

To: Councillor James (Chair)  
Councillors R Williams, David Absolom,  
Ballsdon, Carnell, Ennis, Hoskin, Mpfu-  
Coles, O'Connell, Pearce, Robinson,  
DP Singh, Sokale, Terry and White

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 2432  
e-mail: jemma.durkan@reading.gov.uk

11 January 2022

Your contact is: **Jemma Durkan - Committee Services**

**NOTICE OF MEETING - ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE 19 JANUARY 2022**

A meeting of the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee will be held on Wednesday, 19 January 2022 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chambers, Civic Offices, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

	<b><u>WARDS AFFECTED</u></b>	<b><u>Page No</u></b>
<b>1. READING ADVICE NETWORK - PRESENTATION</b>		
The Committee will receive a short presentation on the work undertaken by the Reading Advice Network.		
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>		
Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration.		
<b>3. MINUTES</b>		<b>5 - 12</b>
<b>4. PETITIONS</b>		
Petitions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been received by Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.		
<b>5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS</b>		

*CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.*

Questions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been submitted in writing and received by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.

**6. DECISION BOOK REFERENCES**

To consider any requests received by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to Standing Order 42, for consideration of matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been the subject of Decision Book reports.

**7. CCG REVIEW OF SAME DAY HEALTHCARE**

**BOROUGH WIDE**

The Committee will receive a verbal update from Katie Summers, NHS Berkshire West CCG on the review of same day healthcare and associated issues.

**8. ONE READING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP - EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2021-2023**

**BOROUGH WIDE 13 - 24**

A report providing an update on the Early Help Strategy and progress against action plans in the three priority areas.

**9. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS REPORT**

**BOROUGH WIDE 25 - 44**

A report providing the Committee with an overview of complaints, compliments, SARs activity and performance for Children's Social Care for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

**10. ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS REPORT**

**BOROUGH WIDE 45 - 56**

A report providing an overview of complaints, compliments activity and performance for Adult Social Care for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2021.

**11. SUMMARY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S WHITE PAPER ON ADULT SOCIAL CARE REFORM**

**BOROUGH WIDE 57 - 62**

A report outlining the new planned reforms for Adult Social Care in England, initially set out by the Government White Paper in December 2021; People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform.

**12. HOARDING PILOT PROJECT UPDATE FROM SAFEGUARDING TEAM - PRESENTATION**

**BOROUGH WIDE**

A presentation providing an update on the hoarding pilot project undertaken by the safeguarding team.

**13. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY**

**BOROUGH WIDE 63 - 108**

A report inviting the Committee to determine:

- The admissions arrangements for Community Primary Schools in Reading for the school year 2023/24.
- The coordinated scheme for primary and junior schools for the 2023/24 school year.
- The coordinated scheme for secondary schools for the 2023/24 school year.
- The Relevant Area 2023.
- Maps of the Primary catchment areas.

### WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note that this meeting may be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during a webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Members of the public seated in the public gallery will not ordinarily be filmed by the automated camera system. However, please be aware that by moving forward of the pillar, or in the unlikely event of a technical malfunction or other unforeseen circumstances, your image may be captured. **Therefore, by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.**

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

# Agenda Item 3

## ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021

**Present:** Councillors James (Chair), Ballsdon, Carnell, Ennis, Mpofo-Coles, O'Connell, Pearce, Robinson, D Singh, Sokale, Terry and R Williams.

**Apologies:** Councillors David Absolom and Hoskin.

(Councillor White was unable to attend in person, so attended and contributed remotely via Microsoft Teams, but did not vote on any of the items, in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972)

### 11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ballsdon declared a personal interest in item 16 on the basis that she was Chair of Governors at the Avenue School.

Councillor Ennis declared a personal interest in item 20 on the basis that his mother-in-law was receiving support from the Council's Adult Social Care Service.

### 12. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 13. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meeting were submitted:

- Health and Wellbeing Board - 19 March and 16 July 2021

### 14. READING YOUTH COUNCIL

The Executive Director of Children's Services - Education, Early Help and Social Care, Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC), submitted a report providing an update on how the Youth Council operated in Reading, an overview of how the Youth Council was run and the various roles and responsibilities of different positions within the Youth Council. A copy of the Reading Youth Council Constitution 2020-2023 was appended to the report.

The report explained that the Youth Council were seeking endorsement to promote further the Youth Council across the Borough. The Youth Council Constitution would inform future recruitment, to ensure a wide representation of young people. The Constitution was a three year working document and future reviews would coincide with the planned changes of leadership in the Youth Council.

The Deputy Chair and a member of the Youth Council were present at the meeting answered questions and addressed the Committee. They explained that the work of the Youth Council had been reduced due to the pandemic and although meetings had taken place online engagement with members had been a struggle. Holding online meetings had impacted on membership as virtual meetings were not popular and a campaign was underway to recruit new members. The application process would recommence in February 2022. Three campaigns were being worked on: plastic waste and the environment, mental

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021**

health and transforming education. A campaign on knife crime had taken place previously and a report had been published with Thames Valley Police.

The Chair thanked the members of the Youth Council for attending the meeting and told them that they would be welcome at future meetings of the Committee and any other Council meetings.

**Resolved - That the updated Youth Council Constitution and planned recruitment campaigns across Reading schools be endorsed.**

**15. PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS INTO EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

The Executive Director of Children's Services - Education, Early Help and Social Care, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report on services that were being provided by Leaving Care, the Virtual School and the Elevate Team within Brighter Futures for Children to children looked after and care leavers and provided an overview of the current picture of children looked after and care leavers aged 16 to 25 years old who had engaged in positive outcomes in education, employment and training (EET). A copy of the report by Brighter Futures for Children was appended to the report.

The report explained that there had been much focus on providing more robust and targeted support to young people in the local authority's care to prevent them becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or to support them to stop being NEET. The aim was to offer a range of training opportunities that combined qualifications with work experience. Communication and support were being expanded so that young people knew about the options and choices outside of college or school to enable them to achieve qualifications and experiences. Communication and local opportunities were being promoted to encourage and enable social workers, leaving care advisers, placement providers and foster carers, support staff to promote actively local provision to young people. Learning and Training providers needed to be accountable in ensuring that good quality provision was delivered to young people, ensuring that they successfully achieved sustained, positive outcomes.

There was also a growing number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who were in need of support with their career planning and further help to fast track them onto ESOL programmes. Work was being carried out with further education providers and other employability programmes to encourage them to support these young people's future career aspirations and progression.

Young people sometimes moved placements, so it was important that there was a more advanced EET plan to support them moving placements and still need transition support to their new EET placement. There had also been a positive and continued take-up of care leavers going to university and the future focus was to increase these numbers. To support this, programmes such as 'Study Higher', a partnership of higher education institutions and further education colleges would be offered alongside university mentoring programmes as well as raising awareness and targeting secondary school students and promoting university open days and alternative Post 16 provision.

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021**

The report explained that another key focus was identifying the reasons for the drop-out rates from Further Education. A Post 16 networking group was being started to support these young people which would bring together a network of partners to work together to offer opportunities to young people. The aim was to have a pan Reading approach to reduce NEET numbers, prevent young people from falling into NEET and promote alternative and vocational pathways to employment or training.

Re-engagement opportunities were promoted to young people who were not ready to access work or formal training due to a history of illness, mental health issues, complex Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) needs and substance misuse and unstable/unsupportive living circumstances. LAS Mindset had been commissioned to offer mentoring and one to one personal gym training and Starting Point matched mentors who focused on young people's confidence and self-esteem offering them social and skills building sessions. Social Workers could also make referrals to the Virtual School Emotional Health and Wellbeing Triage Support Group.

Having a criminal record was a significant barrier and limited access to EET opportunities and Elevate had a careers coach based at the Youth Offending Service (YOS) who worked with YOS officers to engage young people, children looked after and care leavers into EET. Pregnancy/parental responsibility for most young people meant that they were not available for work by their own choice or circumstances, Leaving Care advisors referred young parents who were career planning or ready to work into the Elevate service for advice and support.

Children looked after and care leaver who had been placed out of the Borough did not have consistent support as many other local authorities had very limited NEET services which often excluded care leavers. Elevate researched the local provision for young people who needed more 'hands on support' and aimed to continue to offer a virtual information and guidance session to each young person. Work had also started with Resume Foundation whose job coaches could support young people virtually into EET.

Clare Martin, Post 16 Team Manager, Elevate, attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the participation of Children Looked After and Care Leavers into Education, Employment and Training. The presentation explained that EET numbers were increasing but, as at 30 June 2021 Care Leaver data had shown that there was 100% engagement in EET and 0% NEET or not known. Data for children looked after had shown that 82.9% were engaged in EET, 17.1% were registered as NEET (six young people), and 0% were not known. Performance for EET was higher both nationally and in the south east but for NEET was lower both nationally and in the south east. With regard to apprenticeships, Clare explained that they were growing and that one of the areas that was being investigated was supported apprenticeships and not starting them at level 2 but at a lower level.

**Resolved - That having considered what more the Council might do to provide opportunities for the young people of Reading in relation to training and work, the report be noted.**

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021**

**16. REVIEW OF THE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND**

Further to Minute 20 of the 20 January 2021 meeting and Minute 8 of the previous meeting, the Executive Director of Children's Services - Education, Early Help and Social Care, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report on the admission arrangements for children and young people with SEND.

The report stated that the impact of the revised Holy Brook policy was that there was a greater understanding of processes and communication between BFfC and the school and with other local authorities who requested places at the school. A Senior Case Officer now attended every admissions panel and co-administrated this with the school.

The Avenue School admissions process had not been revised as it was an Academy. Communication between the SEND Team and the school was very frequent and open, the admissions arrangements were transparent and not a cause for concern.

Cranbury Alternative Provision and Hamilton Special School admissions policies had not been reviewed as they were academies. However, the SEND Team Manager had reviewed the procedures and communications regarding the consultation process for admissions to both schools. The impact of this was that the SEND Team were receiving more timely responses to consultations and applications.

The Service Level Agreements for all Resourced Bases, specialist units attached to a mainstream school, were being reviewed and the new admissions process had been written and agreed for Resourced Bases. Although not a formal document, it made the consultation and admission process clear and headteachers had said that it was very helpful to have a step by step guide. Admissions Panels for Resourced Bases were held every six weeks, each new term, and were attended by headteachers and chaired by the SEND Team Manager.

The report explained that the building of the Oak Tree School in Wokingham, a project led by Wokingham Borough Council and the DfE, and for which the Council and BFfC were key stakeholders, had been delayed, having been due to open in September 2022. On-going conversations were being had by all parties around a revised date which was dependent on the requirement, or not, to re-procure the contractor building the school. If procurement was not necessary, the school could be open from September 2023, although the DfE would not commit to this date, and if it was necessary to re-procure the contractor then this would delay the opening beyond 2023. Contingency plans were being worked on particularly for the cohort of children who were to be placed at the school from September 2022.

A new SEND consultation letter had been drafted that explained the purpose of consultations to schools, to seek an indicative view as to whether the school could meet the child's needs and to inform SEND Panel decision making about applications and placements. This had resolved the issue of schools inviting parents to meetings and visits prematurely and raising expectations before a placement had been agreed in principle by the SEND EHC Panel. Finally, SLAs would be reviewed by the BFfC Commissioning Team in conjunction with the SEND Team to ensure parity and compliance with commissioning policy.

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021**

**Resolved - That the progress following a review of SEND admissions policies and arrangements be noted.**

(Councillor Ballsdon declared a personal interest in the above item. Nature of interest, Councillor Ballsdon was the Chair of Governors at the Avenue School)

**17. SEND STRATEGY AND INSPECTION UPDATE**

The Executive Director of Children's Services - Education, Early Help and Social Care, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report providing a brief update on the SEND Strategy and presenting a copy of the letter from Ofsted following a recent inspection. A copy of the SEND Strategy was attached to the report at Appendix 1, a copy of the Inspection Letter from Ofsted was attached at Appendix 2 and a copy of the Reading Area SEND Inspection Presentation was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The report explained that there had been considerable work carried out on developing the next version of the SEND Strategy which now needed to be finalised and agreed for 2022-2027. The recommendations of the local area inspection that had taken place in June 2021 had been included in the updated Strategy. Two more strands had been added to the five existing ones in response to the inspection so there were now seven focused areas of work in the next version of the strategy, as follows:

- Strand 1: Improving communication;
- Strand 2: Early Intervention through to specialist provision;
- Strand 3: Consistent approaches to emotional wellbeing;
- Strand 4: Preparing for adulthood;
- Strand 5: Support for families/short breaks;
- Strand 6: Capital and school places;
- Strand 7: Revenue and funding.

The joint local area inspection of SEND had been conducted by Ofsted and the CQC in June 2021 and had concluded that arrangements were sufficiently robust and effective so that no actions of written statement were required. There had been a very positive response to the inspection outcome and findings from stakeholders and whilst being confident about what had been achieved BFfC were continuing to focus on key areas that needed to be strengthened. The actions had been outlined under the strands and would be overseen through the SEND Strategy Group.

In response to a question about problems getting children and young people seen by CAMHS Deborah Glassbrook, Executive Director of Children's Services - Education, Early Help and Social Care, Brighter Futures for Children, told the Committee that the local area were very mindful of the fact that it was important for children and young people to be assessed as soon as possible and this had been identified as an issue with the CCG who had been allocated over £1m to help in this area.

**Resolved - That the report be noted.**

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021**

**18. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report which would form the Council's submission to the Berkshire West Annual Report 2020/21 and would be incorporated with partners contributions with the approved action plan. The Council's Safeguarding Performance Data was attached to the report in Appendix A and the Council's Safeguarding Achievements were set out in Appendix B.

The report explained that the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) had to lead adult safeguarding arrangements across its authority and oversee and coordinate the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of its member and partner agencies. The overarching purpose of a SAB was to safeguard adults with health and social care needs and it did this by assuring itself that local safeguarding arrangements were in place, as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance. The Berkshire West Annual Report 2020/21, when it was approved by the SAB, would detail what it aimed to achieve on behalf of the residents of Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham during 2020/21. This was both as a partnership and through the work of its participating partners. It provided a picture of who was safeguarded across the area, in what circumstances and why and outlined the role and values of the SAB, its ongoing work and future priorities.

A summary of the Council's Safeguarding Performance Data was set out in the report and included the following:

- In 2020/21 31% of safeguarding concerns (493) had led to a section 42 enquiry, a reduction compared to 2019/20 and comparable with authorities across West Berkshire;
- In 2020/21 56% (244) of section 42 enquiries that had been reported had related to older people over 65 years old;
- More women were subject to a safeguarding enquiry than men, as in previous years, but the gap had narrowed to only 4%;
- 80% of section 42 enquiries were for individual whose ethnicity was White. There had been an increase to 20% in section 42 enquiries for individuals whose ethnicity was Mixed, Asian, Black or other. This continued to be the focus of work for all partners in view of the demographic profile of Reading;
- As in previous years the most common type of abuse for concluded section 42 enquiries were for Neglect and Acts of Omission. This was followed by Financial or Material abuse, Physical abuse and Psychological abuse;
- As in previous years the most common locations where the alleged abuse took place were a person's own home and a care home.

The report stated that a major achievement for Adult Social care had been to secure funding of £58,030 from the Social Impact Voluntary and Community Grant to develop a hoarding pathway. The grant would be used to develop a multi-agency hoarding and self-neglect procedure and pathway. The reason for applying for the grant had been based on activity data that had been collected during the Covid-19 pandemic that had identified individuals who needed help to address their hoarding and self-neglect were reported when their situation had often become acute. It was expected that the funding for the project would be targeted at:

## ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021

- Promoting independence and support of a group of people who had often refused support and were hard to engage;
- Increase access to services to support mental wellbeing, reduce social isolation and stigma;
- Increase access to community and health services;
- Prevent crisis and hospital admissions through preventative work;
- Enabling people to stay healthy and active in their community and at home.

Finally, the report set out the aspirations for 2021/22 which would be as follows:

- To continue to seek assurance that all agencies were clear about their obligations to deliver adult safeguarding activity which prevented abuse, crime, neglect, self-neglect and exploitation;
- To continue to seek assurance that agency obligations were supported by clear processes which directly supported the West Berkshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policy and Procedures as a model of good practice;
- Work would be carried out with each other and collaboratively to maximise multi-agency practice to reduce risk and improve lives;
- Public awareness would be raised about and for adults at risk, what could be done to help, how communities could raise concerns and how the work of the Board was vital for planning, assurance, oversight, transparency and accountability;
- Ensure that the voices of adults at risk were sought, heard. Listened to and acted upon and that engagement took place with local communities ensuring the service was transparent about what it was saying it was going to do and how it would be measured.

The Committee discussed the report and asked that an update report on the work that had been carried out in respect of hoarding be submitted to the summer 2022 meeting.

With regard to providing support for individuals whose ethnicity was Mixed, Asian, Black or other, Seona Douglas, Executive Director of Social Care and Health, explained that a new member of staff had been employed recently and was carrying out a review of safeguarding and this issue including, the issue around language and what was available on the Council's website. Work had also been carried out with the voluntary sector to reach these communities.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the report be noted as the Council's contribution to the Berkshire West Safeguarding Board Annual Report
- (2) That an update report on the work that had been carried out in respect of hoarding be submitted to the summer 2022 meeting.

### 19. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 20 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021**

**20. EXTRA CARE SHELTERED HOUSING - CARE AND SUPPORT TENDER**

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report that explored and made recommendations regarding the Council's options for commissioning Extra Care support upon the expiry of a number of contracts.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That procurement be progressed to procure two Extra Care support contracts (for 141 units and 229 units respectively) to go live on 1 June 2022, with a maximum total cost as set out in the report, each contract to be for the term of 3 years with the option to extend for up to a further 3 years;**
- (2) That the additional maximum spend across the three years be noted;**
- (3) That the Executive Director Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care, be granted delegated authority to enter into a contract with the two successful tenderer(s) for the support/care services to be provided, at the stage of contract award (close of Q4 2021/2022) at an hourly rate range as set out in paragraph 10.2 of the report, which would be permitted for bidders in year one of the contract to ensure that the contract remained within budget (accounting for inflation) and a higher weighting would be given to price as opposed to quality to ensure that rates were competitive within this range;**
- (4) That the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria for Extra Care to a wider range of service users, which could include younger adults and people with mental health needs and/or a learning disability in consultation with the relevant Housing Provider be approved.**

(Councillor Ennis declared a personal interest in the above item. Nature of interest, Councillor Ennis's mother-in-law was receiving support from the Council's Adult Social Care Service)

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.11 pm).

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT BY DEBORAH GLASSBROOK**

<b>TO:</b>	<b>Adult Social Care, Children’s Service and Education Committee</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>19 January 2022</b>		
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>One Reading Early Help Strategy Update</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>Cllr Liz Terry</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>Children’s Services</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>Brighter Futures for Children</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Vicky Rhodes</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>Director of Early Help and Prevention</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b>vicky.rhodes@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</b>

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the One Reading Children and Young People’s (CYP) Partnership Early Help Strategy 2021-2023 and progress against the actions plans in the three priority areas of Under 5s, Adolescence and Consistent Approaches to Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health.
- 1.2 The Under 5s workstream will be the Reading delivery group for Priority 3 of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2030. The action plan has been revised to incorporate needs identified in the strategy and a draft is being considered by stakeholders. The emerging impact of children born during the pandemic is a concern. Progress has been made in relation to the number of 2 years old accessing nursery provision and first-time parents accessing early help support. Speech, language and communication is a Reading priority to ensure children are ready for school and achieve early good levels of development.
- 1.3 A key focus of the adolescence workstream has been to establish the Young People and Extra Familial Harm Strategy. This included a data review and a series of multi-agency workshops to establish the key priorities. The draft strategy has been shared and signed off by key strategic groups. Actions plans and leads are being established.
- 1.4 The Consistent Approaches to Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health workstream has prioritised embedding trauma informed and restorative approaches across the workforce. A free online training package and workforce development network have been established to ensure consistent baseline of knowledge and understanding. The action plan has been aligned with key Berkshire West and Reading strategic groups and plans.
- 1.5 Wider updates include the announcement of a national Family Hub programme focused on early help, continuation of the Supporting Families programme and establishing Partnership Outreach Workers to support early help arrangements within the wider partnership and Hospital Early Help Worker in partnership with Royal Berkshire Hospital.

