

Appendix 2: Summary and analysis of responses to Nottinghamshire County Council's (NCC) statutory consultation on admission arrangements 2018 - 2019

This appendix details a summary and analysis of the responses and comments received as part of NCC's statutory consultation on admission arrangements 2018 - 2019. It also includes an analysis of the comments submitted in a petition from the 'Fairness4Siblings' campaign group.

A Summary of responses

QUESTION 1: overall procedures and practices including oversubscription criteria

"Do you think a change to the oversubscription criteria would improve the overall fairness of the admission arrangements for the majority of families?"

i) Online responses and comments

There were 831 responses to this question, as follows: Yes 630; No 156; Don't know 45.
One person skipped this question.

Some responses included several issues, so the number of comments will not match the total number of responses. The comments are categorised in **Table 1** and the issues most frequently mentioned related to: feasibility/practicality/manageability of having siblings at different schools (186); concerns about the impact on sibling wellbeing and quality of family life (106); statements that siblings should stay together, but with no other issues being identified (110).

ii) Email responses

There were 10 email responses to this question. Of these, 3 did not state a preference for or against a change; 6 were in favour and 1 was against. The comments are categorised in **Table 2**, and most refer to issues about siblings being together or separated. One comment expressed satisfaction with the current criteria.

QUESTION 2: admission numbers

“Do you agree with the proposed admission numbers?”

There were 753 responses to this question as follows: Yes 249; No 103; Don’t know 401. 79 people skipped this question. The comments are categorised in **Table 3** and the issues most frequently mentioned related to: inability to see the proposed admission numbers (12); schools having power to admit over PAN where necessary (7).

QUESTION 3: timelines

“Do you agree with the proposed timelines?”

There were 713 responses to this question as follows: Yes 265; No 82; Don’t know 366. 119 people skipped this question. The comments are categorised in **Table 4** and the key areas identified were: timing of offer date; appeals timelines leading to children missing settling in dates; moving house in the middle of the process causes difficulties. The majority of comments (14) indicated that respondents did not understand how to access the proposed timelines.

QUESTION 4: in-year application process

“Do you agree with the in-year application process?”

There were 701 responses to this question as follows: Yes 306; No 55; Don’t know 340. 131 people skipped this question. The comments are categorised in **Table 5** and the majority of comments (14) indicated that respondents did not understand how to access the information about the in-year application process.

iii) Petition responses

The covering letter accompanying the ‘Fairness4 Siblings’ campaign group’s petition included the following statement: “Based upon legal advice we have received please find enclosed a list of individuals who believe that NCC should reverse its recent change to its school admission criteria and reinstate priority for siblings living out of catchment”. A copy of any questions posed to individuals who signed the petition was not included.

The petition was accompanied by a request that the signatures be formally incorporated into the official statistics of individuals who responded to the consultation and answered 'yes' to question 1 of the online consultation form. The petition was divided into three parts: information from Change.org; written signatures; online signatories. It was not possible to check whether any people had signed more than once by responding to different sections of the petition.

Some responses included several issues, so the number of comments will not match the total number of signatures. The comments are categorised in **Table 6** and the issues most frequently mentioned related to: feasibility/practicality/manageability of having siblings at different schools (158); statements that siblings should stay together, but with no other issues being identified (344); further comments/opinions (141).

B Analysis of responses

The analysis covered:

- responses to the consultation and petition
- location by area for the online consultation and postcodes in the petition
- major and recurring issues included in the comments (categorised in tables as A-N)
- a range of additional comments (highlighted by only a small number of responses)
- further comments/opinions about elected members, the local authority, its employees and the consultation process including some comments which might be considered to be offensive and/or inappropriate.

Methodology:

This analysis was completed between 28 November 2016 and 16 December 2016. Further moderation was completed on 4 January 2017. The analysis was carried out by designated officers. Other officers were also involved in overseeing the process and moderating the analysis. The process involved:

- an initial reading of all the available information
- identification of key and recurring themes
- agreeing categorisation of comments
- annotating available information according to agreed categories
- totalling of comments in each category and creating tables to present the findings
- analysis of the postcodes using online checker
- analysis of addresses where possible
- creation of draft reports
- moderating the analysis
- production of final report.

Analysis of the responses to NCC's statutory consultation on admission arrangements 2018 -2019 by Question

The consultation on the school admission arrangements for 2018-2019 took place between 3 October and 27 November 2016. Participants were invited to respond online, by email or in writing.

