** for Community and Voluntary controlled schools. Waiting lists for academies and schools who are their own admission authority (Foundation, Trust and VA) may operate different waiting list arrangements. Allocation will be on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or when their name was added to the list. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol, will take precedence over those on a waiting list.

6. In-year Admissions (applications received on or after 1 September)

- 6.1. An in-year admission is an application made for a child to be admitted outside of the co-ordinated admissions scheme for the normal year of entry or for another year group within an academy/school.
- 6.2. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools as the admission authority for those schools.
- 6.3. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications made for academies and own admission authority schools (Foundation, Trust and Voluntary-Aided schools) who opt-in to the local authority's scheme for in-year admissions.
- 6.4. The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any academy or school within the Local Authority area, which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 academies or schools and to rank their preferences. The form will be available on the Local Authority website as an e-form or can be downloaded or a hard copy can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.
- 6.5. The application will be dealt with by the local authority for those schools which are community or voluntary controlled schools or those academies and own admission authority who have opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme.
- 6.6. Any application received by the School Admissions Team for an academy or own admission authority school who has opted out of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be forwarded to that academy or school to process.

- 6.7. All Academies and own admission authority schools who deal with their own in-year admissions (i.e. opted out of the in-year co-ordination scheme) will be required to determine the child's application and notify the parent and local authority of the outcome.
- 6.8. Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled school or at an academy or own admission authority school which has opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Academies and own admission authority schools who have opted out will have their own waiting list arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.
- 6.9. If all of the preferred academies and schools are full and the pupil lives in Central Bedfordshire, a place will generally be offered at the nearest academy or school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school or academy.
- 6.10. Any place offered is usually expected to be taken up by the child within 4-6 weeks or by the start of the next school term.
- 6.11. Details of the community and voluntary controlled schools and those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted-in to the in-year co-ordination scheme and those who have opted out can be obtained from the School Admissions Team at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

**Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions to:
Lower, Primary and Middle Schools and Academies for academic year 2020/21**

September 2019	Information about the Starting School and Middle Transfer process issued.
15 January 2020	National closing date for receipt of applications.
7 February 2020	By this date details of applications to be sent to academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies and schools sent to those authorities.
6 March 2020	By this date, academies and foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants.
11 March – 20 March 2020	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers.
9 April 2020	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to schools and academies via the School Admissions Module.
16 April 2020	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire on the offer made to their child.
30 April 2020	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if not required.
1 May 2020	Late applications received between 16 January and 30 April 2020 will be logged onto the database by this date.
1 May 2020	The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that school or academy and applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools will be sent to those authorities.
21 May 2020	Notification to be posted to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late Middle School application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
22 May 2020	Late Middle School applications received on or after 1 May will be processed from this date.
1 June 2020	Notification to be posted to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late Lower and Primary School application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
2 June 2020	Late Lower and Primary School applications received on or after 1 May will be processed from this date.

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PROPOSED

CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO: SECONDARY AND UPPER ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all academies and maintained schools in their area. Academies are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme.
- 1.2 A school is here defined as any academy or maintained community, foundation, trust, voluntary-aided or voluntary controlled school in the Central Bedfordshire Council area.
- 1.3 Central Bedfordshire Council, acting as the Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. The admission authority for academies is the academy trust. For foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools, the admission authority is the governing body.
- 1.4 This scheme will apply to all secondary and upper academies and schools in the Central Bedfordshire Council area from September 2020.
- 1.5 Any reference to Central Bedfordshire is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.
- 1.6 Central Bedfordshire Council uses the equal preference system to process admission applications, as outlined below:
 - 1.6.1 Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the admissions criteria. At this stage the Council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 120 places and there are 150 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

1.6.2 Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school or academy the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference academy or school available for another pupil.