## **2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

**2.1 For members of the ACE committee to receive the update on the One Reading CYP Partnership Early Help Strategy; progress made against priority areas; challenges and new opportunities.**

## **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

3.1 The early help strategy sits within the context of the national HM Government Statutory Guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018) which sets out guidance for inter-agency working to safeguard to promote the welfare of children, including for children and families who would benefit from early help.

## **4. THE PROPOSAL**

4.1 Not applicable as report is for update and no decision is required.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

5.1 The purpose of this section is to ensure that proposals contained in reports support the Council's vision and Corporate Plan priorities:

Reading Borough Council's vision is:

*To help Reading realise its potential - and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.*

5.2 This Early Help Strategy will contribute to Council's Corporate Plan theme of Thriving Communities including tackling inequality, building relationships and strengthening the capacity and resilience of the voluntary and community sector and prioritises early help for children and families to reduce vulnerabilities.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no environmental or climate implications as the purpose of the report is for update and no decision is required.

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

7.1 Local representatives and stakeholders are represented on the One Reading CYP Board and its associated workstreams. Local representatives were included in the consultation workshops to identify priorities and shape the Extra Familial Risk & Harm Strategy.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed as the purpose of the report is for update and no decision is required.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Not applicable as no decision required.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Not applicable as no decision required.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Not applicable.



# One Reading Children & Young People's Partnership

## Early Help Strategy 2021 – 2023 Update

Anna Batty and Kirsten Carr

# Under 5s - Updates

- Delivery group for Berkshire West Health & Wellbeing Strategy Priority 3
- Development of partnership Under 5s strategy
- Dingley's Promise SEND workforce development programme
- National changes to Foundation Stage assessment
- Impact of Covid

## Priority One: Good level of development for 2yr olds

Key Actions	Progress against actions	Success measures and impact to date
Increase number of 2yr olds accessing nursery place	<p>Parent Champion Scheme established (Partnership with CORAM)</p> <p>Links with JCP established.</p> <p>Parent leaflet translated into 11 most commonly used languages in Reading.</p>	<p>Term on term increase in take up since Spring 2021.</p> <p>Autumn Term 74%</p>

## Priority Two : Good level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage

<p>Establish a multi-agency speech, language and communication pathway for earlier identification and lower level intervention.</p>	<p>Multi-agency working group established.</p> <p>Revised Parent information drafted.</p> <p>Practitioner network established.</p>	<p>25 Early Years settings participating in network.</p>
---	--	--

## Priority Three: Reduction in non-accidental injuries suffered by unborn and new born babies

<p>Reduce number of non-accidental injuries suffered by unborn and new born babies</p>	<p>Reviewed Multi-Agency Disciplinary Team (Maternity, Health Visiting and Children's Centres)</p> <p>Recruited Infant Coordinator and established within Hospital, Community Maternity and Children's Centres.</p>	<p>Increase in referrals to Children's Centres for first time parents</p> <p>No safeguarding case reviews to date (2021/22).</p> <p>Reduction in Bruised Baby Protocol to date (2021/22)</p>
--	---	--

# Young people, adolescent risk - Updates

Page 20

- Established Reading Young People and Extra Familial Harm Strategy 2021 – 2024
  - Partnership approach to preventing and responding to exploitation, gangs and youth violence
  - Plan incorporated within wider Serious Violence Strategy, Community Safety Plan
  
- Development of youth offer
  - Mapping and gap analysis
  - Responding to recommendations from young people's research

## Priority One: Ensure effective partnership prevention and response to extra familial harm

Key Actions	Progress against actions	Success measures and impact to date
Co-produce strategy with wide range of partners and support form Tackling Child Exploitation Programme	Themed workshops, national & local reviews, review of data to establish priorities: April -Oct 21. Partnership strategy signed off: Nov 21 Detailed Action Plan: Dec 21 Monitored via Adolescent Risk Strategic Group.	Partnership owned strategy in place and progress against action plan monitored
Develop plan for continued co-production with young people and communities	Multi-agency working group established. Young people's led version of strategy to be developed.  Plan for community engagement outlined in strategy and integrated within CSP led plan and activity.	Strategy informed by young people's research.
Develop integrated adolescent service and response to work with young people and families where there is extra familial risk/harm	Adolescent service and Reconnect Team established. Oct 2021. Multi-agency operational arrangements expanded to include identification and response to young people at risk of serious violence.	61 young people and families accessing bespoke support packages
Evaluate impact of partnership projects & seek sustainability	VRU funded Hospital Navigators Programme established	23 young people supported in Q2 21
	Pilot projects to prevent school exclusion	To report March 22

## Priority Two : Develop diverse, inclusive Youth Offer

Carry out mapping of current youth offer	Mapping, analysis and recommendations completed. Live mapping via quarterly Youth Diversion Network.	Shared understanding of gaps/needs informing commissioning/funding bids
Develop youth offer	BFC Targeted Youth Support being reconfigured to enable more work within community – schools, group work, detached youth work	Pilot to commence in April 22

# Consistent Approaches to Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health - Updates

## ➤ Coordination with Berkshire West and Reading Strategies and Plans:

Berkshire West Health & Well Being Strategy Priority 4

Reading SEND Strategy

Berkshire West Transformation Plan

BFfC Mental Health Strategy

## ➤ Impact of Covid

# Consistent Approaches to Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health - Updates

Priority	Key Actions	Impact to Date
Embed trauma informed and restorative approach across Reading Page 23	Established free online training for workforce.  Workforce network established.  Parent workshops pilot	Training tracking tool established.  3 network meetings.  Schools network established.
Accessible, well communicated trauma informed EWB and mental health offer for children and young people and families that is responsive to need.	Participation in young people mental health review summer 2021.  Joint funding of online support for young people.	Young people mental health single point of access scoping.  Online new registrations highest in Reading.

# Early Help System - Updates

- National launch of Family Hubs
- Continuation of Supporting Families Programme
- Established Partnership Outreach Workers x2 and Hospital Early Help Worker.



# Complaints & Compliments Annual Report 2020-21

## SUMMARY

An overview of complaints, compliments, SARs activity and performance for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## AUTHORS

Nayana George, RBC's Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager and Fiona Tarrant BFC Head of Communications & Marketing

## VERSION

2.0

## DATE

3 December, 2021

---

© Brighter Futures for Children

Brighter Futures for Children  
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,  
Reading RG1 2LU

Company number 11293709

# Contents

- Purpose of report.....3
- Executive summary.....3
- Recommendations.....4
- Context.....4
- Activity.....4
- Contribution to strategic aims.....5
- Community engagement and information.....5
- Equality impact assessment.....5
- Legal implications.....6
- Financial implications.....6
- Value for money.....6
- Risk assessment.....6
- Background papers.....6
- Appendix A.....7
  - Children’s Social Care complaints for Brighter Futures for Children 2020/21.....7
  - Summary report.....7
    - Introduction.....7
    - Statutory complaints procedure.....7
    - Summary of compliments and complaints activity, quality assurance & learning.....8
    - Quality assurance.....8
    - Support network.....9
    - Learning from complaints.....9
    - Complaints activity statistics.....12
      - Total number of Stage 1 complaints (including those resolved by alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and eventually withdrawn) received in the last five years.....13
      - Outcomes for those investigated to a completion (excluding those resolved via ADR and those eventually withdrawn) ..13
      - Timescales.....13
      - Main theme of all complaints received during 2020/21.....13
      - Who the complaint was received from.....14
      - Complaints received by team.....14
      - Methods used to make a complaint.....15
      - Demographic Information.....15
        - Complaints from young people Involving advocates.....15
        - Local Government And Social Care Ombudsman.....16
      - Benchmarking.....16
      - Statutory complaints investigated & outcomes for other neighbouring authorities:.....16
      - Subject Access Requests (SARs).....17
      - Compliments.....17

- Appendix B.....19
- Contact information: How to make a complaint.....19

<b>TO:</b>	<b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES &amp; EDUCATION COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	19 January 2022	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>	BFFC ANNUAL CUSTOMER SERVICES REPORT 2020-21		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	COUNCILLOR TERRY	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
<b>SERVICE:</b>	BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)	<b>WARDS:</b>	BOROUGHWIDE
<b>LEAD RBC MANAGER (as per the SLA with BFFC):</b>	NAYANA GEORGE	<b>TEL:</b>	0118 937 3748
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:Nayana.george@reading.gov.uk">Nayana.george@reading.gov.uk</a>
<b>LEAD BFFC SENIOR MANAGER (BFFC Lead for the SLA)</b>	FIONA TARRANT	<b>TEL:</b>	0118 937 4356
<b>JOB TITLE</b>	Head of Communications & Marketing	<b>E-MAIL</b>	<a href="mailto:Fiona.tarrant@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">Fiona.tarrant@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a>

## Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of complaints, compliments, SARs activity and performance for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## Executive summary

This report outlines the work that Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) and Reading Borough Council (RBC) has carried out to improve customer relations. This report's main focus is on complaints and compliments, although other aspects of customer relations, including subject access requests (SARs) are also covered.

Children's social care, early help, education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services in Reading are delivered by Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), the not-for-profit company wholly owned by, but independent of, Reading Borough Council. Through a Service Level Agreement, Reading Borough Council's Customer Relations team handles the administration for complaints, compliments and SARs.

Complaints, particularly in the emotive arena of children's services, are inevitable. The way that they are handled, however, can help reduce the number of escalating complaints and can improve parental and family understanding of the need for intervention by children's services and the positive outcomes for children and young people.

BFFC recognises that there will be occasions when the service provided to children, young people and their families has not been of a satisfactory standard or where the customer is unhappy with the service they have received.

Complaints are an important source of information to help the company understand where and why changes need to be made to improve the service provided.

During this period the service received 70 statutory complaints, which is a decrease of 22 (23.9%) against the 92 received in 2019/20.

Of the 70 complaints received:

- 13 were resolved through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) by the social care teams.
- The remaining 57 progressed to a formal investigation, although three of these were subsequently withdrawn by the complainant once the investigation had commenced.

During the same period, 11 complaints progressed to a Stage 2 investigation and one of these stage 2 complaints progressed to a Stage 3 investigation, although these were not all progressions of Stage 1 complaints received in the same period, as some related to Stage 1 and 2 investigations carried out in 2019/20.

Both the Customer Relations team, on BfFC's behalf, and BfFC's Communications & Marketing and HR/Training teams have continued to raise awareness of the complaints process for both staff and the public.

The 'Children's Social Care Complaints 2020/21 – Summary Report' attached at **Appendix A** provides an analysis of the data for statutory complaints; it explains how complaints are managed and how the learning is used to improve services. This will be made public through both Reading Borough Council's and Brighter Futures for Children's websites.

The Council and BfFC have worked closely to drive improvements in the services offered to children and young people and to signpost to information on advocacy, early resolution and the complaints procedures.

The 2020/21 report, which will be published as above, shows a marked improvement in the number of complaints received.

Nevertheless, BfFC recognises there is much room for improvement and is actively working to better the services offered to its customers.

## Recommendations

Both BfFC's Board and the Adult Social Care, Children's Services & Education Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of the report and intended actions to further improve the management of representations, particularly complaints, in children's services in Reading.
- Note the continuing work to raise awareness of all conflict resolution processes, including the statutory complaints process and encourage appropriate use by children, young people and their families.

## Context

The NHS & Community Care Act 1990, Children Act 1989, The Children Act 2004, Department of Health and Department for Education Guidance & Regulations require that the children's social care service sets up and maintains a complaints procedure. They also require that local authorities operate the procedure within specified timescales, methods of investigation and that a summary of statistical information on complaints and a review of the complaints process are included in an annual report.

## Activity

Brighter Futures for Children operates a 3-stage procedure in respect of statutory complaints about children's social care made by 'qualifying individuals', as specified in the legislation. Qualifying individuals are defined in national guidance as the child or young person, their parent, carer or foster carer or 'anyone who could be seen to be acting in the best interests of the child'.

The timescale for responding to complaints at Stage 1 is 10 working days, which can be extended to 20 working days in certain circumstances. The RBC Customer Relations Manager, who is the designated complaints manager for BfFC, also has to be aware of all complaints as they are being dealt with. The Head of Communications & Marketing has overall oversight, as the BfFC lead on this Service Level Agreement.

The corporate complaints procedure gives an opportunity for those who are not 'qualifying individuals' under the social services legislation, to still be able to complain about children's services and this route is used for all corporate and education (incl SEND) complaints.

## Contribution to strategic aims

Customer relations contribute to both BfFC and RBC's aims to enhance emotional wellbeing and deliver outstanding services for children in need and those needing protection in Reading. It does this by providing an impartial and supportive service to children and families who wish to complain or raise a concern and ensuring that there is learning from complaints.

RBC's Customer Relations Team and the Customer Relations Manager administer this service to Brighter Futures for Children, under The Service Level Agreement. BfFC provides oversight on service delivery and on actions relating to lessons learned, as part of the company's strategic aim to improve children's services in Reading.

## Community engagement and information

Information about the complaints process is provided verbally to service users via BfFC's Children's Social Care teams and Independent Reviewing Officers, as well as by the Customer Relations team. Full information is also on the website [www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org](http://www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org). Leaflets on the procedures are widely distributed and available in a variety of formats and languages on request to the Customer Relations team or through the use of BrowseAloud (now ReachDeck) on BfFC's website.

In all children looked after reviews and all child protection conferences, the chair always mentions the complaints process so that our most vulnerable children are reminded of their right to complain and a leaflet is provided. Service users are also able to register a complaint via the web, text, the Mind Of My Own App, email directly to the Customer Relations team, in person, by phone and in writing or via an advocate.

The Brighter Futures for Children website has a direct link to the complaints service and the Customer Relations team has published the details of the Customer Relations Manager and the BfFC advocacy provider, Reconstruct. The Customer Relations team also work closely with Healthwatch Reading and other organisations that offer a free help line support to children in care and carers who may wish to complain and require assistance.

Translation services are provided for complainants whose first language is not English and advocacy support is available for young people who wish to make a complaint.

## Equality impact assessment

The Customer Relations Manager will ensure that the statutory complaints process is accessible to all customers regardless of their race, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.

The statutory complaints process is designed to ensure that any concern or issue faced by vulnerable children and their carers is addressed in a timely and impartial manner.

## Legal implications

The statutory foundation for the children's social care services complaints procedures are the Local Authority Social Services Act (1970), The Children Act (1989), The Children Act (2004), The Human Rights Act (1998), The Adoption and Children Act (2002) and The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (2006).

It is a requirement of the Department of Health's standards and criteria for complaints management for children's social care that an annual report including complaints is presented to a public meeting.

## Financial implications

There are no capital or revenue implications arising from this report. However, BfC has an obligation to ensure the service provided by RBC's Customer Relations team is value for money, that the SLA is regularly monitored and that all complaints are handled in a trauma informed, restorative and timely manner to minimise the likelihood of legal costs associated with escalation of complaints that could have been better resolved earlier.

## Value for money

The overriding aim of both BfC and RBC is to work towards informal resolution wherever possible. BfC works to the principle of a restorative and trauma informed approach and is keen for complaints to be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, at the earliest possible stage. The Customer Relations team works to this aim and ensures that most statutory complaints are resolved within the Stage 1 process so that expensive Stage 2 investigations and Stage 3 panels are minimised.

## Risk assessment

There are no specific financial risks arising from this report.

## Background papers

['Getting the Best from Complaints'](#) Government Publication, August 2006

## Appendix A

### Children's Social Care complaints for Brighter Futures for Children 2020/21

#### Summary report

##### Introduction

This is a summary report of the data for statutory complaints received by Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) for the financial year 2020/21, when the number of complaints received has decreased slightly compared to the previous year. This report will also be made available to the public through the Reading Borough Council (RBC) and BFFC websites.

In addition to the quality of service provided, there are many factors that can affect the number of complaints received such as satisfaction, customer expectations, awareness of the complaints process, and the extent of promotional activity.

A high number of complaints should not be interpreted simply as meaning that Brighter Futures for Children is providing a poor service, while at the same time a low number of complaints should not be interpreted as meaning people are satisfied with the service.

When interpreting the statutory complaints statistics, it is important to take into account not just the number received but the number and proportion that are upheld.

Brighter Futures for Children welcomes feedback through the complaints process. As well as providing opportunity to identify where services have not been provided as they should be, feedback can also provide customer insight and help identify any deficiency in practice, policies and procedures. It is from these that the service and those who work within it can continue to learn and improve practice and service delivery.

##### Statutory complaints procedure

Complaints dealt with through the statutory procedure involve three stages.

At Stage 1 complaints are investigated and responded to by a manager in the relevant service area.

If the complainant feels that the issues they have raised remain unresolved, they have the right to progress their complaint to Stage 2. Consideration of complaints at Stage 2 is normally achieved through an investigation conducted by an investigating officer and an independent person. The independent person is involved in all aspects of consideration of the complaint including any discussions in the authority about the action to be taken in relation to the child. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent person and the investigating officer prepare independent reports for adjudication by a senior manager (usually the Director of Children's Social Care).

When Stage 2 of the complaints procedure has been concluded and the complainant is still dissatisfied, they are eligible to request a review of the stage 2 investigation, by a review panel at Stage 3. The panel must consist of three independent people.

The statutory children's social care complaints process encourages the complainant and BFFC to consider Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) at every stage of the complaints process. This means resolving a complaint or concern informally through a face to face meeting or telephone discussion. Entering into ADR does not restrict the complainant's right to request a formal investigation at any

stage. It is the complainant's right to request the presence of a customer relations manager at any face-to-face meeting.

### Summary of compliments and complaints activity, quality assurance & learning

There has been a 22% decrease in the number of complaints received compared to the previous year. The top three themes for complaints continue to be:

- Service provision
- Staff conduct and
- Communication

Examples of complaints recorded as **service provision** are where the parent or carer may disagree with the content of an assessment or care plan proposed for a child or young person, there has been concerns from parents or carers about contact arrangements with their child looked after or child or young person being unhappy about the move to a different placement.

**Staff conduct** complaints are recorded as such when complaints are received around specific individual members of social work staff.

**Communication** complaints are mainly about the customer/young person not being notified in advance of contact arrangements, staff not returning telephone calls or responding to emails.

This report details information for the year 2020/21, analysis of the data, quality assurance and information on service developments as a result of learning from complaints.

Under the current monitoring system, information about complaints received directly by teams is reported to the customer relations manager upon receipt. This is to ensure that the customer relations manager is aware of all current complaints in order to monitor their progress and highlight cases that can be resolved through alternate dispute resolution (ADR) to team managers and senior staff.

This SLA is overseen by BFFC's Head of Communications & Marketing.

### Quality assurance

The Customer Relations team carry out checks of all complaint responses to ensure the quality of the response and that the language and terminology used is easy for the complainant to understand, particularly if the complaint is from a child or young person.

Statistics indicate 100% of responses were checked by the Customer Relations team before being sent out. The findings and recommendations are shared regularly with BFFC's Board, Senior Leadership Team and operational managers. The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager and the Customer Relations team are also available to the complainant and the investigator for advice on best practice during the complaint investigation but remain impartial.

The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager delivers training on investigating and responding to statutory Stage 1 complaints and also on the corporate complaints procedure to BFFC staff. The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager also attends team meetings to provide training and advice to front line staff.

Training is now available online also; this can be accessed by all social care staff through BFFC's training department. Take up of this on-line training has been very low. Two face to face training

session for operational managers were arranged and completed in November 2020 and February 2021.

The complaints procedure is promoted to external groups, publicity material is available to staff, children and young people and close links with Healthwatch Reading. Parents or carers with learning difficulties or other needs will be signposted to local charitable advocacy providers.

Processes have been improved to ensure upcoming responses are discussed and monitored regularly. BFFC 's senior managers get regular updates on all complaints which are live and under investigation. BFFC staff are in more regular contact with the customer relations manager and the team and are aware of their processes, which has led to improved joint working for the benefit of the complainant.

Monthly reports of the Service Level Agreement are provided to the BFFC Contract Manager. Quarterly reports are prepared for the BFFC Board and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and for the Council's Management Team (CMT).

### Support network

The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager participates in the southern region Complaints Managers' Group and is the current vice chair of the group and also attends the National Complaints Managers' Group. Both groups continue to support customer relations and complaints managers in sharing good practice, both nationally and locally. Where cases are complex the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager often seeks advice and guidance from legal services and the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's advice line.

