

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	<b>TO:</b>	Local Admissions Forum										
	<b>DATE:</b>	13 June 2024										
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Sarah Whitby <a href="mailto:Sarah.whitby@rotherham.gov.uk">Sarah.whitby@rotherham.gov.uk</a>										
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Fair Access Protocol review										
<b>1. Background</b>												
1.1	<p>Fair Access Protocols exist to ensure that vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty securing a school place in-year, are allocated a place as quickly as possible. Every local authority must have a Fair Access Protocol in place. Once it is agreed with the majority of schools in its area, all admission authorities must participate in it. The <a href="#">School Admissions Code 2021</a> and associated non-statutory guidance <a href="#">Fair Access Protocols, August 2021</a>, set out the duties of the Local Authority and Admissions Authorities in respect of Fair Access.</p>											
1.2	<p><a href="#">Rotherham's Fair Access Protocol</a> was revised and agreed in September 2021. Following agreement from this forum, a period of consultation has now taken place and a proposed Protocol is presented back to this meeting for ratification.</p>											
<b>2. Key Issues</b>												
2.1	<p>The key considerations during the consultation and revision of the Protocol were:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">PMG</td> <td>For PMG to become a local forum focussed on finding solutions for young people who are at risk of exclusion or require a fresh start in a new school via a Managed Move. For this to happen effectively it is necessary to consider and re-establish the geographical boundaries of the PMG groups to ensure they can be highly effective and mutually supportive.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FAP</td> <td>For there to be a single point of decision making for children identified as requiring placement through FAP. This will minimise time out of education for children requiring a school place and will make more effective use of time and resource.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Placement requests</td> <td>For all placements requests to be supported by relevant information, with a common referral form for placement led by the needs of young people and schools.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transparency of decision making</td> <td>To consider representation at FAP as a single point of decision making. Consultation with schools will determine a preferred model from the LA as a decision maker, maintaining strategic FAP as it currently operates, moving to a model where all schools have representation or one where each trust, or school where they are not part of a MAT, is represented.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Equitable decision making</td> <td>It is proposed that the Protocol is supported by robust data available at each decision point from the LA, including FAP allocations, numbers of children on roll and number of In Year admissions. This is available as schools communicate this information to RMBC already via electronic transfer.</td> </tr> </table>		PMG	For PMG to become a local forum focussed on finding solutions for young people who are at risk of exclusion or require a fresh start in a new school via a Managed Move. For this to happen effectively it is necessary to consider and re-establish the geographical boundaries of the PMG groups to ensure they can be highly effective and mutually supportive.	FAP	For there to be a single point of decision making for children identified as requiring placement through FAP. This will minimise time out of education for children requiring a school place and will make more effective use of time and resource.	Placement requests	For all placements requests to be supported by relevant information, with a common referral form for placement led by the needs of young people and schools.	Transparency of decision making	To consider representation at FAP as a single point of decision making. Consultation with schools will determine a preferred model from the LA as a decision maker, maintaining strategic FAP as it currently operates, moving to a model where all schools have representation or one where each trust, or school where they are not part of a MAT, is represented.	Equitable decision making	It is proposed that the Protocol is supported by robust data available at each decision point from the LA, including FAP allocations, numbers of children on roll and number of In Year admissions. This is available as schools communicate this information to RMBC already via electronic transfer.
PMG	For PMG to become a local forum focussed on finding solutions for young people who are at risk of exclusion or require a fresh start in a new school via a Managed Move. For this to happen effectively it is necessary to consider and re-establish the geographical boundaries of the PMG groups to ensure they can be highly effective and mutually supportive.											
FAP	For there to be a single point of decision making for children identified as requiring placement through FAP. This will minimise time out of education for children requiring a school place and will make more effective use of time and resource.											
Placement requests	For all placements requests to be supported by relevant information, with a common referral form for placement led by the needs of young people and schools.											
Transparency of decision making	To consider representation at FAP as a single point of decision making. Consultation with schools will determine a preferred model from the LA as a decision maker, maintaining strategic FAP as it currently operates, moving to a model where all schools have representation or one where each trust, or school where they are not part of a MAT, is represented.											
Equitable decision making	It is proposed that the Protocol is supported by robust data available at each decision point from the LA, including FAP allocations, numbers of children on roll and number of In Year admissions. This is available as schools communicate this information to RMBC already via electronic transfer.											

Interface with the appeals process	For the Protocol to be reviewed in line with DfE guidance to ensure that, following an unsuccessful application, children are referred to FAP and a school place identified, without any expectation that parents make further applications or exercise their right of appeal (although they maintain a right to do so should they wish).
Timeliness	Move to a cycle of 3 weekly meetings in order that the requirement to identify a school place within 20 days for all children referred to FAP is met.

**2.2**

Feedback from the formal consultation with school leaders is attached as **Appendix 1**. There were no schools expressing disagreement with the proposals. No changes are therefore proposed to the main Protocol that was consulted upon, but appendices have been added taking on board comments received. These are:

1. Process and responsibilities for children requiring reintegration from the PRU;
2. Process for schools to follow up allocations and report children who do not arrive as CME.

**3. Key Actions and Timelines**

**3.1**

End February 2024	Conversations held with regional neighbours to understand how best the appeals/ FAP interface can be supported in the Rotherham context
w/b 18 March 2024	Period of informal consultation with school leaders via a series of briefings
27 March- 19 April 2024	Pre consultation questionnaire to Secondary heads to gather further views and clarity regarding direction of travel
15 April-19 May 2024	Formal period of consultation with school leaders on a revised FAP for Primary
29 April- 24 May 2024	Formal period of consultation with school leaders on a revised FAP for Secondary
13 June 2024	Final agreement and ratification from LAF
July 2024	Planning period with school leaders to make any changes to existing PMG/ FAP membership
September 2024	New FAP is in operation

**4. Recommendations**

**4.1**

That LAF agree to the revised Fair Access Protocol for Primary and Secondary, attached as **Appendix 2 and 3**, effective from September 2024