Section 2

The Scheme

- 2.1. This scheme is for admissions in the normal year of entry for:
 - a) Secondary Academies and Schools
 - b) Upper Academies and Schools
- 2.2. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) available for parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire to apply online or by completing a hard copy application form.
- 2.3. The CAF will be used for the purposes of admitting children into the first year of a:
 - Secondary academy/school (Year 7), or
 - Upper academy/school (Year 9), or
- 2.4. The CAF will enable parents/carers to:
 - express a preference for up to 3 academies/schools
 - rank their preferences
 - give reasons for their preferences
- 2.5. Information will be provided on the admissions process in the form of the admissions booklet and will contain information on:
 - a) the academies and schools in Central Bedfordshire
 - b) dates of open evenings (where applicable)
 - c) published admission numbers and admissions criteria
 - d) how to complete an application
 - e) how places are allocated
 - f) timetable for the application and allocation process
 - g) school transport
 - h) who to contact for advice

2.6. Admission into the normal year of entry into a Secondary academy/school (Year 7)

- 2.6.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a primary academy/school, in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.
- 2.6.2 Parents of children attending a primary academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.6.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a primary academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for a secondary academy or school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

2.7. Admission into the normal year of entry into an Upper academy/ school (Year 9)

- 2.7.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a middle academy/school, in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.
- 2.7.2 Parents of children attending a middle academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.7.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a middle academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for an upper academy or school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

2.8. Admission of children outside their normal age group

- 2.9.1 Parents who want their child to transfer to the next phase of school out outside of their normal age group must make the request in sufficient time for it to be considered before the application deadline.
- 2.9.2 Where the preference is for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school the request should be made in writing for the attention of the Admissions Manager. The Council will liaise with the Headteacher accordingly and will support their professional opinion on the case. The request should include the parent's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development, including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant and whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group. Once determined the

decision will be communicated to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

- 2.9.3 For own admission schools (Foundation, Trust or Voluntary Aided) parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school who will then consider the request, making their decision on what they determine as in the best interests of the child. For Academies parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the academy trust via the Principal.
- 2.9.4 Requests which have been granted must be followed up by a formal application using the appropriate paper CAF within the admission timetable. The application will be considered within the normal allocation process under the relevant admission criterion.

3. Timetable for admissions into Secondary and Upper academies and schools

Secondary:

- 3.1. In **September 2019**, information is sent to parents of all children in Year 6 attending a primary academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.
- 3.2. Completed online applications and hard copies of the CAF are to be submitted to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2019**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Upper:

- 3.3. In **September 2019** information is sent to parents of all children in Year 8 attending a middle academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.
- 3.4. Completed online applications are to be submitted and hard copies of the CAF are to be returned to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2019**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Secondary and Upper transfer admissions

- 3.5.1 By **29 November 2019** all preferences will be logged on the database and the School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust school or voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools are sent to those

authorities.

- 3.5.2 By **6 January 2020** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust or voluntary aided school will consider all applications, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 3.6 The School Admissions Team will match the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies or schools nominated.
- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.
- 3.7 Between **22 January 2020 and 31 January 2020** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 3.8 Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.
- 3.9 On **26 February 2020** all Secondary and Upper academies and schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.
- 3.10 On **2 March 2020** the School Admissions Team will notify parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire of the outcome of their application, including those who have applied for a secondary or upper academy/ school place. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be notified by their home Local Authority.
- 3.11 By **16 March 2020** parents are to notify the School Admissions Team of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.

- 3.12 By **16 March 2020** parents who have applied on time and want to change their preference from their original offer need to have submitted a change of preference by this date.

4. Late Applications

- 4.1 The national closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **31 October 2019**. Applications received after this date will be considered late and will be processed after the initial allocation of places.
- 4.2. Late applications received from 31 October until 16 March will be processed as part of the initial late allocation round and will be logged onto the database by **19 March 2020**.
- 4.3. The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school by **19 March 2020**.
- 4.4. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools will also be sent to those authorities by **20 March 2020**.
- 4.5. By **27 March 2020** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school will consider all their initial late applications for their academy or school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 4.6. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other schools or academies nominated and:
- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference
- 4.7. Information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 4.8. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the

academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.

- 4.9. On **20 April 2020** the School Admissions Team will post letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.
- 4.10. Late applications received on or after the 17 March will be processed from **21 April 2020**.

5. Waiting Lists

- 5.1. Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference academy or school or at any of their preferred academies or schools are kept on a waiting list maintained by the admission authority to be re-allocated if places become available. Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the academic year for 2020/21** for Community and Voluntary controlled schools. Waiting lists for academies, foundation, trust and Voluntary aided schools may operate different waiting list arrangements. Allocation will be on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

6. In-year Admissions (applications received on or after 1 September)

- 6.1. An in-year admission is an application made for a child to be admitted outside of the co-ordinated admissions scheme for the normal year of entry or for another year group within an academy/school.
- 6.2. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools as the admission authority for those schools.
- 6.3. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications made for academies and own admission authority schools (foundation, trust and voluntary aided) who opt-in to the local authority's scheme for in-year admissions.
- 6.4. The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any academy or school within the Local Authority area, which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 academies or schools and to rank their preferences. The form will

be available on the Local Authority website as an e-form or can be downloaded or a hard copy can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