### Learning from complaints

In 2020/21 these were the learning improvements BFFC's services focused on children's social care:

- BFFC has agreed a Quality Strategy, which includes how we will engage with children and families and ensure their participation in planning and reviewing the support and services they receive
- BFFC has also developed a Quality Assurance Operational Framework which sets out among its activities how we will collect the views of children and families (for example, our quarterly quality audits and success reviews include direct feedback and views from young people and families)
- We are revising our Engagement and Participation Strategy, which will include how we use these views to shape provision and will evidence how service delivery is impactful and makes a sustainable difference to the lives of children and families
- Using language that is trauma informed, empathic, evidence-based and naming the source of information when assessments or written reports are produced
- Assessments to be co-produced with families; to reflect a parent and child's views and to be shared with them in a timely manner
- To ensure accurate. Unambiguous and timely recordings on a child's records
- To ensure complainants are spoken to and not only responded to in writing; this enables potential early resolution but also a deeper understanding of the complainant's issues raised
- Work now under way to improve communication and clarity of information with parent carers on the PCNA pathway.

In 2020/21 these were the learning improvements BFFC's services focused on the early help service:

Following a significant data breach, a range of improvements were implemented in both practice and processes to mitigate potential complaints. Changes included: specialist training from RBCs lead officer; a revised protocol for reporting incidents; an in-built delay into generic email accounts to ensure time available to check accuracy of contents and attachments and a re-branded, updated consent form clarifying how we will use data.

The One Reading Children and Young People's Partnership and BfFC Early Help transformation projects continued to embed a trauma informed, restorative approach. Early Help staff have delivered Restorative Practice training across BfFC and a Trauma Informed Practitioner has provided advice on challenging cases.

By working in this way, staff aim to problem solve with families and ensure our role is clear from the outset. Informal feedback from families suggests this has been well received. We delivered the December 2020 Trauma Informed Conference, with 317 places booked by 37 organisations. We are optimistic that this supports collaborative understanding and working across local organisations.

Although the majority of internal learning opportunities have been virtual, a number of staff in managerial roles have completed HR core skills training which included: Challenging Conversation & Managing Team Dynamics/Conflict. Diversity & Cultural Competence. They have also been able to attend the Managers' Communications toolkit training.

BfFC held a series of focused discussions in August 2020 to reflect on the challenges of working in a virtual environment and have used two Early Help virtual away days to share this learning and celebrate success.

In 2020/21 these were the learning improvements BfFC's services focused on the SEND Service:

- Establishment of a communications working group as part of the SEND strategy to identify and remedy poor communication and information for parent carers on the SEND processes and services available (led by the BfFC Head of Communications & Marketing)
- Publication of a comprehensive guide to SEND for parent carers
- Work now under way on EHCPs and provide clearer information for parent carers on the process and a separate guide for professionals on their roles and responsibilities
- Regular meetings between the BfFC SEND team and Reading IASS to understand each other's processes and roles/responsibilities (maintaining independence and impartiality in doing so)
- Review of processes and communication with social care, resulting in a planned training programme for social care colleagues and improvement in contributions to Education Health Care needs assessments
- Improved multi-agency auditing of Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), which demonstrates significant improvements in quality of final plans
- Review of service standards and spot checks in place (re timeliness of responses to emails and calls) show improvements in communication
- All settings now have a named case officer and senior case officer – implemented pro-active check ins every term.

The DfE guidance asks for the council or its representative - in this case BfFC - to ensure that we report the learning and service improvements implemented as a result of complaints. Some learning was pertinent to individual workers and led to bespoke advice and training. Some learning was shared in reminder to all staff regarding good practice and some learning led to review of services and processes.

Some individual and staff learning included:

### **1. Complaint (upheld)**

The complaint details that the father was not contacted in the earlier stages of intervention. The first 3 earlier assessments completed in October 2018, January 2019 and May 2019 without his input.

#### **Learning**

- Accept that more effort should have been made at the time to find alternative methods to contact father regarding BfFC's involvement with the children.
- Ensure the above is shared with the service in order to improve practice in this area, about making sure both parents are actively sought and included in assessments.

### **2. Complaint (upheld)**

Complaint about the content of the assessment taken from the EHCP.

#### **Learning**

- All staff are currently accessing training sessions, the FIT service will review Assisting Team Manager and Team Manager sign off processes for Care Plans and SEN Team has been reviewing the updated standard operating procedures to ensure that such incidences do not occur again.

### **3. Complaint (partially upheld)**

The manner in which social care staff treated and spoke to the family.

#### **Learning**

- A team workshop identified in order to look at the intervention process carried out between children's social care and families, and the potential impact of this upon families. This will include language used, tone, level of understanding.
- BfFC will also continue to work to reinforce the importance of working in partnership with families. This will be addressed with all staff during team meetings and morning briefings.
- A meeting offered to the family with Team Manager in order for BfFC to discuss any further concerns the family had.

Complaints and concerns provide essential and valuable feedback from our customers. Listening to customers and reflecting on examples of where we have not got it right can reveal or highlight opportunities for improvement (for example, a deficiency in practice, communication or service delivery). Even if a complaint is not upheld, lessons can be learnt from that complaint with service developments and improvements as a result. The complaints process and the feedback gained is an integral part of the quality assurance process, which feeds into the development and monitoring of services.

Once a complaint is investigated, the Investigating Officer (IO) will complete a Learning Action Plan for complaints which have been upheld or partially upheld and which may have recommendations to the services about improving services; these are collated by the customer relations team for reporting purposes and shared with BfFC senior managers.

BfFC recognises the need to improve the timescales for responding to complaints. Fortnightly reports have been provided to the head of communications & marketing who shares this with other senior managers and highlights deadlines and responses needed. This has allowed for better tracking of the timeliness of complaints. This remains a priority area to be improved.

### Complaints activity statistics

In the year 2020/21, children’s social care received 70 statutory complaints, which is a decrease of 22 (23.9%) compared to the 92 received in 2019/20.

To give this some context, in 2020/21, 2,384 children in total were referred to children’s social care, so the number of statutory complaints represents 2.9%.

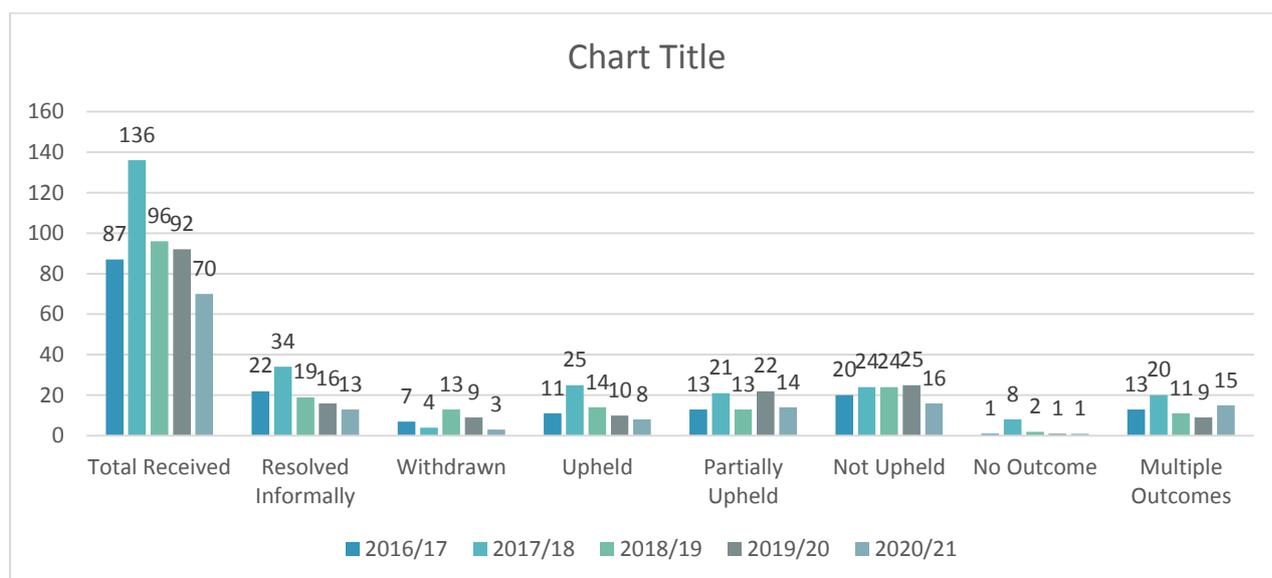
There were 11 requests for a complaint to be progressed to Stage 2 during this period, and one of these has to be progressed to Stage 3. These complaints are not included in the reporting statistics for this report, as they are deemed to be duplicates of the Stage 1 complaint for reporting purposes.

Of the 70 complaints received:

- 13 (18.6%) were resolved as representations informally through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) (Stage 0) by the social care teams.
- 3 (5.3%) of the remaining 57 complaints were withdrawn by the complainant following a resolution with the service after the investigation had commenced, leaving 54 which were investigated at Stage 1 to an outcome.

Of the 54, 15 (27.8%) were responded to within timescale, with the remaining 39 (72.2%) complaints responded to over timescale.

Of the 54 complaints investigated to an outcome, 8 (14.8%) were recorded as fully upheld, 14 (25.9%) as partially upheld, 16 (29.6%) as not upheld, and one (1.9%) as having no recordable outcome. The remaining 15 (27.8%) were complaints with multiple strands where several outcomes were recorded.



Total number of Stage 1 complaints (including those resolved by alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and eventually withdrawn) received in the last five years.

Year	Number of complaints received	% Increase against previous year	Number of cases referred to Children's Services	% of complaints against referrals
*2016/17	132	51.7%	3,169	4.16%
*2017/18	136	3.03%	2,717	5.01%
*2018/19	96	-29.4%	2,765	3.47%
2019/20	92	-4.17%	2,564	3.6%
2020/21	70	-23.9%	2,384	2.9%

\*Pre-Brighter Futures for Children, which became operational on 3 December 2018.

Outcomes for those investigated to a completion (excluding those resolved via ADR and those eventually withdrawn)

Outcome	Number	% of Total
Upheld	8	14.8%
Partially upheld	14	25.98%
Not upheld	16	29.6.3%
No outcome	1	1.9%
Multiple outcomes	15	27.8%
Total	64	100

Timescales

Total Investigated to an Outcome	In Timescale	% of Total	Over Timescale	% of Total
54	15	27.8%	39	72.2%

Total Resolved Informally	In timescale	% of Total	Over Timescale	% of Total
13	5	38.5%	8	61.5%

Main theme of all complaints received during 2020/21

**(NOTE:** This includes all complaints received and resolved informally, withdrawn, and investigated to an outcome at Stage 1, but does not include complaints investigated at Stages 2 & 3, as these themes are duplicates of Stage 1)

Theme of complaint	Number	% of Total
Communication	2	2.9%
Data breach	1	1.1%
Quality of service provided	54	77%
Staff conduct	13	18.5%
Total	70	100

### Who the complaint was received from

Who made the complaint	Number	% of Total
Advocate	3	5.4%
Foster Carer	5	3.3%
Child / Young Person	5	5.4%
Extended Family (Grandparents / Aunts & Uncles, Etc)	8	12%
Professional/Agency	1	
Parent (Incl. Adopted Parents)	48	71.7%
Total	70	100

The majority of complaints are from the birth parents who disagree with social care involvement and outcomes from assessments, care plans and wish to challenge a professional decision. Of the 48 complaints received from parents, 20 of them were from fathers who felt excluded from the processes. Complaints of this nature are inevitable, however high-quality record keeping, clear communication with a clear distinction between fact and opinion reduces the opportunity for dispute.

### Complaints received by team

Team	No of complaints
Access & Assessment Team	22 (31.4%)
Children Looked After Teams	7 (10%)
Children & Young Persons' Disability Team	3 (4.3%)
Children's Single Point of Access Team	3 (4.3%)
Adoption/Family Placement	1 (1.4%)
Family Intervention Teams	26 (37.2%)
Fostering Team	3 (4.3%)
Leaving Care Team	3 (4.3%)
Specialist Youth Team	1 (1.4%)
LADO	1 (1.4%)
Total	70

The three areas which received the highest number of complaints were the Access & Assessment teams with 22 (31.48%), the Family Intervention teams with 26 (37.2%) and the Children Looked After teams with 7 (10%), This can mainly be attributed to the challenging circumstances in which these particular services work in and the volume of their direct contact with the customers.

#### Methods used to make a complaint

Method	Number	% of Total
E-mail	44	62.8%
Complaint Leaflet	1	1.1%
Letter	13	18.6%
Telephone	6	8.6%%
Webform	6	8.6%%
Total	92	100

The above demonstrates that the complainants have a number of methods they can use to contact the Customer Relations team with their complaints.

#### Demographic Information

Ethnicity	Number of complaints received	% of Total
Mixed Black African & White/Asian	4	5.7%
Not Stated	6	8.57%
White British	45	64.28%
White Other	5	7.1%
Asian	4	5.7%
Black Carribean/African	10	14.28%
Total	70	100

For equality monitoring purposes, staff have been encouraged to seek personal demographic information from people who make a complaint to help assess if there are groups of people who are proportionally complaining more or less and to explore the possible reasons. We have found that people who complain do not always wish to state their ethnicity.

The offer of the translation service and easy read versions of complaint responses are made available by the customer relations & information governance manager to those complainants who need these.

#### Complaints from young people Involving advocates

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, only 2 young people complained about the service, one of whom complained on three occasions of his own accord, the other young person complained via the advocacy provider.

The Customer Relations Information Governance Manager also meets BFFC teams and managers to reinforce the importance of capturing verbal complaints. Staff are encouraged to record and analyse comments or concerns, as many children's and young people's issues are resolved this way rather

than using the complaints process. If the young person is unhappy but does not wish to make a formal complaint, the Customer Relations team also offers to try to resolve matters informally.

### Local Government And Social Care Ombudsman

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) received five representations from dissatisfied service users for issues relating to BFFC. This is the same as the previous year. Of the five cases, the Ombudsman investigated two cases. One case was upheld and one case was not upheld. The other case had either not progressed through the complaints procedures or deemed as not within the Ombudsman’s jurisdiction to investigate so was rejected by the Ombudsman as premature.

In respect of the upheld complaint, the Ombudsman asked the Council to apologise and provided financial redress.

The Ombudsman did not issue any formal reports finding maladministration by BFFC.

### Benchmarking

Attempts to collate information from our statistical neighbouring authorities have proven to be difficult over the years. However, through the Southern Regional Complaints Managers Group which the Customer Relations Manager is a member of, she has obtained the following information.

This should not be used as a direct comparison as the size of the authority and the number of referrals to children’s services would differ to that of Reading. It is also worth noting that each authority records their data and report in different formats and Slough Borough Council/Slough Children’s Services Trust (now Slough Children First) is not part of the southern regional complaints managers group.

### Statutory complaints investigated & outcomes for other neighbouring authorities:

Local Authority (or company)	Number of complaints investigated	Number of Complaints fully upheld (%)
West Berkshire	154	6%
Bracknell Forrest Council	73	6%
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	14	0%
Wokingham Borough Council	Requested but not available	
Slough Children’s Services Trust	23	8.7%

## Subject Access Requests (SARs)

The Customer Relations team processes all SARs requests for BFFC. These are open and closed children's social care cases (historical cases where paper and microfiche files are held at the records centre) and Special Education Needs (SEN) cases.

In 2020/21, the Customer Relations team received 66 requests for records 10 less than the 76 requests received in 2019/20 relating to BFFC.

Of the 66 requests received 32 requests were completed.

34 SARs are outstanding at the time of writing this report. The main reasons for the backlog are as a result of the Customer Relations team's functions being suspended between March 2020 and July 2020 which caused back log of requests being processed, along with the following:

- Restrictions posed by the pandemic meant records could not be retrieved from the archive for scanning.
- The move of paper records from Darwin Close to Bennet Road in early 2021 and restricted access to the storage area.
- The lack of resource to redact files which range from a few hundred pages to over 3500 pages per file.
- Paper files need to be copied from microfiche and scanned before redactions can be completed. In SEND cases, information is held on the EMS (Education) system as well as shared files and emails. These have to be searched, converted to PDF and redacted before the file can be shared with the requestor.
- In all cases the Customer Relations team and the Information Governance team has kept in regular contact with the requestor to ensure they were kept up to date on the progress of their request.

Extra BFFC resource has been deployed to help the Customer Relations team to clear backlogs. The Council is also exploring new technology for scanning and redaction work.

## Compliments

In the year 2020/21, 68 compliments were received and logged for BFFC. This is a decrease of six from the previous year when 74 were received. They were received by the following teams:

- Multiple teams within children's services - 5
- Safeguarding - 2
- Children Looked After team - 2
- Fostering - 7
- South Area team - 1
- Early Years team – 2
- Early Help team - 6
- Access & Assessment team - 6
- Foster Carers - 4
- Participation and Engagement Team - 1
- CSPoA - 3
- Communications & Marketing - 1
- Family Intervention team - 8
- CYPDT - 8

- West Area team - 1
- Specialist Youth team - 1
- SEND team - 3
- SGO - 1
- School Admissions team - 1
- The Lodge Day Nursery - 1
- Unknown teams - 4

The following are some examples of compliments received:

**Family Intervention team** – ‘We would like to start by saying a massive thank you. We really appreciate the time you spent with us and we’re grateful for the achievements and progress that was made. It’s very rare to find a social worker that actually listens, show empathy and supports the family the way you did. You are a social worker that makes a difference in a positive way.

‘She goes above and beyond, and I know she works over her hours as she is a committed person. This is not just a job to her, she is passionate about the care children receive. I would like this to be noted as what she has done in the past 2 weeks is more than any social worker has ever done to help me and my children, this has also been recognised by my son’s teachers who have also said the same to her. She is a valuable asset to your service and I thank her for everything she has done.’

**Children Looked After team** – ‘There have been lots of balls to juggle and some complex issues and she had not only kept all the balls in the air but has built good relationships with the children and their carer and be clear around moving the care plans forward. Most Excellent job.’

**Access and Assessment team** – ‘At first I was scared as I have never had social services involved in my life, but u reassured me that you was involved for the best interest of me and my children, you made me feel Positive in moving forward with my life you also gave me options to better mine an my children’s life, An my outlook on life. I felt at ease to talk and be truthful.’

**CYPDT team** – ‘He obviously really cares about the children he works with and has gone above and beyond to seek positive outcomes for this family.’

## Appendix B

### Contact information: How to make a complaint

Some complaints can be sorted out by discussing your problem with your social worker or a manager. If you want to make a complaint, you can contact the Customer Relations team, phone, letter, in person or by email. Telephone the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager (Complaints & Representations) on 0118 937 2905 or email: [socialcare.complaints@reading.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare.complaints@reading.gov.uk).

If you wish to make your complaint to us in writing, our address is:

Customer Relations Team  
Reading Borough Council  
Floor 2 North Front  
Civic Offices  
Bridge Street  
Reading  
RG1 2LU

You can also text us with your complaint, type SPKUP & your message to 81722. Your complaint will be recorded and if we can't sort out the problem immediately it will be passed for further investigation and action.

The Customer Relations team can take your complaint over the telephone and explain the complaints procedure in more detail or send you a leaflet explaining how to complain. The leaflet is also available in council buildings or via the Brighter Futures for Children's website ([www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org](http://www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org)). You can also use these contact details to tell us if you have a concern (but do not want to make a complaint) or if you want to make a compliment about a service.

This page is intentionally left blank

## REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES &amp; EDUCATION COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	19 January 2021	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2020/21 FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ENNIS</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>ADULT SERVICES</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE &amp; HEALTH</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>NAYANA GEORGE</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>0118 937 3748</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>Customer Relations &amp; Information Governance Manager</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:Nayana.george@reading.gov.uk">Nayana.george@reading.gov.uk</a>

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Adult Social Care recognises that there will be occasions when things do go wrong, and complaints are made. This short report tells you how many complaints were received in 2020/21 and were dealt with using either the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure or the Statutory Complaints Procedure for Adult Social Care. It also summarises the main types of complaints we have received and provides some examples where we have improved as a result of learning from these complaints.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of complaints and compliments activity and performance for Adult Social Care for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2021.
- 1.3 During this period the service received 17 corporate complaints, which is a 30.8% increase over the 13 received in 2019/20, and 71 statutory complaints, which is a 15.5% decrease over the 84 received in 2019/20.
- 1.4 The main themes for the period 2020/21 for both corporate and statutory complaints are:
  - Quality of Service Provided
  - Financial Issues
  - Staff Conduct
  - Communication
- 1.5 A summary of Adult Social Care Complaints and Compliments 2020/21 is at Appendix A. This will also be made publicly available through the Council's website from 25 October 2021.

