

Comprehensive Future AGM and Conference

Mander Hall

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Office of the Schools Adjudicator Admissions & New Roles

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Schools Adjudicator

Introduction

- The OSA
 - Who and what are we?
- An Expanding Role
 - School Organisation
 - Admissions
- Focus on Admissions
- 2008 Consultation
 - Admissions & Admissions appeals codes
- 2009 – New Code & more legislation
- Future developments
- Discussion

Office of the Schools Adjudicator

- Who are we and what do we?
 - Created by School Standards and Framework Act 1998
 - Chief Adjudicator (Dr Philip Hunter) plus 9 Adjudicators
 - Four former Chief Education Officers
 - Three former senior OFSTED HMIs
 - Two former Diocesan Directors of Education
 - One former FAS official (also a Parliamentary Commissioner)
 - Supported by a secretariat based in Darlington
 - A “Tribunal”
 - Set up to resolve disputes about school organisation and admissions policies. Part of new structures (including School Organisation Committees and Admissions Forums) to take over the role previously discharged by the Secretary of State

An Expanding Role

- School Organisation
 - Previously determine any proposals when the SOC could not agree
 - Now (post SOC)
 - Referral from aggrieved parties
 - Decision maker in the first instance (e.g. Competitions where LEA cannot act)
 - Disputes over Assets
- Admissions
 - Originally: objections by one admissions authority (usually LEA) against another (usually school based) variations & limited referrals from parents
 - Now (since 2006 Act)
 - Wider Scope of Forum & parental objections
 - Adjudication can go beyond objection
 - Decisions have three year life
 - Direction of hard to place and Looked After Children
 - Future power of independent intervention.

Admissions Consultation

- Published June 2008 & Closed 2nd October
- Informed by OSA work
 - Appeal Committees review
 - Compliance exercise
- Legislation already in train
 - Detail shifted to regulations (scope for easier amendment?)
 - Duty of LEAs to do annual report to OSA
 - Adjudicator's new powers to act

Admissions Consultation 2

- Consultation Issues
 - Primary coordination
 - Admission Forums –to go?
 - Ease consultation requirements & later objection deadline
 - Admission Appeals: KS1 class size & individual schools
 - Service families
 - Fair access protocols
 - School 'ethos' & charging
 - Sixth form - pupil application & appeals
 - PANs
 - Banding

Admissions: Aims & Objectives

Basic principles of the Code: largely unchanged between original and latest versions:

- Work for the benefit of all parents and children. Be simple to use and help parents take the best decisions for their children
- Admission authorities should:
 - Maximise parental satisfaction
 - Use clear, fair and objective criteria
 - Help improve standards for all pupils
 - Consult each other, and coordinate arrangements
 - Facilitate inclusion of vulnerable children (e.g. LAC & excluded)
 - Ensure easy access to information
 - Comply with legislation and guidance in the Code

Future Developments?

- A NEW WAY OF HANDLING PARENTS' COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL ISSUES: CONSULTATION
- Admissions & Exclusion Appeals
- New LA duty to report to OSA
- Training & development
- Next general election?