Q1: Do you think a change to the oversubscription criteria would improve the overall fairness of the admission arrangements for the majority of families?

i) Online responses and comments

Answer choices	Responses
Yes	75.81% - 630 responses
No	18.77% - 156 responses
Don't know	5.42% - 45 responses
Total	831 responses to this question (1 person skipped this question)

The main issues identified in the comments are categorised in Table 1 below and reflect the range of responses and opinions. A number of responses included **several** of the following issues, therefore the number of comments will not match the total numbers of responses.

Table 1

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
Comments expressing satisfaction with current criteria	Feasibility/ Practicality/ manageability of siblings at different schools	Concerns re having to move older sibling	Lateness/ absence	Transport/ effect on environment/ traffic	Concerns re impact on sibling wellbeing and quality of family life	Concerns re impact on family finances including child-care costs	'siblings should stay together' response – no other issues identified	Concern re impact of family involvement with school/s	When first sibling was allocated an alternative OOC school, concern re fairness for subsequent siblings in future	Change should have been phased in	Concerns re consultation	Further comments/ opinions	Unfair
24	186	26	38	22	106	34	110	32	15	6	14	20	5

(NB many but not all comments discussed personal circumstances of the respondent and did not necessarily address Q1 in its entirety)

The range of additional comments included:

- Make more places at popular schools – 2 comments
- Confusing consultation question 1 – 4 comments
- Equality – remove sibling link for all or re-instate previous criteria – 3 comments
- Concern about impact on small, rural schools relying on OOC to exist and the effect of moving children to join siblings – 2 comments
- Concerns re disadvantaging working parents - 3 comments
- Discriminatory for BME (large families), disabled and low-income families – 2 comments
- Use a lottery system – 1 comment
- Nursery link as a priority – 1 comment
- Remove catchment areas – 5 comments
- A specific link the catchment maps would be a good idea

The further comments/opinions category (M) contained opinions about elected members, the local authority, its employees and the consultation - including some comments which might be considered to be offensive and/or inappropriate.

ii) Email responses:

There were 10 email responses received, categorised in Table 2 below.

- 3 did not state whether they agreed with a change or not to the current arrangements
- 6 were in favour of a change (Yes to Q1)
1 supported the current criteria and was against a change to current admission arrangements (No to Q1). This response also included concerns about lobbying which took place locally and included private emails being given to an OOC parent's campaign.

Table 2

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Comments expressing satisfaction with current criteria	Feasibility/practicality /manageability of siblings at different schools	Concerns re having to move older sibling	Lateness/ absence	Transport/effect on environment/ traffic	Concerns re impact on sibling wellbeing and quality of family life	Concerns re impact on family finances including child-care costs	'siblings should stay together' response – no other issues identified	Concern re impact of family involvement with school/s	When first sibling was allocated an alternative OOC school, concern re fairness for subsequent siblings in future
1	2	1					3		1

Q2: Do you agree with the proposed admission numbers?

Answer choices	Responses
Yes	33.07% - 249 responses
No	13.68% - 103 responses
Don't know	53.25% - 401 responses
Total	753 responses to this question (79 skipped this question)

The main issues identified in the comments are categorised in Table 3 below.

Table 3

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M
Unable to see the proposed admission numbers	Need to consider new housing development	PANs creating split year groups	Need to increase school places	Schools need to take all catchment children regardless of PAN	Schools having power to take over PAN numbers where necessary	PAN should be guidance only	Siblings must be kept together	Further comments/opinions
12	3	2	4	2	7	2	4	1

The majority of comments indicated that some respondents did not understand how to access the proposed admission numbers information.

The range of additional comments included:

- PAN is fairly arbitrary – what is the rationale? – 5 comments
- children should be able to travel to nearest school
- there should be exceptions
- schools should not be expected to take over PAN where this makes classes unmanageable
- expand popular schools.

Q3: Do you agree with the proposed timelines?

Answer choices	Responses
Yes	37.17% - 265 responses
No	11.50% - 82 responses
Don't know	51.33% - 366 responses
Total	713 responses to this question (119 skipped this question)

The main issues identified in the comments are categorised in Table 4 below.

Table 4

A	B	C	D	E	F
Unable to understand where to find the information on the proposed timelines	Offer date earlier	Appeals timeline can cause difficulties	Moving house	Concerns re consultation	Siblings should be together
14	3	1	2	2	2

The range of additional comments included:

- timing of offer date
- appeals timelines can lead to children missing their settling in dates
- moving house in the middle of the process causes difficulties.
- the appeals process can be a lengthy and difficult time for parents and children
- open evenings for secondary transition need to be early enough
- out of county and academies not included in the data
- admissions deemed to be too complex a process.