## **2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the contents of the report.**

## **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1** Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 require that Local Authorities operate the procedure. In September 2009, the Department of Health introduced a complaint procedure to cover both adult social care and health services. This meant a 3 stage complaints procedure became a 1 stage complaints procedure. Following investigation of the complaint by the Council, if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome the complainant is advised to contact the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager, to share their concerns with a view to possibly reviewing them with a senior manager or proceed to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 3.2** Complaints relating to Adult Social Care that fall outside of the scope of the statutory process are investigated in accordance with the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.
- 3.2.** Compliments can be an indicator of when the Council has performed well and can highlight the positive outcomes for the public who are in contact with us or that we provide a service to.

## **4. ACTIVITY**

- 4.1** The Council operates a 1 stage complaints procedure in respect of statutory complaints about Adult Social Care made by 'qualifying individuals', as specified in the legislation. Qualifying individuals are defined in national guidance as the Service User or their appointed representative which can be a family member, friend or Advocate. The timescale for responding to complaints is between 15 working days and 3 months, depending on the seriousness and complexity of the complaint. The guidance provides a risk matrix to assist the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager, who is the designated Complaints Manager for the Council, to assess the complaint.

Reading Borough Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure gives an opportunity for those who are not 'qualifying individuals' under the social services legislation, to still be able to complain about Adult Social Care.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1** The Complaints Service provided by the Customer Relations Team contributes to the Service's aims to enhance emotional wellbeing and deliver outstanding services for service users who may be dissatisfied with the Adult Social Care service and those needing protection through Adult Safeguarding. It does this by providing an impartial and supportive service to service users and their families who wish to complain or raise a concern and ensuring that there is learning from complaints.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Information about the complaints or compliments process is provided verbally to service users via the Social Care Teams as well as the Customer Relations Team. Leaflets on the procedures are also widely distributed by the Social Care Teams and available in a variety of formats and languages on request.
- 6.2 Service Users are reminded of their right to complain or make a compliment and a leaflet is given out when the social worker first meets with them. Service users and/or their representative can also register a complaint via the web, email direct to the Customer Relations Team, in person, by phone, in writing or via an advocate.
- 6.3 Translation services are provided for complainants whose first language is not English and advocacy support is available for those people who wish to make a complaint.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager will ensure that the statutory complaints/compliments process is accessible to all customers regardless of their race, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.
- 7.2 The statutory complaints process is designed to ensure that any concern or issue faced by the service user or their representative is addressed in a timely and impartial manner.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Statutory foundations for the Adult Social Care Services Complaints Procedures are The Local Authority Social Services Act (1970), The Human Rights Act (1998), Statutory Instruments 2009 No.309 National Health Service, England Social Care, England, the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no Capital or Revenue implications arising from this report.

The Council's Customer Relations Team provides value for money in effectively discharging the complaints process for the Council by attempting informal resolution of complaints.

There are no specific financial risks arising from this report.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 Department of Health, Advice Sheet for Investigating Complaints - Listening, Responding, Learning.

## ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS 2020/21 SUMMARY REPORT

### Introduction

This is a summary report of the data for complaints/compliments received by Adult Social Care for the financial year 2020/21.

The Council welcomes feedback through the complaints/compliments process which, as well as providing the opportunity to identify where services have not been provided as they should be, also provides customer insight and helps identify any deficiency in practice, policies and procedures. It is from these that the Service and those who work in it can continue to learn and improve practice and service delivery.

### Statutory Complaints Procedure

General complaints about Adult Social Care received from Service Users or their approved representatives (Family Member, Advocate or Power of Attorney) are dealt with through the statutory procedure. This will be one investigation by a senior officer in the relevant service area (Team Manager) and then signed off by either a Service Manager or Assistant Director.

At the Complainant's, or their representative's, request, an external, independent investigator can be appointed to investigate if the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager deems the complaints to be at medium or high risk. The following Risk Matrix is used to assess the complaint.

### **Risk Matrix**

The matrix below is used by the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager in confirming the level of risk once an expression of concern has been considered within the formal complaints procedure.

		LIKELIHOOD OF RECURRENCE				
		RISK	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely
SERIOUSNESS	Low	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
		Low	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High	High	Extreme
		Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Extreme
	High	Moderate	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
		Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme

## Time Limits

Level of Risk	Maximum Time Limit for Completion
Immediate resolution	1 working day - confirm outcome
All accepted as formal complaints	Acknowledge within 3 working days
Low	15 working days
Moderate	25 working days
High	65 working days
Extreme	Up to 6 months

If the complainant feels that the issues they have raised remain unresolved, they have the right to request a meeting with the Locality Manager/Deputy Director and the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager or refer their complaint to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

The Statutory Complaints process encourages the complainant and the Local Authority to consider resolving a complaint or concern informally through a face to face meeting or telephone discussion. It is the complainant's right to request the presence of the Customer Relations Manager at any face-to-face meeting.

Some complaints may require immediate action including whether the matter should be considered as a safeguarding issue. If it is a safeguarding issue, the relevant procedures would take precedence over the complaints procedure.

### Corporate Complaints Procedure

The Corporate Complaints Procedure deals with complaints which do not meet the criteria for investigation through the Statutory Procedure (for example the complaint is made by a Provider or a family member who does not have consent from the Service User to make the complaint) and is a 2-stage process. The first stage provides an opportunity for a local resolution of any problems which may arise, and it is expected that the majority of complaints will be resolved at this level, usually within 20 working days or less. Where the problems cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at a local level, Stage 2 of the process involves the investigation of the complaint by a more senior member of staff, usually within 30 working days or less and with a formal sign off by an Assistant Director/Deputy Director.

Where the complainant feels that the issues they have raised remain unresolved, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

### Summary of Compliments and Complaints Activity, Quality Assurance & Learning

This report details information for the past year together with analysis of the data, quality assurance and information on service developments as a result of learning from complaints. Under the current monitoring system, information about complaints received directly by teams is reported to the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager upon receipt. This is to ensure that the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager is aware of all current complaints in order to monitor their progress and highlight cases that can be resolved through Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) to Team Managers and senior staff.

### Corporate Complaints

Please Note: The following tables include information for those complaints received and investigated at Stages 0 and 1 only, as complaints which go on to Stage 2 would count as being a duplicate complaint received for reporting purposes.

For information, the service received one request for a complaint to be investigated further at Stage 2 during this reporting period.

#### Total Number of Corporate Complaints Received

	Total No. Received	Stage 0	Stage 1
2015/16	29	8	20
2016/17	5	3	2
2017/18	7	3	4
2018/19	9	1	8
2019/20	13	3	10
2020/21	17 (+30.8%)	2	15

#### Outcomes for complaints investigated formally

Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld	No Outcome	Multiple Outcomes
7	1	4	2	3

#### Timescales for those investigated

In Timescale	Over Timescale
8 (47.1%)	9 (52.9%)

#### Spread of Complaints across Teams

Team	Number	% of Total
Commissioning	6	35.3%
Deputy's Office	1	5.9%
Localities Team	3	17.6%
PBST	1	5.9%
Short-Term Team	4	23.5%
Transformation Programme Team	1	5.9%
Wellbeing	1	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Themes

Theme	Number	% of Total
Financial Issue	5	29.4%
Health & Safety Issue	1	5.9%
Policy Issue	1	5.9%
Quality of Service Provided	6	35.3%
Staff Conduct	4	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### How Was Complaint Received

Method	Number	% of Total
Email	11	64.6%
Letter	2	11.8%
Telephone	2	11.8%
Webform	2	11.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Statutory Complaints

### Total Number of Statutory Complaints Received

	Total No. Received	% change over previous year	Stage 0	% of total received	Stage 1	% of total received
2015/16	86		33	38.4%	53	61.6%
2016/17	62	-27.9%	20	32.3%	42	67.7%
2017/18	79	+27.4%	22	27.8%	57	72.2%
2018/19	72	-8.9%	21	29.2%	51	70.8%
2019/20	84	+16.7%	30	35.7%	54	64.3%
2020/21	71	-15.5%	33	46.5%	38	53.5%

### Outcomes of statutory complaints investigated formally

Outcome	No.	% of Total
Upheld	10	26.3%
Partially Upheld	2	5.3%
Not Upheld	14	36.8%
No Outcome	2	5.3%
Multiple Outcomes	10	26.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Timescales for responding to statutory complaints

In Timescale	%	Over Timescale	%
18	47.4%	20	52.6%

**Note:** The statutory complaints above, we worked to an initial 15 working day response date extending to no more than 20 working days.

### Spread of Complaints across Teams (All Complaints)

Team	Number Received	% of Total
Community Mental Health	5	7.0%
Commissioning	5	7.0%
Community Reablement	2	2.8%
Deputy's Office	3	4.2%

Financial Assessments & Benefits	7	9.9%
Localities	14	19.7%
Personal Budget Support	4	5.8%
Safeguarding Adults	1	1.4%
Short-Term Team	29	40.8%
Wellbeing	1	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Themes (All Complaints)

Theme	Number	% of Total
Communication	9	12.7%%
Financial Issue	23	32.4%
Health & Safety Issue	1	1.4%
Lack of Support	1	1.4%
Quality of Service Provided	29	40.8%
Staff Conduct	8	11.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100%</b>

### How Was Complaint Received (All Complaints)

Method	Number	% of Total
Email	53	74.6%
Letter	11	15.5%
Telephone	7	9.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Learning & Service Improvements following Complaints received

Complaints and concerns provide essential and valuable feedback from our clients and customers. Listening to customers and reflecting on examples of where we have not got it right can reveal or highlight opportunities for improvement (for example, a deficiency in practice, communication or service delivery). Even if a complaint is not upheld, lessons can be learnt from that complaint with service developments and improvements as a result. The complaints process and the feedback gained is an integral part of the quality assurance process, which feeds into the development and monitoring of services. Learning from complaints should be reviewed by Social Care teams regularly at their team meetings. Below are some examples of learning from complaints in the past year along with key service improvements as a result of complaints received.

#### Examples of complaints and learning

##### Complaint:

Not notified of the increase to their mother's care charges.

##### Learning:

- A project is underway now to look at the processes that will be used in the lead up to April 2021, to ensure that anyone whose care charge is increasing as a result of inflation will be notified in writing beforehand.

**Complaint:**

Brother, was not informed that the fact that he owns a property that he does not live in, would make him liable to pay for the full cost of his care, which he cannot afford.

**Learning:**

- The team to work across service areas in Adult Social Care to ensure greater awareness of the Council's charging policy so that all staff can inform service users and their family about the implications of the policy.

**Complaint:**

Only given one option of a care home, when was originally told there they would be able to pick from two or three, and the delay in the financial assessment being agreed, which caused a lot of stress and worry.

**Learning:**

- Workers to encourage families to start making plans or thinking about the future when assessing/reviewing care needs.
- Supervisors/Managers ensure the workers check and understand the outcome/decision of a service user's care needs and that if any actions are required, they are completed in a timely manner.

**Service Improvements  
For 2020/21**

The Hospital Team adapted their way of working in line with new Hospital Discharge guidance issued during the pandemic. This resulted in people leaving hospital sooner, enabling people to recover at home rather than in a hospital setting. This was possible due to additional therapy and support available for people at home arranged by the Council.

Whilst a number of inhouse services needed to close due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic a new outreach service was developed. This meant that service users and their carers who were in need of respite could receive it in their own home thus reducing the impact of the social isolation caused by the pandemic.

In response to the increasing numbers of people in hospital the Council put in place a new hospital to home service in a hotel on a temporary basis. This successfully supported over 60 people to be discharged from hospital quickly to receive further support in the hotel to continue their recovery. Due to the focus on therapy and achieving outcomes, a number of people went home from the hotel with limited or no requirement for ongoing care.

The Contracts and Commissioning Team were successful in going live with the new Supported Living and Homecare framework on 1 April 2020. The framework itself was

new and improved from the previous version based on their learnings of what worked well and to achieve it they undertook a huge amount of collaborative work with Providers to get the right outcomes. Having the framework in place with increased number of Providers who worked closely with them was invaluable as they worked through the impacts of the pandemic.

### **Quality Assurance**

The Customer Relations Team carries out checks of all complaint responses to ensure the quality of the response and that the language and terminology used is made easy for the complainant to understand, particularly if the complainant has a disability. We have on occasion asked the investigating officer to translate reports and responses into Easyread.

Statistics indicate 100% of responses were checked by the Customer Relations Team before being sent out. The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager and the Team are also available to the complainant and the investigator for advice on best practice during the complaint investigation but remain impartial.

The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager will deliver training on investigating and responding to complaints on request. The Corporate Complaints Procedure is available on-line. The Adult Social Care statutory procedure is available on-line also. The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager attends Team Meetings to provide training and advice to Teams and Senior Managers when required. The Customer Relations Team has also improved processes to ensure upcoming responses are discussed and monitored at weekly meetings. The Social Care staff are in more regular contact with the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager and her team and are aware of their processes which has led to improved joint working for the benefit of the complainant.

### **Support Network**

The Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager is the Vice Chair and participates in the Southern Region Complaints Managers' Group, which continues to support Customer Relations and Complaints Managers in sharing good practice, both nationally and locally. Where cases are complex the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager often seeks advice and guidance from Legal Services and the Local Government Ombudsman's advice line.

### **Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman**

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's role is to investigate complaints about maladministration or administrative fault that lead to injustice for the complainant. In some complaints the Local Ombudsman may find evidence of administrative fault but no resultant injustice. The Local Ombudsman should not investigate complaints about policy changes where the decision has been properly made.

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) received 5 representations from dissatisfied service users for issues relating to Adult Care & Health Services, which is 2 fewer than the previous year. Of these 5 cases, 2 cases were assessed and not investigated, 3 cases were investigated, and the Ombudsman upheld 2 cases and found no fault with the remaining case, therefore it was not upheld.

The Ombudsman did not issue any formal reports finding maladministration by the Council.

### **Compliments**

The Customer Relations Team owns the logging of compliments for the Council as a whole. Staff are reminded and encouraged to pass on all compliments to the Customer Relations Team's generic mailbox.

In the year 2020/21, 28 compliments were received by the following Adult Social Care Teams:

Community Reablement Team - 1

Deputy's Office - 1

Enablement Team - 1

FAB Team - 1

Hospital Discharge Team - 2

Locality Team - 12

Short Term Team - 8

Wellbeing - 2

The following are some examples of compliments received:

#### **Short Term Team**

- I'd like to salute you guys for your hard work, and I hope you keep it up! Once the lockdown has eased up, I will thank you properly for everything.
- Thank you for being the only one to think not just of my mum who you were brill with but also helping me along the way. Please make sure you keep in touch and pop in now and again.

#### **Locality Team -**

- Thank you as always for your continued communication, I am encouraged by you and your colleagues who also work at the front line during these difficult times
- Thank you for amending the review you yourself conducted over the telephone. We really are extremely grateful for your help and also for the way that you have dealt with all this, and for your patience and compassion.

#### **The Deputy's Team -**

- I'm very pleased to let you know that the Deputy's Office Team has been selected as one of the winners from the nominations for the People's Choice award. Your team was selected as a winner for demonstrating values associated with the "Making a difference to our customers" in the Team Category.

## Wellbeing -

- I am writing to express my thanks and gratitude for your tremendous support with my queries about the COVID vaccination jab...You were very patient and helpful during that call, and you stated that you would look in to this, and call me back, which you did at 5.45pm. That too was very helpful, and indeed very good of you at the end of a long week I am sure.

## Hospital Discharge Team -

- Thanks again for your help, and your team's too. They are providing an outstanding service, especially in these difficult times.

## Contact Information: How to make a complaint

Some complaints can be sorted out by discussing your problem with your Social Worker or a manager. If you want to make a complaint, you can contact the Council by phone, letter, in person or by email. Telephone the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager on 0118 937 2905 or e-mail: [Socialcare.Complaints@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Socialcare.Complaints@reading.gov.uk). If you wish to make your complaint to us in writing, our address is: The Customer Relations Team, Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU. Your complaint will be recorded and if we cannot sort out the problem immediately it will be passed for further investigation and action. The Customer Relations Team can take your complaint over the telephone and explain the complaints procedure in more detail or send you a leaflet explaining how to complain. The leaflet is also available in Council buildings or via the Council's website. You can also use these contact details to tell us if you have a concern (but do not want to make a complaint) or if you want to make a compliment about a service.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY Executive Director of Social Care and Health

<b>TO:</b>	<b>Adult Children and Education Committee</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> January 2022</b>		
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Adult Social Care Reform</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>Cllr John Ennis</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>Adult Social Care</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>Adult Care and Health Services</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Joanne Lappin</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>07773 000 382</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Safeguarding, Quality, Performance and Practice</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b>joanne.lappin@reading.gov.uk</b>

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the new planned reforms for Adult Social Care in England, initially set out by the Government White Paper in December 2021, *People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform*.
- 1.2 This paper also details the approach which will be taken by Reading Borough Council to respond and plan for the proposed changes.
- 1.3 The White Paper forms part of a suite of reforms concerning health and social care, outlined in 2021.
- 1.4 It is expected that an additional paper on health and social care integration will follow this White Paper. However, at this stage there is no indication of when this will be issued.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 *For Members to note the details outlined in the White Paper - People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform.*

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Adult social care is the support provided to adults with care and support needs and their carers as set out in the Care Act 2014, and includes:
  - Support in people's homes (home care or domiciliary care)
  - Support in community settings
  - Care provided by regulated providers in care homes and nursing homes
  - Reablement services to help people gain or maintain their independence
  - Providing aids, adaptations and technology enabled care in people's homes
  - Providing information and advice
  - Providing support for informal carers.

- 3.2 The Care Act 2014 provides the legislative framework for adult social care, together with the associated statutory guidance. Person centred care and a focus on wellbeing and independence has previously been key themes, which are also consistent with the new framework, set out in the White Paper.
- 3.3 There are many examples of services in Reading which have delivered against the Care Act 2014 principles including our Extra Care provision, our technology enabled care offer, and our occupational therapy teams supporting and maximising independence.
- 3.4 The White Paper builds on the vision of the Care Act 2014 by setting out a 10-year vision for support and care in England and revolves around 3 objectives:
- People have choice, control and support to live independent lives.
  - People can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support.
  - People find adult social care fair and accessible.
- 3.5 Social care is means tested and is funded privately or where publicly funded this is through central government finance settlements, local government revenue and in recent years the government has also provided additional ring-fenced funding for adult social care.
- 3.6 Adult social care funding has been under pressure for some time with a sizable estimated social care ‘funding gap’ between the resources available and demand and cost pressures for the additional funding required by 2024-25.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Reforming adult social care, including how people pay for care, has been an issue for successive governments and several reform proposals have been made. In July 2011, the Commission on the Funding of Care and Support, chaired by Sir Andrew Dilnot, published its report ‘*Fairer Care Funding*’. This is particularly relevant to the current proposals and made several recommendations for reform, including:
- A lifetime cap on the contribution that people aged over 65 would be expected to make towards their personal care costs, after which they would be eligible for full support from the state.
  - Increasing the upper capital limit.
  - A standard rate for services other than personal care provided in a care home.
- 4.2 Whilst the Coalition Government accepted the Dilnot Commission’s proposals in principle, implementation was delayed and then effectively indefinitely postponed. In 2017, the then government said it would set out its proposals for adult social care funding in a green paper.
- 4.3 The Conservative Party’s 2019 manifesto confirmed the intention to seek a cross-party consensus for proposals to reform how people pay for adult social care. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there was a delay in publication, but at the Spending Review 2020 the Government confirmed their intention to introduce sustainable improvement of the adult social care system, with this position reiterated at the Queen’s Speech in May 2021.

##### **The Proposed Reforms (published in 2021)**

*Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health & Social Care* (September 2021) confirmed the intention to introduce wide ranging new legislation for health and social care, with the ambition of a more integrated health and social care sector.

The White Paper which followed *People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform* (December 2021) sets out a 10-year vision which will be achieved through co-production

with a range of stakeholders and partners to shape and deliver new and improved services across a range of areas:

- Integration of housing into local health and care strategies
- Adoption of technology and digital tools to achieve widespread digitalisation across social care
- Investment in the social care workforce to ensure staff have the right training and qualifications, feel valued and recognised for their skills and commitment and have their wellbeing prioritised.
- New practical support services to make minor repairs and changes in people's homes to help people remain independent and safe in their homes, alongside increasing the upper limit of the Disabled Facilities Grant for home adaptations such as stair lifts, wet rooms and home technologies.
- A change in services for unpaid carers.
- Support to local areas to help them innovate and provide new and different ways to help people understand and access support available.
- Additional funding to increase the support offer across adult social care to improve the delivery of care and support services, including assisting local authorities to better plan and develop the support and care options available.

