

THIS REPORT REPLACES THE PREVIOUSLY ISSUED VERSION

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 23 JANUARY – 10.30 AM**

Agenda Item No:

5 (ii)

CASUAL ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To invite the Select Committee to decide whether or not to scrutinise casual admissions.

2. Summary

- 2.1. The issue of casual admissions has been proposed for scrutiny by Tanis Kent.
- 2.2. Casual admissions disproportionately affect a group of 17 schools which traditionally are not full to capacity in all year groups.

3. Conclusions

The Select Committee should discuss whether or not they wish to scrutinise the proposed item and by what method.

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4. Current Issues:

- 4.1. A casual admissions process for admission to community and voluntary controlled secondary schools was introduced in March 2001.
- 4.2. An analysis of casual admissions over 3 months between March and June is shown below:

Category 1 Moving into Hertfordshire (with a new address)	247
Category 2 Moving area within Hertfordshire (with a change of address)	69
Category 3 Request to move school with no change of address	279
TOTAL CASUAL ADMISSION REQUESTS	595

- 4.3. The process involves allocations being made to community and voluntary controlled secondary schools every two weeks. Places are allocated according to the published admission rules.
- 4.4. Headteachers are required to contact parents of children who are allocated via the casual admissions process within five days of the allocation date.
- 4.5. An examination of requests for transfer under Category 3 has revealed that parents request admission to an alternative school as a result of:
- Bullying
 - Poor attendance
 - Wanting to avoid exclusion
 - Wanting a fresh start

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4.6. Student Service Managers engage with the parents in Category 3 in a number of ways including the following:

- Advising parents to reconsider their request for transfer to an alternative school, suggesting that they discuss the issues with the existing school
- Providing parents with information over exclusion
- Discussing the issues with the current school
- Explaining to parents attendance does not improve merely because a child changes school

4.7. Schools report that these children often require a great deal of support during their integration to the school, and frequently, the issues which faced the child in the original school, re-occur in the next school. Commonly, the receiving schools are already those, which are facing particular challenges in raising standards.

4.8. Some progress has been made in some areas of the county in making arrangements between schools to share out excluded pupils, but this does not extend more widely. The result is that schools with available places take a disproportionate number of casual admissions.

4.9. This is an important issue, which requires careful consideration and the further development of policies which improve the situation in those schools which are particularly affected at present.

4.10 A scrutiny process might be as follows:

- Select a sample of:
 - a) Headteachers from the Casual Admissions Working Group with which to discuss Secondary Casual Admissions focusing on the effects of casual admissions on attendance rates, examination results and the management of the school.
 - b) Headteachers from schools with low rates of casual admissions, but high rates of children exiting the school.
- Review the current casual admissions procedure.
- Analyse the KS3 and GCSE results of schools comparing the initial cohort's achievement, with the achievements of the pupils admitted through the casual admissions process.
- Analyse the results of pupils who have been admitted through the casual admissions process compared with the overalls rate at KS3 and GCSE.
- Analyse the unauthorised absence rates, at schools with a significant number of casual admissions.