

Equality Analysis

Name of proposal	Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form Admissions arrangements for 2016/17 – including the future of Banding
Lead officer	Claudia Smith, Interim Service Manager, Educational Access
Other stakeholders	
Start date of Equality Analysis	20 February 2015
End date of Equality Analysis	17 March 2015

1: Background

An EAA is the process of analysing a proposed or existing policy, strategy or service to identify what effect, or likely effect, will follow from its implementation for different groups in the community. Assessments should consider the effect of a service on Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion/Belief, Pregnancy and Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership, and Gender Reassignment. In addition, EAAs consider whether proposals might contravene human rights. By conducting an EAA organisations can consider what good practice could be shared or what measures might need to be taken to address any adverse impact.

Lewisham's diversity is one of its key strengths and the Council is committed to supporting an inclusive and cohesive local community. EAA supports this intention, by identifying how the Council's service can actively promote equal opportunities and avoid direct and indirect discrimination.

This document considers how the recommendations made in this report affect different groups of children, young people and their families (specifically those with 'protected characteristics') differently, and assess whether these effects are positive or negative. It also outlines the activity that the Council will take to ensure that equal opportunities are promoted and that no group is discriminated against.

The report on Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form Admissions Arrangements for 2016/17 including the future of Banding seeks the Mayor's approval for the admission arrangements. It was agreed by the Admissions Forum that Lewisham should consult on behalf of all admissions authorities in the borough whether to continue to use banding for secondary transfer.

The overall assessment of this EAA is that whilst the recommendations will affect different groups of young people differently, overall none of the protected characteristics will be disproportionately or negatively affected by the proposals.

2: Changes to the service

This report considers the equalities impact of the proposed changes to the Admissions arrangements for 2016/17 in particular the future use of banding. It assesses the effect the recommendations will have on specific groups involved as well as the wider community.

The EAA provides the answers to the following questions:

1. Will the proposed changes affect some groups in society differently?
2. Will the proposed changes disproportionately affect some groups more than others?

3. What actions can be taken to reduce any negative impact on particular groups?

The proposals would mean that admissions to Lewisham secondary schools would be based on distance only criteria (after sibling and LAC) without the use of banding. Lewisham is committed to ensuring that all schools continue to have a comprehensive intake and therefore data was analysed to see whether this still would be achieved without the use of banding.

3: Assessment of data and research

The admissions process is administered by Lewisham LA under the statutory framework of the Pan-London Co-ordinated Admissions System. In addition the use of banding as the admission criteria to school is part of the process that ensures that there is a comprehensive intake across schools in Lewisham. This is the process used for allocating a school place and as such does not have any impact on those children from 'protected characteristics' groups.

Details of the research that was undertaken includes some modelling of data across two academic years. The data shows that without the use of banding overall schools will continue to have a comprehensive intake. Full details of the assessment of data and research is outlined on pages 6-11 of the report, as well as Appendices J, L, M and N.

Lewisham Local Authority carries out annual monitoring of the outcome of secondary transfer this includes the collection of data based on factors such as banding, ethnicity, SEN, schools and locality. Lewisham will continue to monitor these outcomes annually.

4: Consultation

Details of the consultation that was undertaken is outlined in page 6 of the full report.

5: Impact Assessment

Overall the different groups of children and young people with those 'protected characteristics' will not be impacted upon by the proposed changes to the admissions process for secondary transfer.

Admissions authorities must act in accordance with the Code, the School Admissions Appeal Code, other laws relating to admissions and relevant human rights and equalities legislation. Authorities must also ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational need' (Code, paragraph 1.8)

Lewisham's arrangements comply with these requirements and vigilance is embedded in our processes. Lewisham has a well established Admissions Forum which serves as an important function in monitoring the content of school admission policies and arrangements for their impact. Any instances of poor practice would be challenged and referred to the School Adjudicator if necessary.

Lewisham has considered the impact of a decision to cease the use of banding for secondary transfer. Close examination of the data provided as appendices to this report indicate an increase in opportunity for parents to obtain a place in their nearest preferred school and that the modelling shows that there appears to be no negative impact on the admissions of children into schools at secondary transfers.

Faith

The Catholic secondary schools do not operate a banding system therefore the proposed changes will not impact upon those children who apply for a place at any of the Catholic secondary schools in Lewisham. Other faith schools such as Trinity (Church of England) do participate in the banding process.

Housing and socio-economic factors have also been examined and details of the outcome of this is provided on page 7 of the full report.

6: Decision/ Result

Lewisham has considered the impact of a decision to cease the use of banding for secondary transfer. Close examination of the data provided as appendices to the report indicate an increase in opportunity for parents to obtain a place in their nearest preferred school and that the modelling shows that there appears to be no negative impact on the admissions of children into schools at secondary transfer.

Lewisham will continue to monitor the impact of any changes to the intake of pupils to ensure a comprehensive intake across all secondary schools.

7: Equality Analysis Action Plan

Signed..... Date