- 4.4 As part of the suite of changes the Government has also announced plans to substantially increase funding for health and social care over the next three years (2022-2025), to be funded by a new tax, the Health and Social Care Levy. The Health and Social Care Levy Act 2022, which provides for the introduction of the new levy, received Royal Assent in October 2021. The funds from the Health and Social Care Levy will be ringfenced for investment in health and social care.

The levy will be based on National Insurance contributions (NICs). From 2023, the levy will also apply to individuals working above State Pension age, who are currently liable to pay NICs on their earnings. The government also plans to increase the rates of income tax that apply to income from dividends.

£5.4 billion of revenue from the levy will be used to support adult social care in England over the next three years (2022-2025) as follows:

- £3.6 will be used to introduce a cap on care costs and reform the social care means test. The funding will also be used to help local authorities better sustain their local care markets by moving towards a fairer cost of care
- £1.7 billion will be used to support wider system reform.

- 4.5 These new reforms will complement the existing provision allowing people in need of residential care to defer payment of their care home fees to avoid selling their property. This system has been in place since 2015 and there is now a plan to undertake work to review the existing scheme in order to provide more flexibility for people to defer their care payments. A deferred payment agreement is essentially a loan given by the local authority, which is usually secured against the value of a person's property. The intention is to allow a person to delay paying their care costs to avoid having to sell their property in their lifetime to pay for residential care.

- 4.6 In addition, the reforms intend to tackle the inequity faced by some people who fund their own care. The intention is to implement a provision under the Care Act 2014 (Section 18.3) which will ensure that people who fund their own care are able to ask their local authority to arrange their care for them to ensure best value. Currently people who pay for their own care can pay significantly greater sums for care than those funded by Councils and the NHS (under Continuing Healthcare). This is designed to enable Councils to take account of their commissioning ability to secure lower rates for self-funders; as a result, the costs paid by self-funders and the state should align.

- 4.7 The information available so far has outlined that along with the care cap, anyone with less than £20,000 of assets will not pay anything towards their care from their assets.

People with between £20,000 and £100,000 of assets will be eligible for some means-tested financial support on a sliding scale.

Further details and guidance will be published nationally in the form of statutory guidance which will be consulted on and via the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS).

## 5. ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

- 5.1 If someone needs care local authorities will continue to assess:
- a) their care needs and which of those needs are eligible to be met by the Local Authority and
  - b) whether they should receive financial support to help with care costs, via a means test assessment.

Like the current system, the means test will be based on total assets, including both the value of a person's home and their savings. However, if a person needs to continue to live in their own home, it will be excluded from the assessment of total chargeable assets. This is known as the housing disregard and is unchanged from the current rules.

The new means test for adult social care will come into effect in October 2023 based on a person's income and savings.

- 5.2 The reforms will apply to all adults in receipt of adult social care in England, no matter their age. When these reforms are implemented, around 150,000 people will be directly benefiting at any one point in time.
- 5.3 As outlined, details of the proposals for NHS and Social Care integration are to follow. It is also important to recognise that the role of the Health and Social Care Regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will also be subject to change with the introduction of an Assurance Framework for local authority adult social care provision.

## 6. APPROACH TO BE TAKEN IN READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

- 6.1 The approach to be taken by Reading Borough Council to prepare for the reforms:

The response to the reforms will be led by the Deputy Director, Commissioning and Transformation and the Assistant Director Safeguarding, Quality, Performance and Practice.

- 6.2 Detailed analysis will be required across a range of activity and there will be full engagement with LGA and ADASS, regionally and nationally and to keep abreast of the publication of statutory guidance and consultation deadlines.

- 6.3 Building on our current operating frameworks areas of focus will include:

**Financial Planning** - there is no details currently about the profile of the £5.4 billion over the three-year period but extensive financial planning will be needed to determine the likely local impact of the new arrangements.

**Cost of Care** - each local authority will be required to undertake a Cost of Care exercise. Piloting is in the early stages nationally and the outputs from the pilot sites will be considered.

**Policy framework** - it will be necessary for Reading Borough Council to undertake a full review of the policy framework related to the assessment of need, funding and charging arrangements.

**Strategies** - there will need to be a refresh of existing commissioning strategies and our approach to technology enabled care.

**Partnership working** - a key change will be our partnership arrangements to broaden the focus on the community and voluntary sector.

**Communication and engagement** - information and publicity will need to be produced for the public, existing and future service users, partners and stakeholders.

**Training and development** - a programme of facilitated workforce training and development sessions and possibly some amendments to roles and responsibilities of some postholders.

**IT and systems changes** - plans will need to be made to amend existing systems including IT changes.

## **7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

7.1 The planned reforms will be implemented in line with the vision of Reading Borough Council's to help Reading realise its potential - and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no anticipated environmental or climate implications.

## **9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

9.1 A communication and engagement strategy will be required, which will be developed alongside any key changes in service provision.

## **10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be required.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Legal implications will need to be assessed in full as further details become available.

## **12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Much of the detail has still to be worked through to fully understand the financial implications, although the major financial implications to local authorities will be around the care cap and the impact on the care market.

12.2 The proposals include a care cap on eligible personal care costs of £86k in a lifetime which is expected to be introduced from October 2023. Those paying for their care at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 will not be able to count any care costs incurred prior to this date as counting towards the care cap sum. Daily living allowances of £200 per week have been assumed nationally.

12.3 The impact of the care cap is likely to have a greater impact on those local authorities where there are large numbers of self-funders and combined with the fair cost of care work is likely to drive up the weekly cost of care home and home care fees as well as other forms of care such as direct payments, extra care housing and supported living. There is a question as to whether the £3.6bn will be enough to cover the costs of these changes as no financial impact analysis has been undertaken.

- 12.4 It is also of note that the upper limit of £100,000 is more than four times the current limit of £23,250. This is likely to be significant for an authority such as Reading which supports more younger adults than older adults.
- 12.5 The investment of £1.7bn in improvements in the wider social care system seems is viewed as small given the level of underfunding of adult social care over the last decade or more, and it is likely that the service is likely to remain under pressure.

### 13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Government White Paper (December 2021) *People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform.*

Commission on the Funding of Care and Support (July 2011) chaired by Sir Andrew Dilnot, *Fairer Care Funding.*

Government Policy Paper (September 2021) *Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health & Social Care*

Department of Health and Social Care (July 2021) *Health and Care Bill: integration measures - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)*



# ACE Report

School Admission arrangement  
2023-2024

For decision     For discussion     For information

**SUMMARY**

To advice that School Admissions are asking the Adults Social Care, Childrens Services and Education (ACE Committee) to determine the admission arrangement for 2023-2024

**OWNER**

Victoria Hannington, School Admissions Manager

**VERSION 1**

**DATE**

6 December, 2021

**REVIEW DATE**

Yearly for new admission arrangement

## Contents

1	PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT .....	3
2.	RECOMMENDED ACTION .....	3
3.	POLICY CONTEXT .....	4
4.	THE PROPOSAL.....	5
4.1	Primary and Secondary School Co-ordinated schemes 2023-24 .....	5
4.2	Admission Policy for Community Primary, Infant and Junior Schools 2023-2024.....	5
4.3	Relevant Area.....	5
5.	CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS.....	5
6	ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS .....	5
7.	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION .....	5
8.	EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT .....	5
9.	LEGAL IMPLICATIONS.....	6
10.	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS.....	6
11.	HR IMPLICATIONS .....	6
12.	COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS.....	6
13.	BACKGROUND PAPERS.....	6



<b>TO:</b>	<b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDRENS SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>19 January 2022</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>SCHOOL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS 2022/23</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>ASHLEY PEARCE</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>BFFC</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>SUE IMBRIANO</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>INTERIM DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b>Sue.Imbriano@BrighterFuturesforChildren.org</b>

## 1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report invites the Committee to determine;
- The admissions arrangements for Community Primary Schools in Reading for the school year 2023/24.
  - The coordinated scheme for primary and junior schools for the 2023/24 school year.
  - The coordinated scheme for secondary schools for the 2023/24 school year.
  - The Relevant Area 2023.
  - Maps of the Primary catchment areas.
- 1.2 These arrangements for 2023/24 comply with the School Admissions Code 2021.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the scheme attached at Annexes A, B and C as the admissions arrangements for 2022/23 for community schools in Reading and the local arrangements for complying with the national coordinated primary school admission procedures for the allocation of primary school places for residents of Reading Borough be agreed.
- 2.2 That the scheme attached at Annex D as the local arrangements for complying with the national coordinated secondary admissions procedure for the allocation of secondary school places for 2023/24 for residents of Reading Borough be agreed.

- 2.3 That the relevant area as attached in Annex E which sets out the organisations that must be consulted for any admissions arrangements for schools in Reading be agreed.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 School admissions are subject to detailed requirements, set out in law and particularly the School Admissions Code 2021, published by the Government and approved by Parliament. As part of those requirements, local authorities must draw up schemes for coordinating admissions to all maintained schools in their area. The purpose of coordinated schemes is to ensure that every parent/carer of a child living in Reading who has completed and submitted an on time application receives one offer of a school place at the conclusion of the normal admissions round. The schemes set out a process and timescale to enable the offer of a single school place. They do not affect the right of individual admission authorities to set and operate their own admission arrangements but they do include arrangements for resolving multiple offers, where a place can be offered at more than one school. Reading Borough Council is the admitting authority for community and voluntary controlled schools within the borough.
- 3.2 In addition, the Council is also required to determine the admission policy for community schools which includes the number of places to be made available at each school and the oversubscription criteria to be applied where there are more applicants than places available. Where the over-subscription criteria include catchment areas these must also be approved. The governing bodies of academies, free schools, voluntary aided and foundation schools are required to determine their own admission number and oversubscription criteria. Those schools also operate their own arrangements as part of the coordinated scheme – and where they are oversubscribed, continue to decide which applicants best meet their oversubscription criteria.
- 3.3 Reading Borough Council last consulted on the policy in 2018 and therefore there is no duty to consult this year.
- 3.4 Reading Borough Council deliver its school admissions service through Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC). BFfC is an independent, not-for-profit company, wholly owned by Reading Borough Council, set up in December 2018 to deliver children’s services, early help, education and SEND services in Reading
- 3.6 The documents must be determined by the 28 February 2022 to ensure Reading is compliant with the school admissions code and published on the BFfC website by 15 March 2022.
- 3.7 BFfC are reviewing the admissions policies/procedure of maintained special schools and resourced bases within mainstream and academy schools. Legal advice is being sort. Any finding will be brought back to ACE committee at a late date

## 4. THE PROPOSAL

### 4.1 Primary and Secondary School Co-ordinated schemes 2023-24

These schemes have been amended to reflect appropriate dates. Both policies were approved on the previous consultation for 2018 entry and there are no significant changes.

### 4.2 Admission Policy for Community Primary, Infant and Junior Schools 2023-2024

The policy has no significant changes from the proposals for 2022/23.

### 4.3 Relevant Area

The Relevant area outlines the organisations that must be consulted by all schools in Reading when consulting on admissions policies. No amendments have been made to this.

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The admission schemes contribute to the aims of ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

5.2 It also contributes to the aims to establish Reading as a learning City and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit.

## 6 ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

6.2 Where possible children are placed as near as possible to their local school. Parental preference and the need to divert children to other schools that are not their preference, means that some children are placed in schools outside their local community. This can have an impact on travel by public transport and in cars.

## 7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way".

7.2 This duty has been met. We have a statutory duty to consult every 7 years on the coordinated scheme for school admissions. We last consulted between 17 October 2018 and 10 December 2018 as per the school admission code. The outcome from that was reported to ACE on the 14 February 2019.

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—



- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision

## 9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Compliance with School Admissions Code (2021)

9.2 Compliance with SEND code of Practice (2015)

## 10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None arising directly from this report

## 11. HR IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None arising directly from this report

## 12. COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The new policies will be shared with all local Schools and neighbouring local Authorities by the School Admission Team. The new 2023 admissions guides will be updated as will the relevant pages on the BfFC website.

## 13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 [supporting regulations](#), the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)



**Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council  
Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for the 2023/2024 academic  
year.**

**For September 2023 entry**

**Determined on xxx**

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Applications.....	4
Late Applications.....	5
Changes of preference.....	5
Change of Address .....	6
Processing Applications .....	6
Exchange of information.....	6
Resolving multiple offers .....	6
Informing schools.....	7
Informing Parents .....	7
Waiting Lists .....	7
Withdrawing a place .....	8
Requests for admission outside the normal age group .....	8
Disputes between Parents.....	9
In-Year Admissions.....	9
Timetable for the Primary & Junior School Admissions Round 2023-24.....	10

## Introduction

Reading Borough Council delivers its school admissions service through Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC). BFfC is an independent, not-for-profit company, wholly owned by Reading Borough Council, set up in December 2018 to deliver children's services, early help, education and SEND services in Reading.

The Reading coordinated scheme was last consulted on between 17 October 2018 and 10 December 2018. There have been no significant changes since that consultation took place, therefore no requirement for a public consultation.

This Scheme is made under section 84 of the Standards and Framework Act 1998 and in accordance with the school Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Coordination of admissions arrangements (England) Regulations 2014.

The purpose of this coordinated scheme for primary/infant/junior school admissions is to ensure that every parent/carer of a child **resident in Reading Borough**, who has submitted an application, receives **one offer** of a school place at the conclusion of the normal admissions round. At its heart is clear communication between Reading school admissions, other Local Authorities, community, and all state schools in Reading.

Parents/carers who live in the Borough of Reading **must** submit an application to Reading school admissions if they require a place for their child in any state school as part of a routine admissions round, including schools in other local authorities, academies and free schools. Applications cannot be submitted to a school or to the local authority in which the school is situated. Parents/carers living within any other local authority areas must apply through their own local authority admissions service.

Coordination with Reading school admissions does not affect the right of individual admission authorities to set and operate their own admission arrangements. Admission authorities for Reading schools will need to comply with the timetable set out below.

These arrangements deal mainly with a child's first admission to school during the school year from September 2023 to August 2024. The children concerned are those born between 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2019. The place offered is a full-time place from September 2023.

Admission to Junior School in September is for children born between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016.

**National Offer Day for Primary and Junior Admissions is 17 April 2023**

Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for the 2023/2024 academic year.

## Applications

Reading Borough Council will put in place procedures that, where possible, ensure all parents/carers living in the Borough of Reading (with a child eligible to start school in September 2023) will be aware of the application process. Children on roll at a Reading nursery school/early years setting in September 2022 will receive an information pack in November 2022.

Children living in Reading and attending an infant school will be sent information about the application process for admission to a junior school.

Parents/carers are encouraged to apply online via the Reading Citizen Portal. The site will be open from **11 November 2022 until 15 January 2023**.

Parents/carers will be invited to list four preferred schools and rank them in priority order. Parents/carers may also give reasons for their preferences. Parents/carers may list any state schools, including those outside the local authority; this includes academies, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled Schools.

The Reading common application form (and the online terms and conditions) will include a statement requiring parents to confirm they have read the *Guide for Parents and Carers* and accept the policies and procedures in that document.

Parents/carers should return their completed forms directly to the school admissions team at BFFC.

Parents/carers will complete the common application form online by the agreed deadline. The school admissions team will validate the application address. Validation, where possible, will be by reference to Council Tax data held by the local authority. Where this is not possible, proof of residence will be required in the form of ownership documents or tenancy agreement.

Where, as part of its admission arrangements, a school requires additional information, parents/carers may also choose to complete a supplementary form to support their application. This should be submitted separately to the school. The *Guide for Parents and Carers* will identify those Reading schools for which a supplementary form may be necessary. These forms will be available from the BFFC website. Supplementary forms are not applications and parent/carers must submit an application to Reading school admissions either on the common application form or online.

The National Closing Date is **15 January 2023**.

## Late Applications

Applications received after the closing date will be treated as 'late' applications. However, if the late submission of the application is caused by extenuating circumstances (e.g. sudden illness or death of a close family member or the family having very recently moved to the area), written evidence may be provided to support this. In such cases, the application may be treated as on time if evidence is received before **1 February 2023**.

Where no evidence is provided, it will be assumed that the application could reasonably have been submitted by the closing date. In such cases, the application will be treated as late and considered after all on time applications have been allocated.

All applications received from the **2 February** are considered late and will be passed to the appropriate admission authority in Reading (or to the appropriate local authority) **approximately two weeks after National Offer Day**.

In these cases, parents/carers will be informed about the outcome of their application as per the timetable below, after National Offer Day. Applications for oversubscribed schools will be added to the waiting lists of those schools and ranked according to their oversubscription criteria.

Late applications will be processed **approximately two weeks after National Offer Day**. The first round of allocations, following National Offer Day will be **at the end of May 2023**. After this date late application will be processed regularly. In each case, the cut-off date for consideration in each round of allocations will be 1 week prior to the allocation date.

## Changes of preference

Changes of preference must be submitted using a new application form (paper or online). If received by the school admissions team before **15 January 2023** it will be accepted as on time and will replace any previous application. Any preferences to be retained from a previous application should be listed on subsequent applications.

Changes of preference received after **15 January 2023** will be treated as late applications in the way described above. However, applications for late change of preference where there are extenuating circumstances (e.g. sudden illness or death of a close family member or the family having very recently moved to the area) may be treated as on time, provided written evidence is supplied to support the late submission. This should be received by the school admissions team before **1 February 2023**. If no evidence is provided, the application will be treated as late. Any application for change of preference(s) received after **1 February 2023** will replace any previous application and be marked as late. Please think very carefully about submitting an application after this date, particularly if you have already submitted an on time application.

Approximately two weeks after National Offer Day, late changes of preferences will be passed to the appropriate admission authority in Reading or to the appropriate local authority to be considered.

## Change of Address

As required by the School Admissions Code 2021, changes of address made after **15 January and before 1 February 2023** may be considered as on time. If an applicant changes address after the **1 February 2023** they will need to submit a new application, based on the new address. The new application will be marked as late and their previous application may be withdrawn. Documentary evidence of the change of address will be required.

## Processing Applications

### Exchange of information

As per the timetable below, the Reading school admissions team will forward applications to other local authorities and admission authorities in Reading. At the same time other local authorities will forward applications to Reading for their residents to be considered for Reading schools.

Depending on the arrangements agreed with the governing body of each school, the school admissions team will provide the school with relevant information to enable them to rank against their oversubscription criteria, as per the timetable. Reading school admissions will not pass on the details of the parent/carers preference ranking to the school, and no school will be told about other schools a parent has listed.

As per the timetable, each admission authority in Reading will rank the applications according to their published oversubscription criteria and return ranked lists to the school admissions team.

### Resolving multiple offers

As per the timetable, Reading school admissions will inform other local authorities of places offered in Reading schools to their residents. During the exchange of information, Reading school admissions will consider all cases where a child can be offered more than one of their preferences. In such cases, a place offered will be at the school a parent/carer listed highest in preference.

If a place cannot be offered at one of the preferred schools listed by the parent/carer, a place will normally be offered at the catchment school (if that school has spaces remaining) or, the nearest Reading school with a place available. If the offered school is one where Reading Borough Council is not the admission authority, this will be in consultation with the governing body of the school in question. If the nearest school with places is a faith school, parents/carers will be offered this as an option. Should the parent/carer be unhappy with a

Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for the **2023/2024** academic year.

faith school being offered, they will be informed of other schools with available spaces (which may be further from their home). Where no places are available at any Reading schools, parents/carers will be informed and alternative schools (outside Reading Borough) may be offered. Such an offer will depend on availability and the agreement of the appropriate admission authority. This will not preclude parents/carers from requesting an alternative school, nor from lodging an appeal for their preferred school with the admission authority.

## Informing schools

As per the timetable, the school admissions team will send each Reading primary and infant school a list of pupils to be offered a place at their school. This will be confidential to the school and must not be passed on to parents/carers.

## Informing Parents

On **National Offer Day**, parents/carers who submitted an online application will receive an email with a formal offer and may view their offer online.

Parents/carers who submitted a paper application will receive details of their offer by letter (posted 2<sup>nd</sup> Class). The formal offer will identify whether the offer is made on behalf of the governing body of a school or another local authority. The letter will:

- Inform parents of the school offered;
- Indicate how to accept a school place and the deadline for accepting.
- Provide information about the right to defer admission to a later term and any option for part-time provision.
- Provide information on school transport;

If the school offered is not their first preference, parents/carers will also be supplied with the following information:

- Where they can find information showing how places were allocated at oversubscribed schools in Reading.
- How to submit an appeal.
- If the place offered is not their highest preference school(s), the child's name will be added to the waiting list(s) of all of the school(s) they listed higher in preference. Parents/carers are required to advise Reading school admissions if they do not wish their child's name to remain on a waiting list.
- Contact information for other local authorities.