Q4: Do you agree with the in-year application process?

Answer choices	Responses
Yes	43.65% - 306 responses
No	7.85% - 55 responses
Don't know	48.5% - 340 responses
Total	701 responses to this question (131 skipped this question)

The main issues identified in the comments are categorised in Table 5 below.

Table 5

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Unable to understand where to find the information on in-year application process	Schools should have more say in in-year admissions	Waiting list administration	Needs of specific vulnerable groups in the admission arrangements	Concerns re disadvantage when moving house	Siblings should stay together	Consultation concerns
14	3	7	1	5	3	2

Additional comments included:

- schools should be able to refuse admissions from pupils with challenging behaviour and unfunded care requirements - 3 responses
- timeline around applications for the following academic year
- concern about possible fraudulent applications.

Location by area of respondents to NCC's online consultation

Ashfield	23.85% - 160 responses
Bassetlaw	7.30% - 49 responses
Broxtowe	8.79% - 59 responses
Gedling	10.43% - 70 responses
Mansfield	15.65% - 105 responses
Newark and Sherwood	17.59% - 118 responses
Rushcliffe	6.86% - 46 responses
Out of Nottinghamshire	9.54% - 64 responses
Total	671

161 people did not indicate their area of residence.

Analysis of the responses to the petition submitted from the ‘Fairness4Siblings’ campaign group

A copy of any questions posed to individuals who signed the petition was not included. The covering letter accompanying the ‘Fairness4Siblings’ campaign group’s petition included the following statement: “Based upon legal advice we have received please find enclosed a list of individuals who believe that NCC should reverse its recent change to its school admission criteria and reinstate priority for siblings living out of catchment”. The submission’s covering letter indicated there were 3706 signatures from people who had signed the petition. Signatures were gathered in a period up to 24 November 2016 when the petition was submitted to NCC. A check by NCC counted around 4580 signatures so that is the number used for this report.

The campaign group specifically asked that the signatures should be formally incorporated into the official statistics of the number of individuals who responded to the consultation and answered ‘Yes’ to Q1 on the on-line consultation form. It should be noted that a copy of any questions posed to individuals who signed the petition was not included, and therefore the questions may not be the same as those in NCC’s online consultation. There was a final total of around 4580 signatures on the petition. The group collected and presented online signatures, paper signatures and signatures via Change.org which included comments. It was not possible to check whether any people had signed more than once by responding to different sections of the petition and also NCC’s online consultation.

iii) Petition Responses and comments

The main issues identified in the comments are categorised below and reflect the range of responses and opinions. A number of responses included **several** of the following issues, therefore the number of comments will not match the total numbers of signatures.

Table 6

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
Comments expressing satisfaction with current criteria	Feasibility/ practicality /manageability of siblings at different schools	Concerns re having to move older sibling	Lateness/ absence	Transport/ effect on environment/ traffic	Concerns re impact on sibling wellbeing and quality of family life	Concerns re impact on family finances including child-care costs	‘siblings should stay together’ response – no other issues identified	Concern re impact of family involvement with school/s	When first sibling was allocated an alternative OOC school, concern re fairness for subsequent siblings in future	Change should have been phased in	Concerns re consultation	Further comments/ opinions	Unfair
0	158	8	48	13	83	18	344	11	15	10	36	141	83

The further comments/opinions (M) contained opinions about elected members, the local authority, its employees and the consultation - including some comments which might be considered to be offensive and/or inappropriate.

Analysis of postcodes and addresses from the petition

The petition was divided into 3 parts as follows:

1. Change.org (no postcodes – only place names)
2. Written signatures (only postcodes – no place names)
3. Online signatories (postcodes and place names)

1. There were 881 signatures. Of these, 148 (16.8%) can be identified as addresses in other local authorities (not Nottinghamshire). Some more places may be outside Nottinghamshire e.g. City of Nottingham
2. There were 990 signatures. Of these, there were 19 incomplete postcodes (1.92%) and 59 (5.96%) which can be identified as postcodes in other local authorities (not Nottinghamshire).
3. There were 2698 signatures. Of these:
 - there were 49 incomplete postcodes (1.82%) and some responses from overseas
 - there were 407 postcodes (15.09%) which can be identified as from other local authorities (not Nottinghamshire)
 - there were 172 additional postcodes (6.38%) which can be identified as from the City of Nottingham.

This gave a total of 628 postcodes (23.28%) which could not be confidently identified as being Nottinghamshire addresses.

It was not possible to determine whether each name appears only once as some people may have signed or added their name to more than one element of the petition and also responded to NCC's online consultation.