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REPORT TO LEEDS ADMISSION FORUM

DATE: 1 June 2010

SUBJECT: The school admissions policy and the transfer of learners from year 11 into school sixth forms

1. Background

Education Leeds, as admission authority for Leeds schools on behalf of Leeds City Council, must ensure that arrangements for admission to school sixth forms comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code, specifically paragraphs 1.41 and 1.42. The code was introduced by DCSF on 10th February 2009 and determines that admissions arrangements should be lawful and fair. This duty is overseen by the Admissions Forum.

It was necessary to review existing arrangements which devolve the responsibility for sixth form admissions to school governing bodies leading to development of different local practice across the city and to put processes in place to ensure the Admissions Forum can readily monitor adherence to the School Admissions Code.

Leeds Pathways is the Common Application Process (CAP), an online system that allows year 11 learners to research opportunities, submit applications and monitor the progress of their applications through a web-based portal. Leeds Pathways is a software package developed and hosted by UCAS, the university and college admissions service.

This policy applies to children and young people living within the administrative boundaries of Leeds who want to enrol onto sixth form provision at a Leeds school and to learners across LA boundaries who want to enrol onto sixth form provision at a Leeds school.

Schools have a statutory responsibility to deliver impartial information, advice and guidance to pupils, and use of the common application process is included in statutory guidance for schools. The CAP will improve progression for all year 11 learners by simplifying the processes for all post 16 progression. This will contribute to reducing numbers of young people not in education, training or employment (NEET) and will contribute to the local authority's targets to raise participation in learning.

2. Online sixth form admission process

From September 2010 Admission to Leeds school sixth forms has been in line with a published admissions policy and the online Common Application Process, Leeds Pathways, has been used to manage admissions to Leeds school sixth forms from September 2010.

Schools published anticipated sixth form intake (taking into account both internal and external candidates) on the Leeds Pathways 14-19 online prospectus. Support was available to schools to help them introduce the system in the year 11 curriculum and for heads of sixth form and administrators.

A timeline for the sixth form admissions process was agreed in consultation with heads of sixth form (80% school sixth forms contributed to the consultation).

Young people and parents/carers received information about Leeds Pathways and support provided through Connexions to help learners choose courses and submit their preferences for year 12 of their existing school, for other school sixth forms, for colleges and training opportunities.

Impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) is available to all young people and parents/carers through schools and the Connexions service. The Education and Skills Act 2008 makes explicit to duty of all schools and local authorities to provide impartial information, advice and guidance.

1. Summary of activity (31st March 2010)

60% of year 11 learners had made online applications by 31st March 2010, just behind Sheffield and Hull regionally, who have had 88% and 80% of year 11 online applications respectively.

In some schools over 80% of learners had made online applications (Abbey Grange, Allerton Grange, Allerton High, Cardinal Heenan, Corpus Christi, John Smeaton, Morley High, Otley Prince Henry's, Ralph Thoresby, Rodillian, Roundhay, Temple Moor).

In some schools less than 20% of learners had made online applications (Bruntcliffe (19%), DYCA (19%), Garforth (1%), Horsforth (18%), St Mary's Menston (1%), Wetherby High (17%).

Connexions personal advisers are following up young people with no online applications to ensure they have made alternative applications and record these for tracking and monitoring purposes.

1930 young people are holding offers on the system for any post 16 opportunity. The projected numbers for Leeds sixth form admission (year 12) is approximately 3,800 for 2010 entry.

Case Study

A Connexions personal adviser (PA) interviewed three year 11 students who had applied to their home school sixth form and not been offered a place despite meeting the academic entry requirements. The PA followed this up with the Head of Sixth form, who stated they had been rejected on the grounds of poor behaviour and / or attendance. The case was followed up the 14-19 team and the school then made an appropriate offer to each student.

The CAP will contribute to reducing the number of young people who receive no offers of learning after year 11 by offering transparency and enabling schools and connexions services to monitor and support young people at risk of not progressing in learning.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the activity was informed by heads of sixth form, connexions personal advisers, young people using the system and feedback from parents and carers.

Issues raised in the evaluation included:

- i. the need to develop implementation processes (including implementation timeframe in school, administration and curriculum / Connexions input during year 11)
- ii. a number of system developments which have been incorporated into the UCAS Change User group priorities.

Some highlights from the evaluation include

- Young people found the system easy to use
- Schools have engaged well
- The helpdesk is a resounding success
- Training approach worked
- Excellent feedback for some personal advisers
- Commitment to adapt and improve processes
- Excellent ideas for future development

2. Conclusions

- i. The CAP will help to reduce the number of young people NEET by offering transparency of progression plans and enabling schools and connexions services to monitor and support young people at risk of not progressing in learning.
- ii. This year has seen a higher number of year 11 applications to all post 16 sectors.
- iii. Leeds City Council has performance indicators to meet around reducing numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) as part of Children's Services notice to improve and the 14-19 Government Office Progress Check.

3. Recommendations

- i. Admissions forum consider the benefits of a transparent admissions process to support the monitoring of fairness and equity of progression into Leeds sixth forms
- ii. Leeds City Council to continue to promote Leeds Pathways and roll out the Common Application Process across Leeds schools and academies