## Waiting Lists

**Two weeks after National Offer Day**, 'waiting lists' will be administered for schools with more applicants than places available. A child's position on a waiting list is determined according to the oversubscription criteria of the school. When a place becomes available, this will be offered to the child who is top of the waiting list. A child's position on a waiting list may go up or down for a number of reasons (e.g. pupil withdrawals or new and revised applications).

Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for the **2023/2024** academic year.

When a place is allocated from the waiting list, the child's current allocation (for a lower preference school) will be removed and allocated to another student, if appropriate. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school admissions team if they no longer wish to remain on the waiting list of a school. It will be assumed that a child is to remain on the waiting list of all schools listed as a higher preference than the allocated school, unless the parent/carer indicates otherwise.

Waiting lists, for all schools in the Reading Borough, will be kept until **31 August 2024**. After this date, the policy of the individual school(s) will be followed. After the coordinated admissions round ends on **31 August 2023**, any waiting list will be treated as In-Year admissions and will follow the individual policy of the school.

### **Withdrawing a place**

If the offered place is not accepted **within four weeks of national offer day**, Reading school admissions will send a reminder and allow a further seven days for a reply. If there is still no response, the place may be withdrawn. If a school place has been offered on the basis of fraudulent, or intentionally misleading, information (which denied the place to another child), the place will be withdrawn

### **Requests for admission outside the normal age group**

Parents/carers may request their child be admitted outside the year group suggested by the child's date of birth (i.e. admissions to Reception, rather than Year 1, in **September 2024**). In such cases, applicants should apply using the common application form by **15 January 2023**. They should **also** complete the offset request form (having read the separate guide). The offset request form should be submitted to the school admissions team before **1 February 2023** to be considered prior to National Offer Day. The application will be forwarded to the relevant admissions authority of the listed schools for consideration and the school admissions team will seek the views of the child's early years setting. Each case will be carefully considered by the admissions authority. Parents/carers will be informed of the decision in writing, before the National Offer Day, setting out clearly the reasons for the decision. Any request received after **1 February 2023**, will be processed after National Offer Day.

If the offset request is agreed, parents/carers must formally accept the offset. Following their acceptance, the application submitted for September **2023** will be withdrawn. Parents/carers will not be told which school their child would have been allocated before the decision is accepted or declined. A new application must then be submitted in the following year for entry from September **2024**.

Requests for schools outside Reading will be referred to the relevant local authority for consideration under that Council's scheme.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission outside the normal age group. Therefore, if an application for **2024**

Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for the **2023/2024** academic year.

entry lists different schools to the application withdrawn in 2023, it will, if required, be forwarded to different admissions authorities for their consideration. Where this is the case, the offset request form must be resubmitted.

## Disputes between Parents

When completing the application, a parent/carer must tick the box to declare they have parental responsibility for the child. It is assumed that the application is made with the agreement of all parties having parental responsibility. Where one or more applications are received for a child, and there is dispute about the preferences or preference order on the application, the applications will be withdrawn until a court order is provided detailing the arrangements for schooling. If consensus between parents or a court order is not received by **1 February 2023**, all preferences will be removed and new preferences will be inserted in the following order: catchment area schools(s), closest appropriate Reading schools by straight-line distance to the home address. This is to ensure there is an allocated school for the child. The home address used will be that of the parent/carer receiving child benefit for the child or, where no parent claims this, the address registered with the child's current school.

In the event of a dispute after National Offer Day, the allocated school will remain in place and the child's name will be removed from any waiting list. The parents/carers must then reach agreement about which schools are listed on the application form and both provide written confirmation of the preferences to the School Admissions Team.

## In-Year Admissions

The In- Year admissions arrangements for the school year, September 2023 - July 2024 will use the determined policies of 2023/2024.

Parents/carers seeking admission for their child into Year 1 – Year 6 of a primary/infant or junior school in Reading Borough must apply to Reading school admissions. Parents/carers may apply direct to some voluntary-aided, academy or free schools in the Borough, however, the majority of these schools have opted to be part of the coordinated admission arrangements and applications are normally submitted to the Reading school admissions team. A list of schools to which a direct application is necessary is available from the BFfC website. Where a school listed is in another local authority, the parent/carer will be advised to apply directly to that local authority and the application for that school will follow the relevant local authority's scheme

## Timetable for the Primary & Junior School Admissions Round 2023-24

Action	Date
<i>Guide for Parents and Carers</i> to be placed on BfC Website.	By 12 September 2022
Parents/carers to receive application information.	By 12 September 2022
Online admissions site open.	11 November 2022 – 15 January 2023
National Closing date for receipt of applications.	15 January 2023
Late/change of preference applications accepted in extenuating circumstances, written support must be submitted at time of application.	1 February 2023
Application details sent to voluntary-aided/Academes schools in Reading and other local authorities. Own Admissions Authority schools to provide Reading school admissions team with a list of children ranked according to the school's oversubscription criteria.	During February 2023
Coordination between other local authorities of offers that can be made to their residents in Reading schools.	By 2 April 2023
National Offer Day - Offer notifications sent to Reading Residents	17 April 2023
Deadline for parents to accept.	1 May 2023
Late applications for over-subscribed schools added to the waiting lists/change of preferences processed.	From 2 May 2023
Coordination with other LA's ends.	31 August 2023
Waiting lists held for Reading schools.	Until at least 31 July 2024



**ADMISSION POLICY FOR COMMUNITY INFANT, JUNIOR**  
**AND**  
**PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2023-2024**

For September 2023 entry  
Determined on XX

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Other admitting authorities within Reading Borough Council .....	3
Cohort .....	3
Admission of children outside the normal age to Reading Borough Council Community Primary Schools .....	3
Oversubscription Criteria for Community Primary and Infant Schools .....	4
Priority within the Oversubscription Criteria.....	5
Oversubscription Criteria for Community Junior Schools – Geoffrey Field Junior School.....	5
Priority within the oversubscription criteria.....	6
Notes relating to the above oversubscription criteria.....	6
Note 1 – Category 1 – Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children .....	6
Children who were previously in state care outside England.....	7
Note 2 – Category 2 Medical/Social Reasons .....	7
Note 3 – Category 3 – Siblings .....	8
Note 4 – Category 3 – Siblings .....	8
Catchment area.....	8
Tiebreaker .....	8
Multiple births (twins, triplets etc.) .....	8
Parent/Carers.....	9
Home address .....	9
Split living arrangements .....	10
Siblings .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Deferring a Place.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Part Time Admissions.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Waiting Lists.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Returning Crown Servants and Armed Forces Personnel.....	12
In-Year Admission Arrangements for the School Year 2022-2023 .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appeals.....	13
Admissions Numbers – Reading Community Infant, Junior and Primary Schools.....	13

## Introduction

Reading Borough Council is the admitting authority for community and voluntary controlled schools within the borough.

Reading Borough Council delivers its school admissions service through Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC). BFfC is an independent, not-for-profit company, wholly owned by Reading Borough Council, set up in December 2018 to deliver children's services, early help, education and SEND services in Reading

This document sets out the local authority's admission arrangements for entry to schools in September 2023.

The Reading School Admissions policy was last consulted on between 17 October 2018 and 10 December 2018. There have been no significant changes since that consultation took place, therefore no requirement for a public consultation.

These arrangements comply with the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the School Admissions Code 2021 (conditional on the 2021 Code passing through Parliament. All such variations should come into effect on 1 September 2021) and the School Admissions Appeals Code 2012.

## Other admitting authorities within Reading Borough Council

Voluntary aided schools, free schools and academies are their own admitting authorities and are required to publish their own proposals for consultation (if required) and determine their own admissions arrangements. Details of their proposals and/or determined arrangements should be obtained from each individual school.

**National Offer Day for Primary and Junior Admissions is 17 April 2023**

## Cohort

Applications for children born between 1-9-2018 and 31-8-2019 will be considered for admission to a reception class in 2023 as part of the 2023/2024 routine admission round.

Applications for admission to junior schools in September 2023 will be considered for those born between 1-9-2015 and 31-8-2016.

## Admission of children outside the normal age to Reading Borough Council Community Primary Schools

Children are normally allocated according to their chronological age. Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to Reception rather than Year 1 - in September 2024.

Reading Borough Council, as the Admission Authority for community primary schools, will consider each case individually and make a decision in every case that is in the best interest of the child,

taking into account:

- The parent's/carer's views;
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development from their current setting;
- The child's medical history and the views of a medical professional (where relevant);
- Whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group;
- Whether the child may have fallen into a lower age group had they not been born prematurely.
- DfE document 'Advice on the admission of summer born children';
- DfE document 'School Admissions Code'
- LGO document 'Summer born admissions';
- The views of the head teacher of the school(s) concerned
- The views of the child's early years setting (if attending one)

To request a child's admission be delayed to September 2024, parents/carers need to read the offset guide and complete the required form. It is recommended they make an application for a Reception place in the normal way for September 2023 by 15 January 2023 so that the application can be considered. Each case will be carefully considered and parents/carers will be informed of the decision in writing, before the National Offer Day, setting out clearly the reasons for the decision. If the request to delay admission is agreed, the parents/carers must issue a formal acceptance, declaring their intention to proceed on this basis. In this case, the application submitted for September 2023 entry will be withdrawn (before a Reception place is offered) and a new application must then be submitted (for entry in September 2024) when the next primary admissions round opens in November 2023. Parents will not be made aware of the school they would have been allocated before the decision is accepted or declined. The decision made by Reading school admissions panel is not binding on any other Admission Authority and therefore schools may come to different decisions based on the evidence. If the request is refused, parents must decide whether to accept the offered place for Reception 2023 or refuse it and make an in-year application for a Year 1 place in September 2024.

## Oversubscription Criteria for Community Primary and Infant Schools

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming a preferred community primary or infant school will be allocated a place above all other children.

The oversubscription criteria take no account of the parent's/carer's order of preference. Applications for each school named by the parents/carers will be ranked according to the criteria set out below if there are more applications than places available.

Category		Notes
1	A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the	Provided appropriate evidence is submitted – See Note 1.

	exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).	
2	Families who have strong medical or social grounds for their child's admission to a particular school.	See Note 2.
3	Children whose permanent home address is in the catchment area of the school and have a sibling at the school at the time of application who is expected to be attending the school when the child is due to start school.	This category may apply in other circumstances - See Notes 3 and 4.
4	Children whose permanent home address is in the catchment area of the school.	
5	Children whose permanent home address is not in the catchment area of the school but have a sibling at the school at the time of application who is expected to be attending the school when the child is due to start school.	See Note 4.
6	Children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) at the time application who attends the nursery unit at the school.	
7	Other Children	

### Priority within the Oversubscription Criteria

Within each of the above categories 1-6 and 8, priority will be given to children who are in receipt of the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Service Premium or Pupil Premium (PP) at the time of application. To be considered for this priority, parents/carers **must tick the relevant box on their child's application and, by doing so, permit the Reading School Admissions team to verify the conditions have been met for the priority to be applied.**

### Oversubscription Criteria for Community Junior Schools – Geoffrey Field Junior School

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school will be allocated a place above all other children.

The oversubscription criteria take no account of the parent's/carer's order of preference and applications for each school named by the parents/carers will be ranked according to the criteria set out below if there are more applications than places available.

Older siblings still attending the linked junior school will be considered as siblings for admission to the infant school.

Category		Notes
1	A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order <sup>91</sup> including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).	Provided appropriate evidence is submitted – See Note 1.
2	Families who have strong medical or social grounds for their child's admission to a particular school.	See Note 2.
3	Children whose permanent home address is in the catchment area of the school and have a sibling at the school, or Geoffrey Field Infant School at the time of application who is expected to be attending the school when the child is due to start school.	This category may apply in other circumstances - See Notes 3 and 4.
4	Children whose permanent home address is in the catchment area of the school.	
5	Children whose permanent home address is not in the catchment area of the school but have a sibling at the school or Geoffrey Field Infant School at the time of application who is expected to be attending the school when the is due to start school.	See Note 4.
6	Children who are attending Geoffrey Field Infant School at the time of application.	
7	Other Children.	

### Priority within the oversubscription criteria

Within each of the above categories 1-6 and 8, priority will be given to children who are in receipt of the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Service Premium or Pupil Premium (PP) at the time of application. To be considered for this priority, parents/carers **must tick the relevant box on their child's application and, by doing so, permit the Reading School Admissions team to verify the conditions have been met for the priority to be applied.**

### Notes relating to the above oversubscription criteria.

#### Note 1 – Category 1 – Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

A 'Looked After' child is a) in the care of a local authority, or b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making an application for a school place.

A previously 'Looked After' child is a child who was looked after, but has been adopted or became subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order immediately following having been 'Looked After'. Confirmation will be required from the local authority that last looked after the

child that the child was looked after immediately prior to the issuing of one of the following orders:

An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

### **Children who were previously in state care outside England**

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

The care may have been provided in an orphanage or other setting but the child may have been adopted and is no longer in state care. Evidence of the previously looked after status and/or the adoption will be requested. Where such evidence is not available, the Admissions Authority will work closely with BFFC Virtual School for Children Looked After to make a pragmatic decision based on the information available so that there is a local consistent approach.

### **Note 2 – Category 2 Medical/Social Reasons**

When submitting an application under criterion 2, families who have strong medical or social grounds for their child's admission to a particular school must provide written evidence. This may come from an independent professional aware of the case relating to the child, parent/carer or other children living at the same address (e.g. doctor, hospital consultant or psychologist for medical grounds or registered social or care worker, housing officer, the police or probation officer for social needs). This evidence must: be specific to the school in question; show why that school is the most suitable; what facilities will benefit the child, and why no other school can offer the same support. It is not enough for the professional to report what the parent/carer has told them.

If failure in awarding this priority would result in no appropriate school being allocated, the panel, after taking considering the evidence submitted, the parental preference and the catchment school, will allow categorization of medical/social grounds to the most appropriate school. This applies to those children whose social/medical needs can be met by one than one school but not many schools. For example, when reasons are due to mobility issues and a number of schools are equal distance and failure to award this would result in no appropriate school being allocated.

In addition, this category includes children who are subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order awarded to a family member in order to prevent the child being taken into care by a local authority. A copy of the order must be provided.

No individual officer will take responsibility for determining whether a case is ranked in the category. A panel of officers in the form of the School Admissions Panel will make the final decision. Evidence must be provided by **1 February 2023** to be considered as on time for National Offer Day. If evidence is received by the team after this date then it is at the discretion of the panel whether to accept these documents for "on time" allocations. The admissions team will not prompt parents to send evidence to support admission under this category but they may ask for further evidence if this is required to make a decision. If evidence is received before the **1 February 2023** parents will be informed, in writing, before National Offer Day as to whether this has been granted. This is not a guarantee of a place at a particular school.

### **Note 3 – Category 3 – Siblings**

Children whose home address is in the former catchment area of a school and have a sibling at the school and that sibling was admitted to the school from the same address will be treated as category 4 of the over-subscription.

### **Note 4 – Category 3 – Siblings**

If parents/carers applied for a place at their catchment area school for their child and it was not possible to offer a place at that school because the school was oversubscribed, a sibling protection applies. Where the child was admitted to a lower preference Reading community primary school, or allocated a place by the authority at an alternative Reading community primary school, the application for any younger siblings for that school will be treated as “catchment area” and considered under category 4. Where a parent does not list all schools in the catchment area for the home address at the time of application and a place would have been offered at a catchment area school had it been listed, they forfeit the right to sibling protection. Parents/carers must inform the admissions team at the time of application if they consider this exemption applies.

Where a space is allocated as part of an in-year admission at a school listed second preference or lower, or if a school closer to the child’s home address was available to parents and was refused, parents forfeit the right to this sibling protection for future admissions. Parents will be informed at the time of allocation if this right has been forfeited.

## **Catchment area**

The catchment area of the schools can be seen from attached maps. These are a guide only. Exact catchment area information for individual addresses can be found on Reading Borough Council’s website <https://my.reading.gov.uk/>

## **Tiebreaker**

If a school does not have enough places for all children in a particular category, places will be allocated to those living nearest the school. The distance is measured in miles as a straight line between the Ordnance Survey data point for the child’s home address and the school using Reading Borough Council digital mapping software. This distance is measured to three decimal places. In the rare event that it is not possible to decide between the applications of those pupils who have the same distance measurement, the place will be offered using random allocation. A member of Committee Services staff for Reading Borough Council will supervise the selection process.

## **Multiple births (twins, triplets etc.)**

Places are offered according to the oversubscription criteria. In the event that this would result in splitting multiple birth families, in the majority of cases the other child/children will be offered a place. In very exceptional circumstances, where the admission of more than one additional child to the year group causes prejudice to the provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources it may not be possible to offer a place to all multiple birth children.

In the event that siblings with a different date of birth, but in the same year group, are split by the oversubscription criteria, only one child will be offered a place. This applies to children during Key stage 1, up to and including Year 2, if admission would take a class over 30. Selection will be made

randomly by a representative of Reading Borough Council's Committee Services. It is open to the parents to decline this offer and seek places for all their children at another school or suggest the place is given to one of the other siblings. The other sibling(s) name(s) will put on the waiting list. If the admission is in Key Stage 2 or admission of the other siblings will not contravene infant class size regulations then each case will be considered and in most cases the other child/children will be offered a place (on the condition that the admission will not prejudice the provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources).

## Parent/Carers

A parent/carer is any person who has parental responsibility or care of the child. Parental responsibility for a child is set out in the Children Act 1989. Normally this parent/carer would reside with the child at the permanent home address stated on the application.

## Home address

Applications are processed based on the child's single permanent home address, where the child lives with parent(s) or a carer/legal guardian and are living at this address on the closing date for applications. By submitting an application, the parent/carer/legal guardian is confirming the child will be living at that address on National Offer Day. An address will not be accepted where the child was resident - other than with a parent or carer - unless this was part of a private fostering or formal care arrangement.

Checks will be made to determine whether an address declared on the application form is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. Some residential arrangements will be considered to be temporary arrangements. The Reading school admissions team will consider the available evidence to determine if, on the balance of probability, the declared home address is the child's permanent home. Where the applicant, or their partner or spouse, is reasonably considered to be living with them as a single family unit owns another property, has previously lived in it and has chosen not live in it (including where a home is rented out to a third party) the owned property will ordinarily be considered to be the permanent home. Special circumstances that might lead to the declared address being considered as a permanent home despite another home being owned or otherwise available for occupation will need to be declared at the point of application by parents. Without being exhaustive these might include:

- an owned property being a considerable distance from the preferred school, indicating that the family had permanently relocated to the new home; or
- an owned property that is uninhabitable and cannot reasonably be made habitable in the period leading up to admission to the school; or
- an owned property that is in the process of being sold and the family live permanently in the declared property; or
- a situation, following divorce or separation, where the family home cannot be occupied by the applicant or otherwise treated as the child's permanent home.

Where the declared address is rented and the applicant has no claim on any other property, the declared address may be considered to be a temporary address if there is evidence the applicant has chosen to rent the property solely for the period necessary for a child to be admitted to a particular school.

Reference to Reading Borough Council tax records will be made to determine a single address for consideration of a place under criteria 4 or 5. It is for the applicant to satisfy the admissions authority that they live at the address stated.

Applicants will be asked to declare that the address used is expected to be their place of residence beyond the date of the pupil starting school. Applicants are required to advise of any change of circumstance at any time prior to the child starting school. If the applicant does not declare such arrangements, or a different address is used on the application where the child does not usually live; it will be considered that a false declaration has been made and it may be decided to decline to offer a place at a particular school, or to withdraw the offer of a place. In deciding whether a place was allocated on the basis of a misleading or fraudulent application, an admissions panel will consider any supporting evidence giving reasons why the move was necessary prior to the child starting school.

It is important to declare if there is to be a change of address prior to the child starting school. If the applicant already owns a property which is in the process of being sold, the admissions team are able to accept the address of the new property only on submission of the appropriate evidence in support (e.g. completion of contracts letter on both the new property and, where possible, disposal of their current property). The deadline for submission of evidence to support a move is **1 February 2023**. If the move takes place later or evidence is submitted later, the application will be marked late and considered after National Offer Day.

