

## Appendix 11 - Proposed Criteria 2 arrangements

During the consultation a range of questions were raised about how criteria 2 within the existing and proposed admission arrangements operates.

Criteria 2 is named: Compelling medical or other exceptional reasons for attending the school.

This appendix provides clarification on the wording proposed for 2026-27 arrangements and how the criteria will be implemented. This criteria applies for applications for secondary, primary, infant and junior main admission rounds and for in year applications for 2026/07 onwards.

This is the wording in our proposed admission arrangements, to be published. Wording in bold shows changes from the 2025/26 arrangements – following feedback received during the consultation.

Exceptional Circumstances - This criteria applies to pupils with a specific need that can only be met by one school rather than any other. This could include medical or social reasons that make it essential for the child to attend a particular school. Independent supporting information **(this could be a report or an assessment for example that specifies why the child's needs can only be met at one school)** must be provided from a professional, for example a doctor, consultant, mental health practitioner, social worker or other professionals working with the family which makes a compelling case as to why the child's needs can only be met at the preferred school and no other. A medical condition or diagnosis in itself will not automatically result in priority being given. Advice **will** be sought from **a panel of relevant professionals** where necessary to determine whether or not the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to qualify under this category.

**Following feedback from the consultation, the council wanted to clarify how this criteria works and the process for decision making / communications with families**

The supporting information from a professional must be received to the school admission team by the closing date (31 October 2025 for Secondary and 15 January 2026 for Infant, Primary and Junior).

Before the allocations are made in February-March 2026 for secondary schools and March-April 2026 for primary phase schools, the School Admissions Manager will convene a panel meeting of the relevant professionals to consider all priority 2 applications. When there are in-year applications from September 2026 onwards that wish to apply using criteria 2 a virtual convening of a panel will take place to consider the application.

The panel is likely to comprise representatives from the Council's school admissions team, the Consultant Community Paediatrician, an Educational Psychologist, a mental health practitioner and any other relevant professionals.

If a child is going to be offered a place anyway under another criteria area (e.g. sibling link) they will not be considered by the panel as the place will be offered and therefore a decision is not needed.

The outcome of the panel decision will be recorded by the school admissions team and the decisions will be used when allocating the school places.

If a child is unsuccessful in being considered under criteria 2 and doesn't receive the school of first preference, a written description of the panel's decision making will be available to the parent/carer.

The appeal process would be the normal school allocation appeals which can be used after the offers have been made on the 2 March 2026 for Secondary and 16 April 2026 for Infant, Primary and Junior Schools.

Guidance for parents/carers on this priority will be available for when applying for schools for September 2026.