- 6.5. The application will be dealt with by the local authority for those schools which are community or voluntary controlled schools or those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme.
- 6.6. Any application received by the School Admissions Team for an academy or own admission authority school who has opted out of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be forwarded to them to process.
- 6.7. All academies and own admission authority schools who deal with their own in-year admissions (i.e. opted out of the in-year co-ordination scheme) will be required to determine the child's application and notify the parent and local authority of the outcome.
- 6.8. Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled school or at an academy or own admission authority school who has opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Academies and own admission authority schools who have opted out will have their own waiting list arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.
- 6.9. If all of the preferred academies and schools are full and the pupil lives in Central Bedfordshire, a place will generally be offered at the nearest academy or school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school or academy.
- 6.10. Any place offered is usually expected to be taken up by the child within 4-6 weeks or by the start of the next school term.
- 6.11. Details of the community and voluntary controlled schools and those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted-in to the in-year co-ordination scheme and those who have opted out can be obtained from the School Admissions Team at:
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

**Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions to:
Secondary and Upper Academies and Schools for academic year 2020/21**

September 2019	Information about the admission process issued.
31 October 2019	National closing date for receipt of applications.
29 November 2019	By this date details of applications to be sent to academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools. Applications for places in other Local Authority schools and academies sent to those authorities.
6 January 2020	By this date academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants.
22 January – 31 January 2020	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers.
26 February 2020	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to academies and schools via the School Admissions Module.
2 March 2020	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire on the offer made to their child.
16 March 2020	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if not required.
19 March 2020	Late applications received between 1 November 2019 and 16 March 2020 will be logged onto the database by this date.
20 March 2020	The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that school or academy. Applications for places in other Local Authority schools / academies will be sent to those authorities.
27 March 2020	By this date academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants in the initial late allocation round.
20 April 2020	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
21 April 2020	Late applications received on or after 17 March will be processed from this date.

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Confirmation of religious affiliation – Church of England Schools

Please complete this form if you are applying for the any of the following schools
on religious/faith grounds:

Manshead CE Academy, Edward Peake CofE Middle, Henlow CofE Academy, Holywell School, Ashton St. Peter's VA Primary, Clifton All Saints Academy, Dunton VC Lower, John Donne Primary, Meppershall CofE Academy, Northill VA Lower, Pulford VA Lower, St. Andrew's VC Lower (both East and West), St. Leonard's VA Lower, St. Mary's CofE Academy, St. Mary's VA Lower (Clophill), Sutton VA Lower, Thomas Whitehead CE Academy, Wrestlingworth VC Lower

To be completed by the parent/carer:

Child's surname _____ Child's name _____

Date of birth ___/___/___

Address _____

School preferences (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

To be completed by Priest, Minister or Faith Leader:

I can confirm that (name(s) of parent/carer) _____

Is/are a member/practising member of the following congregation/place of worship and meets the criteria for admission to _____ (name of school/s)

Name of priest/minister/faith leader _____

Name of congregation/place of worship _____

Christian denomination or religious faith _____

Signature of priest/minister/faith leader _____

Date _____

Return this completed form to the School Admissions Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable LU6 1LF or email it to: admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Confirmation of religious affiliation – Catholic Schools

Please complete this form if you are applying for the any of the following schools **on religious/faith grounds**:

St. Mary's Catholic Primary (Caddington), St. Vincent's Catholic Primary

If your application for a place at the above Catholic primary schools is on religious grounds because your child has been baptised or enrolled in a catechumenate programme you must provide a copy of their baptismal certificate or your priest must confirm enrolment in the programme.

To be completed by the parent/carer:

Child's surname _____ Child's name _____

Date of birth ___/___/___

Address _____

School preferences (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

I have attached a copy of my child's baptismal certification: Yes No

To be completed by Priest, Minister or Faith Leader:

I can confirm that (name(s) of parent/carer) _____

The family of this child is a practising Catholic family

The child is not baptised but is enrolled in a catechumenate programme

I support this application

Name of priest/minister/faith leader _____

Name of congregation/place of worship _____

Christian denomination or religious faith _____

Signature of priest/minister/faith leader _____

Date _____

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