If the applicant is renting the property, the tenancy agreement must be dated **1 February 2023** or prior, to be accepted as on time. If the tenancy agreement then expires prior to National Offer Day, the applicant must provide evidence showing that they still reside at the property past that date. If the applicant moves to a new rented property after the **1 February** the application will be marked late and considered after National Offer Day.

A temporary address cannot be used to obtain a school place. Temporary addresses will only be considered where evidence is provided of a genuine reason for the move e.g. flooding or subsidence.

Reading school admissions reserves its right to carry out further investigation and require additional evidence and to reject applications or withdraw offers of places if it believes it has the grounds to do so. In such cases, the applicant will have recourse to the independent appeals process. Where it is believed an address provided is not the only address, the Corporate Audit & Investigation Team **may be called upon to investigate further**.

The home address should be the child's current address and is assumed to be the address on the National Offer Day. Any change of address after submitting the application must be notified to the Reading admissions team and the application will be reviewed using the new address. Any place offered based on misleading information, with the intention of deception or fraud concerning a permanent home address, may **be** withdrawn (even if the child has **already** started at the school).

## Split living arrangements

Where a family claims to be resident at more than one address, justification and evidence of the family's circumstances will be required, e.g., formal residence order, child arrangements order or legal separation documentation. The application must be completed by the parent using the address which is owned, leased or rented where the child lives for the majority of the school week. This is based on the number of school nights a child spends at the home (Sunday night 1800hrs to Friday 0900hrs).

Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, the school admissions team will assess and make a judgment about which address to use for the purpose of the allocating of a school place where necessary requesting further information, for example:

- any legal documentation confirming residence;
- the pattern of residence;
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place;
- confirmation from any previous school or early years setting of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents;
- the address where child benefit or other benefit (if applicable) is paid;
- where the child is registered with the GP;
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

It is recommended that **the parents and child reach** consensus regarding the school preferences **to be listed**. **In addition**, it should be noted that only one offer letter will be sent; usually to the main applicant (unless otherwise requested and agreed by both parents).

The information provided to determine the home address to be used will be considered by an admissions panel of at least two officers and their decision is final.

## Siblings

For the purposes of admissions criteria during the main primary admission round, “siblings” are **older siblings already attending the preferred school**. However, Geoffrey Field Junior School will consider a younger sibling **attending** Geoffrey Field Infant School. In-year applications will consider younger siblings, but not a sibling attending the nursery class of a school.

Siblings are children who have either the same mother or father, or they are children who live together in a family unit and with their parent(s)/carer(s). Siblings must live at the same permanent home address as each other. If they do not live at the same address, then they are not treated as siblings for the purpose of admission.

## Deferring a Place

Upon receipt of an application, the local authority is legally required to offer every child a full-time Reception place to start in the September following their fourth birthday. In Reading schools, places are offered in on a full-time basis from September 2023 as a “rising 5” admission. Children do not reach statutory (compulsory) school age until the September, January or April following their fifth birthday. When children are offered “rising 5” places, parents/carers may decide to defer their child’s start until January 2024 or April 2024 (depending on their child’s birth date). In such cases, the offered school must hold the child’s place. However, schools are not obliged to hold a place where a parent/carers wishes to defer beyond April 2024 (i.e. at September 2024) as this pushes the child’s start into the following academic year. Any parent/carers wishing to defer entry to September 2024 (i.e. to miss out Reception entirely and start their child in Year 1) must forfeit their child’s September 2023 school offer and re-apply for a Year 1 place in July 2024. They should also consider that places may not be available if their preferred school has become oversubscribed by this time.

## Part Time Admissions

Parents/carers may request their child be admitted on a part time basis for an initial period (but not beyond the point at which their child reaches compulsory school age). Where a parent/carers chooses this option, they cannot insist on part-time provision that is individually tailored to their needs. Parents/carers must consult with the Headteacher of the allocated school to agree the best arrangement for both child and school.

## Waiting Lists

Approximately two weeks after National Offer Day 'waiting lists' will be created for Reading schools where it has not been possible to offer a place at a school the parents/carers listed as a higher preference than the school which has been offered. A child's position on the waiting list is determined according to the oversubscription criteria and will be re-ranked when new children are added to the list as a result of late applications or change of preference. When a place becomes available this will be offered to the child ranked highest on the waiting list. After the 1 September 2023, children identified for placement as part of the Fair Access Protocol can be placed above those on the waiting list. Positions on the waiting lists may go up or down due to pupil withdrawals, new or revised applications. Reading school admissions will keep waiting lists until end of July 2024 (End of Term 6 for Reception classes). After this date, the waiting lists will be abandoned. Parents/carers must then re-apply for a place in Year 1 as an in-year admissions application if they are still interested in obtaining a place for their child.

## Returning Crown Servants and Armed Forces Personnel

Families of Crown servants returning from overseas to live in the Reading Borough or applicants relocating in the armed forces may apply for a place in advance of their move provided the application is accompanied by an official letter confirming the posting to the UK and the expected relocation date. A school will be offered in advance of a move and held until the appropriate time. If the schools listed on an application form are oversubscribed, the family will need to provide an address in order to be ranked accordingly. Where a parent is unable to provide confirmation of a relocation address, an indication of the area may be provided, narrowed down as far as possible, to which the family intend to return. Preferences will be processed but applications will be considered under criterion 7 (other children) until the parent is able to provide confirmation of the new address such as proof of exchange of contracts or a signed rental agreement. If a place cannot be offered at a preferred school, an alternative school will be offered and parents will be advised of the right of appeal for a place at the preferred school. It is the responsibility of parents to keep the school admissions team informed of any changes to their planned address during the application process.

## In-Year Admission Arrangements for the School Year 2023-2024.

The In-Year admissions arrangements for the school year, September 2023- July 2024 will use the determined policies of 2023/2024.

Parents/carers seeking admission for their child into Year 1 – Year 6 in a community primary school in Reading Borough must apply to Reading school admissions using the In-Year Application form. Parents/carers may apply direct to some voluntary-aided or academy schools in the Borough but the majority of these schools have opted to be part of the coordinated admission arrangements and applications are normally submitted to the Reading school admissions team. A list of those schools to which a direct application is necessary is available from the Brighter Futures for Children website.

If there is a place in the parent's/carer's preferred school, the place will be allocated, however, if there are more applications than places available the oversubscription criteria (as outlined above) will apply with places allocated to the child(ren) ranked highest. Remaining applicants will be added to the waiting list which will also be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria. Children allocated according to the Fair Access Protocol will take precedent over children on the waiting list.

Children new to the area, or those who have moved within the borough, will be able to start at the school as soon as possible after their move. If the request is to move schools within the borough without a move of home, these children will normally be expected to start at the beginning of the following term.

Waiting lists for admission in Years 1 to 6 will be held until 31 December 2023 after which parents/carers must reapply for their child to remain on the waiting list until July 2024. The waiting list will be abandoned after 31 July 2024 and parents/carers must reapply if they are still seeking a place for September 2024.

## Appeals

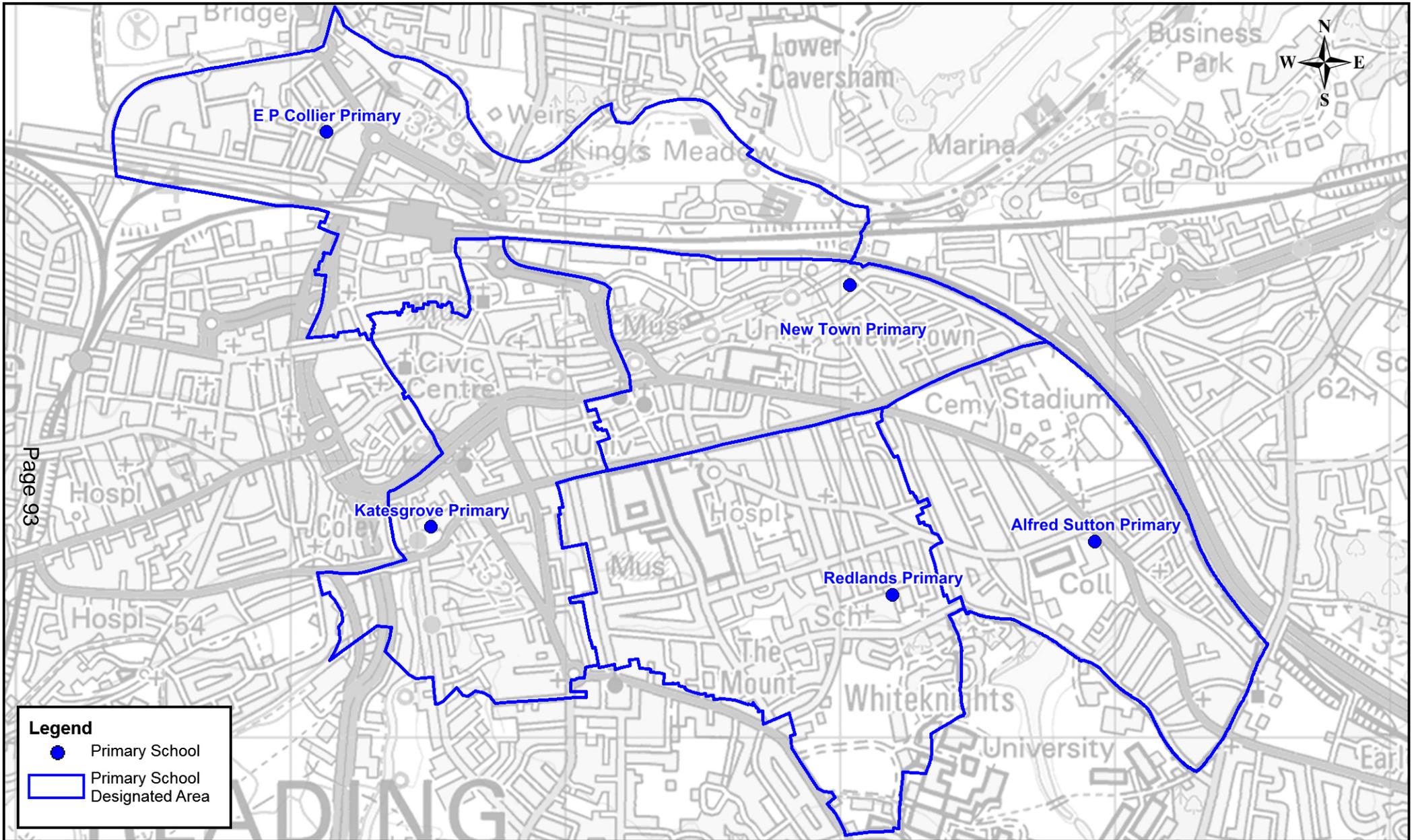
If it is not possible to offer a place at the preferred school(s) parents/carers will be advised of their right of appeal.

## Admissions Numbers – Reading Community Infant, Junior and Primary Schools.

The following are the proposed admission numbers for 2023

School	September 2023 - Admission Number
Alfred Sutton Primary	90
Caversham Park Primary	30
Caversham Primary	60
Coley Primary	30
Emmer Green Primary	60
EP Collier Primary	60
Geoffrey Field Infant	90
Geoffrey Field Junior	90
Katesgrove Primary	90
Manor Primary	45
Micklands Primary	60
Moorlands Primary	60
Oxford Road Community	30
Park Lane Primary	60
Redlands Primary	30
Southcote Primary	90
St Michael's Primary	60
Thameside Primary	60
The Hill Primary	60
The Ridgeway Primary	60
Whitley Park Primary School	90
Wilson Primary	60

This page is intentionally left blank



Page 93

**Title: Primary Schools Designated Areas**  
Central and East Reading

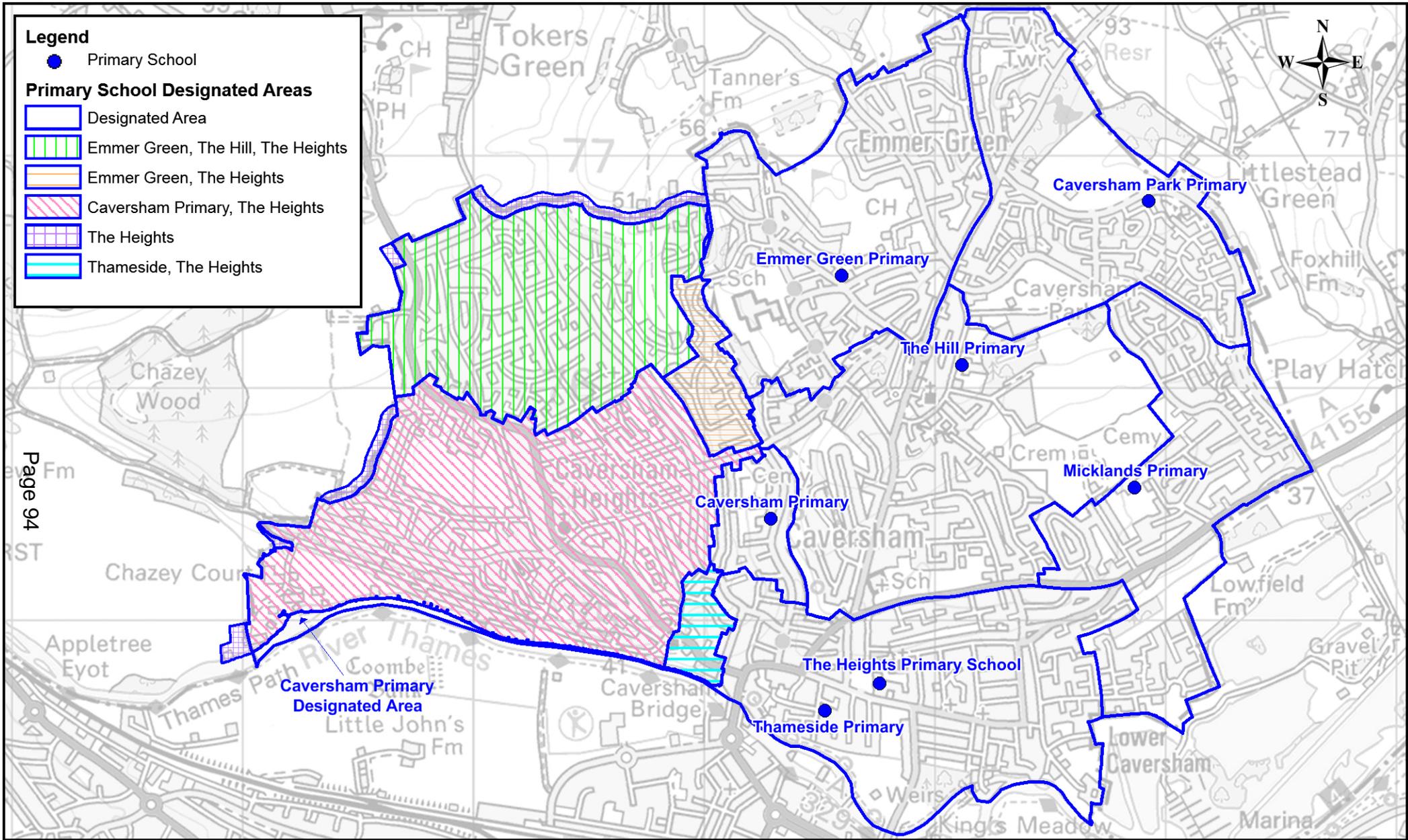
Drg.No.: GIS00015

Date: 09/08/2018 Scale at A4: 1:18500

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Ref:7223 - G:\Mapinfo\Data\Client datasets\Education & Community\School Admissions\updated primary schools\designated areas maps





**Legend**

- Primary School

**Primary School Designated Areas**

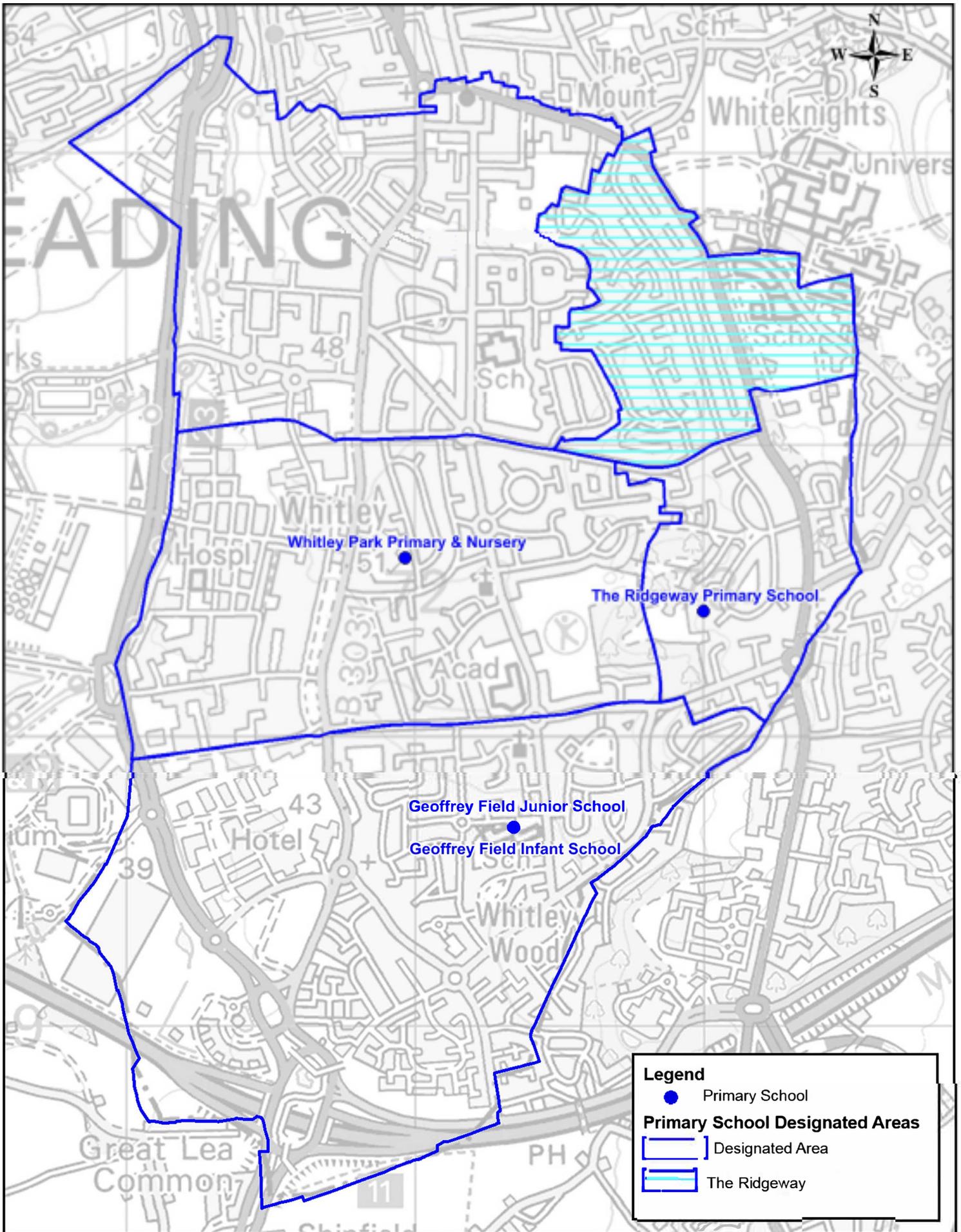
- Designated Area
- ▨ Emmer Green, The Hill, The Heights
- ▨ Emmer Green, The Heights
- ▨ Caversham Primary, The Heights
- ▨ The Heights
- ▨ Thameside, The Heights

Page 94

**Title: Primary Schools Designated Areas  
North Reading**

Drg.No.: GIS00012      Date:09/08/2018      Scale at A4: 1:22000  
 Produced by GIS & Mapping Services      Ref: 7223\G:\Mapinfo\Data\Client datasets\Education & Community\School Admissions\updated primary schools\designated areas maps



