



Association of
Democratic Services
Officers

ADSO Webinar

School Appeals: The Basics

Speakers: Ann Coldicott, Democratic Services Manager, Essex County Council & Rachel Williamson, Democratic Services Manager, Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

Chair: Katherine Harclerode, ADSO Regional Rep

Q&A: John Lynch, ADSO Director of Finance

Sponsored by FCS Software



AppealsPro

The AppealsPro Management solution is suite of secure, web-based applications that are designed to manage school appeals and exclusions across all schools and key stages from reception to secondary. The product suite includes the following:

- AppealsPro is our core application that allows you to manage all of your administrative tasks for the management of school appeals and exclusion reviews
- The Appellant Portal is a self-serve tool where parents can create and manage their account and submit appeals online
- The School Portal allows you to provide schools with access to their own dedicated school account which enables them to view appeals for their school and review or submit supporting evidence
- The Panellist Portal is a self-serve tool where panel members can securely access their panel packs, late evidence and maintain and update their contact details

<https://fcssoftware.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/appeals-pro-brochure.pdf>



AppealsPro



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Ann Coldicott



Ann and Rachel are both Democratic Services Managers with extensive experience of working in local councils including:

- Handling admissions and exclusions appeals
- Running reviews across a range of community, faith, academy and foundation schools

Rachel Williamson



Ann started her career at London Borough of Redbridge and is now at Essex County Council.

Rachel started her career at Hounslow and is now at Richmond and Wandsworth Councils.



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School Admission Appeals

The Basics

Thursday 30 September 2021

ANN COLDICOTT

Statutory basis for School Admission Appeals

- Appeals are governed by The School Admission Appeal Code which was issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- It applies to admission appeals for all maintained schools in England.
- It should be read alongside the School Admissions Code and other guidance and law that affect admissions.
- The Code imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidelines.



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Other appropriate guidance

- Ensure you have all the appropriate legislation, guidance and information to hand including:
 - School Admissions Code September 2021
 - School Admissions Appeals Code 2012
 - Coronavirus regulations
 - Useful Ombudsman cases (for potential issues you have identified)
 - School Admissions Brochures
 - Templates for Chair's Notes and Decision-Making Notes



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What should you do first?

- Read the papers and send to all parties
- Identify any issues – ask for help from colleagues/ Head of Service and agree with them to seek advice from legal if necessary.



What **must** you do next?

- Check the Membership of the Panel – **must** be independent of the School, trained etc
- You **must** Schedule the hearings in accordance with the timetables set out in the Code
- You **must** notify all parties of the date, time how or where the appeal will take place
- The Clerk **must** notify the parties of the order of proceedings in advance
- Appeal panels **must** operate according to the principles of natural justice
- Appeal panels **must** either uphold or dismiss an appeal
- The panel **must** communicate the decision of each appeal
- The panel **must** ensure that the decision is easily comprehensible



On the day

- Consider the layout of the room
- Layout panel member name plates
- Door signs
- Layout water/cups
- Check on your attendees in the waiting area
- Take any equipment needed - Notepad, Pens, Tissues, Blue Tac
- Spare appeals papers
- Chair's/Clerk's script
- Decision sheets (if used)
- Brief panel members on any changes/amendments to the schedule



What type of appeal are you clerking?

- Prejudice – you must follow the two stage decision making process
- Infant Class Size – you are reviewing the evidence and process

Notes and records of proceedings



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- The decision letter **must** contain a summary of relevant factors that were raised by the parties and considered by the panel:
- WHO was present (and how they joined the meeting if virtual/ in person)
- HOW the appeal was considered – 2-stage or ICS
- WHAT information the panel heard/ received including any new information ie a summary of the school's case and a summary of the appellant's case
- WHAT happened including breaks for connectivity issues, use of interpreter
- DECISION made at each step in the process
- REASONS for the decision made at each step – including any 'findings of fact, reasons and factors they placed most weight on to support these decisions



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Q & A

Q&A Chair: John Lynch, ADSO Director of Finance

Speakers: Ann Coldicott and Rachel Williamson



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What's happening.....?

- 1st October 10.00am - North East, Yorkshire & Humberside Regional meeting
- 15th October 10.00am - East of England Regional meeting
- 20th October 2.00pm - South East Regional meeting
- 10th November 11.00am - School Appeals Webinar 2: Best Practice
- 25th – 26th November – ADSO Annual Conference, AGM & Awards Ceremony