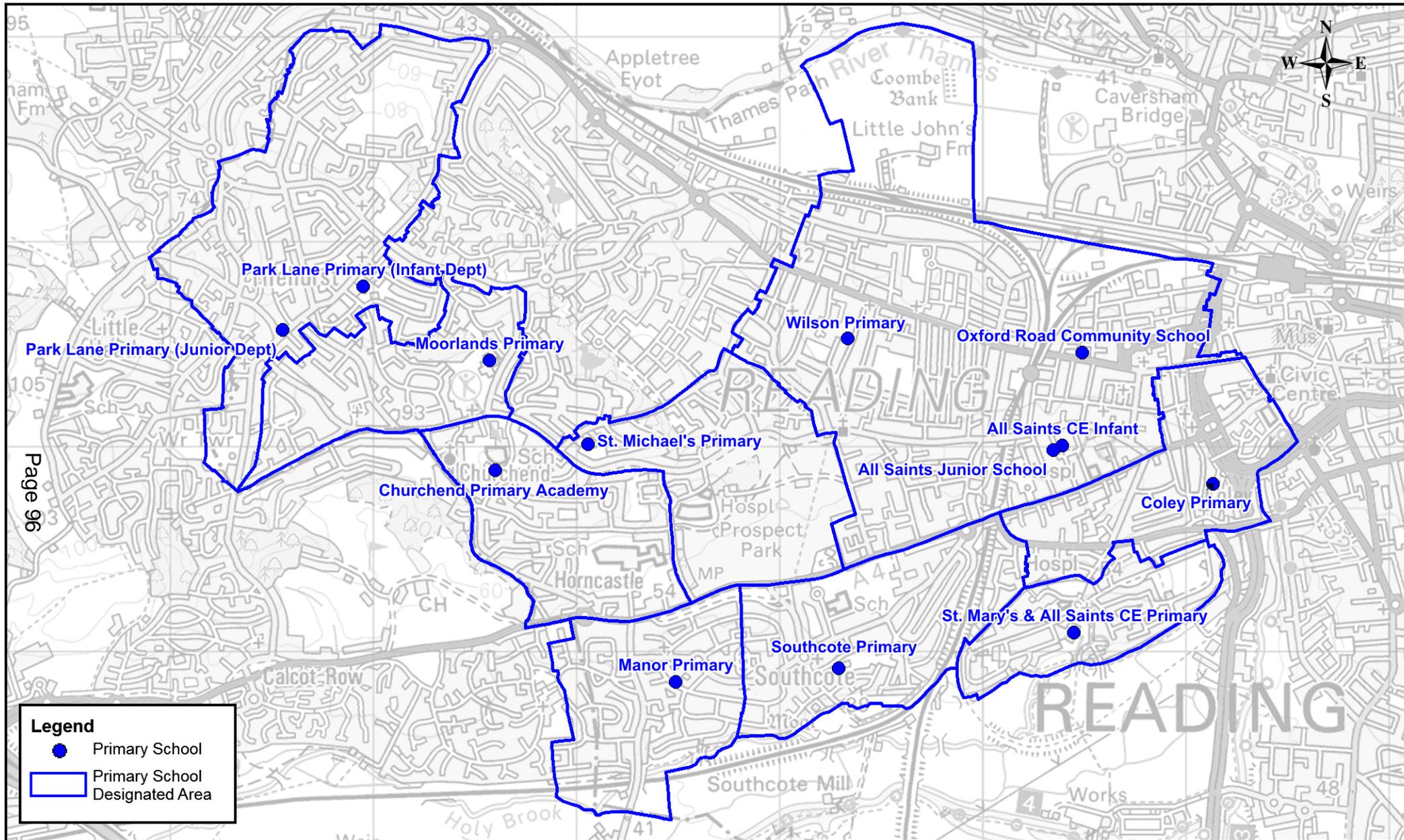


Title: **Primary Schools Designated Areas**  
South Reading

Drg.No.: GIS00013  
Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Date: 09/08/2018 Scale at A4: 1:18000  
Ref: G:\MIND\CD\Edu & Commu\School Admissions\updated primary\designated





**Title: Primary Schools Designated Areas  
West Reading**

Drg.No.: GIS00014

Date: 09/08/2018 Scale at A4: 1:25000

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Ref:7223 - G:\Mapinfo\Data\Client datasets\Education & Community\School Admissions\updated primary schools\designated areas maps



**Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council  
Secondary Schools for the 2023/2024 academic year.**

**For September 2023 entry**

**Determined on xxx**

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Applications.....	4
Late Applications.....	5
Changes of preference.....	5
Change of Address .....	6
Processing Applications .....	6
Exchange of information.....	6
Resolving multiple offers .....	6
Informing schools.....	7
Informing Parents .....	7
Waiting Lists .....	7
Withdrawing a place .....	8
Requests for admission outside the normal age group .....	8
Disputes between Parents.....	9
In-Year Admissions.....	9
Timetable for the Secondary School Admissions Round 2023-24.....	10

## Introduction

Reading Borough Council delivers its school admissions service through Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC). BFfC is an independent, not-for-profit company, wholly owned by Reading Borough Council, set up in December 2018 to deliver children's services, early help, education and SEND services in Reading.

The Reading coordinated scheme was last consulted on between 17 October 2018 and 10 December 2018. There have been no significant changes since that consultation took place, therefore no requirement for a public consultation.

This Scheme is made under section 84 of the Standards and Framework Act 1998 and in accordance with the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Coordination of admissions arrangements (England) Regulations 2014.

The purpose of this coordinated scheme for secondary school admissions is to ensure that every parent/carer of a child **resident in Reading Borough**, who has submitted an application, receives **one offer** of a school place at the conclusion of the normal admissions round. At its heart is clear communication between Reading school admissions, other local authorities, community, and all state schools in Reading.

Parents/carers who live in the Borough of Reading **must** submit an application to Reading school admissions if they require a place for their child in any state school as part of a routine admissions round, including schools in other local authorities, academies and free schools. Applications cannot be submitted to a school or to the local authority in which the school is situated. Parents/carers living within any other local authority areas must apply through their own local authority admissions service.

Coordination with Reading school admissions does not affect the right of individual admission authorities to set and operate their own admission arrangements. Admission authorities for Reading schools will need to comply with the timetable set out below. As all schools in Reading are foundation, voluntary aided or academy schools, the governing body of each school will consult (if necessary) and determine their own admission arrangements for September 2023.

These arrangements deal mainly with a child's admission to secondary school during the school year from September 2023 to August 2024. The children concerned are typically those born between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012. The place offered is a full-time place from September 2023.

### National Offer Day for Secondary Admissions is 1 March 2023

Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council Secondary Schools for the 2023/2024 academic year.

## Applications

Reading Borough Council will put in place procedures that, where possible, ensure all parents/carers living in the Borough of Reading (with a child eligible to start secondary school in September 2023) will be aware of the application process. Eligible children living in Reading will receive an information pack in September 2022. Children who attend Reading schools but who are not resident in Reading will be advised to apply to their home local authority.

Parents/carers are encouraged to apply online via the Reading Citizen Portal. The site will be open from **12 September 2022 until 31 October 2023**.

Parents/carers will be invited to list four preferred schools and rank them in priority order. Parents/carers may also give reasons for their preferences. Parents/carers may list any state schools, including those outside the local authority; this includes academies, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled Schools.

The Reading common application form (and the online terms and conditions) will include a statement requiring parents to confirm they have read the *Guide for Parents and Carers* and accept the policies and procedures in that document.

Parents/carers should return their completed forms directly to the school admissions team at BFFC.

Parents/carers will complete the common application form online by the agreed deadline. The school admissions team will validate the application address. Validation, where possible, will be by reference to Council Tax data held by the local authority. Where this is not possible, proof of residence will be required in the form of ownership documents or tenancy agreement.

Where, as part of its admission arrangements, a school requires additional information, parents/carers may also choose to complete a supplementary form to support their application. This should be submitted separately to the school. The *Guide for Parents and Carers* will identify those Reading schools for which a supplementary form may be necessary. These forms will be available from the BFFC website. Supplementary forms are not applications and parent/carers must submit an application to Reading school admissions either on the common application form or online.

National Closing Date is **31 October 2022**.

## Late Applications

Applications received after the closing date will be treated as 'late' applications. However, if the late submission of the application is caused by extenuating circumstances (e.g. sudden illness or death of a close family member or the family having very recently moved to the area), written evidence may be provided to support this. In such cases, the application may be treated as on time if evidence is received before **31 December 2022**.

Where no evidence is provided, it will be assumed that the application could reasonably have been submitted by the closing date. In such cases, the application will be treated as late and considered after all on time applications have been allocated.

All applications received from the **1 January 2023** are considered late and will be passed to the appropriate admission authority in Reading (or to the appropriate local authority) **approximately two weeks after national offer day**.

In these cases, parents/carers will be informed about the outcome of their application as per the timetable below, after National Offer Day. Applications for oversubscribed schools will be added to the waiting lists of those schools and ranked according to their oversubscription criteria.

Late applications will be processed **approximately two weeks after national offer day**. The first round of allocations, following National Offer Day will be **May 2023**. After this date late application will be processed regularly. In each case, the cut-off date for consideration in each round of allocations will be 1 week prior to the allocation date.

## Changes of preference

Where the parent/carer wishes to change their preferences, they must submit a new application form (paper or online). If this is received by the school admissions team before **31 October 2022** it will be accepted as on time and will replace any previous application. Any preferences to be retained from a previous application must be listed on any subsequent applications.

Changes of preference received after **31 October 2022** will be treated as late applications in the way described above. However, applications for late change of preference where there are extenuating circumstances (e.g. sudden illness or death of a close family member or the family having very recently moved to the area) may be treated as on time, provided written evidence is supplied to support the late submission. This should be received by the school admissions team before **1 January 2023**. If no evidence is provided, the application will be treated as late. Any application for change of preference(s) received after **1 January 2023** will replace any previous application and be marked as late.

Please think very carefully about **applying** after this date, particularly if you have already submitted an on-time application.

Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council Secondary Schools for the **2023/2024** academic year.

Approximately two weeks after national offer day, late changes of preferences will be passed to the appropriate admission authority in Reading or to the appropriate local authority to be considered.

## Change of Address

As required by the School Admissions Code 2021, changes of address made after **31 October 2022 and before 1 January 2023**, may be considered as on time. If an applicant changes address after the **1 January 2023** they will need to submit a new application, based on the new address. The new application will be marked as late and their previous application may be withdrawn. Documentary evidence of the change of address will be required.

## Processing Applications

### Exchange of information

As per the timetable below, the Reading school admissions team will forward applications to other local authorities and admission authorities in Reading. At the same time, other local authorities will forward applications to Reading for their residents to be considered for Reading schools.

Depending on the arrangements agreed with the governing body of each school, the school admissions team will provide the school with relevant information to enable them to rank applicants using their oversubscription criteria, as per the timetable. Reading school admissions will not pass on the details of the parent/carers preference ranking to the school, and no school will be told about other schools a parent has listed.

As per the timetable, each admission authority in Reading will rank applications according to their published oversubscription criteria and return ranked lists to the school admissions team.

### Resolving multiple offers

As per the timetable, Reading school admissions will inform other local authorities of places offered in Reading schools to their residents. During the exchange of information, Reading school admissions will consider all cases where a child can be offered more than one of their preferences. In such cases, a place offered will be at the school a parent/carer listed highest in preference.

If a place cannot be offered at one of the preferred schools listed by the parent/carer, a place will normally be offered at the catchment school (if that school has spaces remaining) or, the nearest Reading school with a place available. If the offered school is one where Reading Borough Council is not the admission authority, this will be in consultation with the governing

body of the school in question. If the nearest school with places is a faith school, parents/carers will be offered this as an option. Should the parent/carer be unhappy with a faith school being offered, they will be informed of other schools with available spaces (which may be further from their home). Where no places are available at any Reading schools, parents/carers will be informed and alternative schools (outside Reading Borough) may be offered. Such an offer will depend on availability and the agreement of the appropriate admission authority. This will not preclude parents/carers from requesting an alternative school, nor from lodging an appeal for their preferred school with the admission authority.

## Informing schools

As per the timetable, the school admissions team will send each Reading Secondary school a list of pupils to be offered a place at their school. This will be confidential to the school and must not be passed on to parents/carers.

## Informing Parents

On **National Offer Day**, parents/carers who submitted an online application will receive an email with a formal offer and may view their offer online.

Parents/carers who submitted a paper application will receive a letter (posted 2<sup>nd</sup> Class) containing their child's offer of a secondary school place. The formal offer will identify whether the offer is made on behalf of the governing body of a school or another local authority. The letter will:

- Inform parents of the school offered;
- Indicate how to accept a school place and the deadline for accepting.
- Provide information on school transport;

If the school offered is not their first preference, parents/carers will also be supplied with the following information:

- Where they can find information showing how places were allocated at oversubscribed schools in Reading.
- How to submit an appeal.
- If the place offered is not their highest preference school(s), the child's name will be added to the waiting list(s) of all of the school(s) they listed higher in preference. Parents/carers are required to advise Reading school admissions if they do not wish their child's name to remain on a waiting list.
- Contact information for other local authorities.

## Waiting Lists

Two weeks after national offer day 'waiting lists' will be administered for schools with more applicants than places available. A child's position on a waiting list is determined according to the oversubscription criteria of the school. When a place becomes available, this will be offered to the child who is top of the waiting list. A child's position on a waiting list may go up or down for a number of reasons (e.g. pupil withdrawals or new and revised applications). When a place is allocated from the waiting list, the child's current allocation (for a lower

Coordinated Admissions scheme for Reading Borough Council Secondary Schools for the 2023/2024 academic year.

preference school) will be removed and allocated to another student, if appropriate. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school admissions team if they no longer wish to remain on the waiting list of a school. It will be assumed that a child is to remain on the waiting list of all schools listed as a higher preference than the allocated school, unless the parent/carer indicates otherwise.

Waiting lists for all schools in Reading Borough will be kept until the end of the **31 December 2023**. After this date, the policy of the individual school(s) will be followed. After the coordinated admissions round ends on **31 August 2023** any waiting list will be treated as an In-Year admission and will follow the individual policy of the school.

## Withdrawing a place

If the offered place is not accepted **within four weeks of national offer day**, Reading school admissions will send a reminder and allow a further seven days for a reply. If there is still no response, the place may be withdrawn. If a school place has been offered on the basis of fraudulent, or intentionally misleading, information (which denied the place to another child), the place will be withdrawn

## Requests for admission outside the normal age group

In exceptional circumstances, applications may be received for children who are not **currently studying** in the school year appropriate to their age. Where this arises, the schools requested will consider the circumstances of each case. Applications for these children will normally be processed with all other children, and these children will be permitted to enter their allocated secondary school.

Applicants should apply using the common application form by **31 October 2022**. Parents must outline their reasons for the request and supply supporting documents (e.g. information from their child's education setting or medical evidence). They should also provide confirmation from their current school that their child is studying outside their normal year group, in Year 6. The school admissions team will forward this information to the listed schools for consideration. Each case will be carefully considered by the admissions authority and parents/carers will be informed of the decision in writing, before National Offer Day, setting out clearly the reasons for the decision. One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group.

Requests for schools outside Reading will be referred to the council in whose area the school is located for consideration under that council's scheme.

## Transgender Students

Where a transgender pupil wishes to apply for a single-sex school, they must do so in the normal way (outlined in this policy) by completing the Common Application Form. Reading school admissions will coordinate these admissions; however, it is for the admissions authority of the school(s) listed on the application to make a decision on the case. Where a place is refused, parents will be notified of their right to appeal.

## Disputes between Parents

When completing the application, a parent/carer must tick the box to declare they have parental responsibility for the child. It is assumed that the application is made with the agreement of all parties having parental responsibility. Where one or more applications is received for a child, and there is dispute about the preferences or preference order on the application, the applications will be withdrawn until a court order is provided detailing the arrangements for schooling. If consensus between parents or a court order is not received by the 31 December 2022, all preferences will be removed and new preferences will be inserted in the following order: catchment area schools(s), closest appropriate Reading schools by straight-line distance to the home address. This is to ensure there is an allocated school for the child. The home address used will be that of the parent/carer receiving child benefit for the child or, where no parent claims this, the address registered with the child's current school.

In the event of a dispute after National Offer Day, the allocated school will remain in place and the child's name will be removed from any waiting list. The parents/carers must then reach agreement about which schools are listed on the application form and both provide written confirmation of the preferences to the School Admissions Team.

## In-Year Admissions

The In- Year admissions arrangements for the school year, September 2023- July 2024 will use the determined policies of 2023/2024.

Parents/carers seeking admission for their child in Year 7- Year 11 of a secondary school in the Reading Borough should in most cases apply to Reading school admissions. Most secondary schools in the borough have opted to be part of the coordinated admission arrangements. A list of the schools to which a direct application is necessary may be obtained from the BfC website. Where a school listed is in another local authority, the parent/carer will be advised to apply directly to that local authority and the application for that school will follow the relevant local authority's scheme

## Timetable for the Secondary School Admissions Round 2023-24

Action	Date
<i>Guide for Parents and Carers</i> to be placed on BFFC Website.	By 12 September 2022
Parents/carers to receive application information.	By 12 September 2022
Online admissions site open.	12 September 2022 – 31 October 2022
National Closing date for receipt of applications.	31 October 2022
Late/change of preference applications accepted in extenuating circumstances, written support must be submitted at time of application.	By 31 December 2022
Application details sent to secondary schools in Reading and other local authorities. Own Admissions Authority schools to provide Reading school admissions team with a list of children ranked according to the school's oversubscription criteria.	During December 2022- January 2023
Coordination between other local authorities of offers that can be made to their residents in Reading schools.	By 12 February 2023
National Offer Day - Offer notifications sent to Reading Residents	1 March 2023
Online applicants can view outcome of application.	1 March 2023
Deadline for parents to accept.	15 March 2023
Late applications for over-subscribed schools added to the waiting lists/change of preferences processed.	From 16 March 2023
Coordination with other LA's ends.	31 August 2023
Waiting lists held for Reading schools.	Until at least 31 December 2023

### Relevant Area.

Reading Borough Council delivers its school admissions service through Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC). BFFC is an independent, not-for-profit company, wholly owned by Reading Borough Council, set up in December 2018 to deliver children's services, early help, education and SEND services in Reading.

The School Standards & Framework Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to establish Relevant Area(s) for admission policy consultations. The Relevant Area is the area in which admission authorities must consult with schools regarding their proposed admission arrangements before finalising them.

Once the relevant area has been determined, any school or academy proposing to change arrangements will need to consult with all other interested parties within this area in line with the Schools Admission Code.

Reading's last consultation ran from 17 October until 9 December 2018 and was determined on the 14 February 2019 to ensure that schools and academies use the defined relevant area to inform their statutory consultation process on admission arrangements.

Reading has reviewed the current relevant area and as there is no change, this will be retained for school year **2023/24**. The relevant area was determined as follows:

1. Admissions Authorities must consult on admission arrangements for primary/infant and junior schools with

- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all schools in Reading Borough
- Neighbouring Local Authorities – Oxfordshire County Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council
- Diocesan Authorities - Oxford Church of England Diocese, Portsmouth and Birmingham Catholic Diocese
- All Academies, Voluntary Aided or Foundation Secondary Schools within 8 kilometres (5 miles) of the Reading Borough border
- All Academies, Voluntary Aided or Foundation primary/junior/infant schools within 3.2 kilometres (2 miles) of the Reading Borough border

2. Having first consulted with the appropriate Diocese, **primary** Voluntary Aided schools must consult with:

- Reading Borough Council/ Brighter Futures for Children

- All primary/infant and junior and maintained nursery schools in Reading Borough
- Neighbouring Local Authorities – Oxfordshire County Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council
- All Academies, Voluntary Aided or Foundation primary/junior and infants schools outside Reading Borough within 3.2 kilometres (2 miles) of the school

3. Primary Academies and Foundation and Trust schools must consult with

- Reading Borough Council / Brighter Futures for Children
- All primary/infant/junior and maintained nursery schools in Reading Borough
- Neighbouring Local Authorities – Oxfordshire County Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council
- All Academies, Voluntary Aided or Foundation primary/junior and infants schools outside Reading Borough within 3.2 (2 miles) kilometres of the school

4. Secondary Academies and Foundation schools must consult with:

- Reading Borough Council / Brighter Futures for Children
- All primary/junior and secondary schools within Reading Borough
- Neighbouring Local Authorities – Oxfordshire County Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council
- All Academies, Voluntary Aided or Foundation Secondary Schools within 8 kilometres (five miles) of the Reading Borough border
- All Academies, Voluntary Aided or Foundation primary/junior schools within 3.2 kilometres (2 miles) of the Reading Borough border

5. Having first consulted with the appropriate Diocese, **Secondary** Voluntary Aided schools must consult with:

- Reading Borough Council / Brighter Futures for Children
- All primary/junior and secondary schools within Reading Borough
- Neighbouring Local Authorities – Oxfordshire County Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council
- All Academies, Voluntary Aided or Foundation Secondary Schools within 8 kilometres (5 miles) of the Reading Borough border
- All Academies, Voluntary Aided or Foundation primary/junior schools within 3.2 kilometres (2 miles) of the Reading Borough border