

Frequently Asked Questions

School Admissions 2027 – 2028 consultation

1. What changes are being proposed?

It is being proposed that the medical criterion within the oversubscription criterion and its accompanying notes are amended and updated.

A definition of exceptional medical need has been provided and evidence required has been clarified.

2. Why are these changes being proposed?

Following feedback from health professionals about fulfilling the requirements of this criterion, the criterion has been further defined to be clear about the level of exceptional medical need required to be given priority for a school place. The amends also make it easier to understand what is required to fulfil the criterion.

3. Will this make it more difficult for a child to be considered for admission under this criterion?

The proposed changes will not affect the actual children considered for admission under this criterion. It will be applied consistently as it always has been. However, the amendments do make it easier for parents to understand the level of exceptional medical need expected to be considered for this priority admission. This should help parents to understand whether their child would be considered within the criterion and fulfils section 14 of the School Admissions Code (2021).

4. What are the benefits of these amendments?

Providing clarity for parents on the level of medical need required to fulfil the criterion, will also relieve the unnecessary burden on health professionals to provide evidence to fulfil the criterion in inappropriate circumstances, releasing them from unnecessary contact and appointments. This will support clinic availability and workload for health professionals as well as ensuring only children with genuine exceptional medical need will be considered under this criterion.

1. Are there any other options to these amendments?

- a) The first option would be to continue with the current criterion wording. However, this has proven to not be easily understood by parents and therefore is not compliant with the requirements of the School Admissions Code (2021). In addition, the lack of clarity is proving a burden to health professionals
- b) The second option would be to remove the medical criterion entirely. At this time, the preferred option would be to continue to support families of children with exceptional

medical need by providing this criterion. To remove the criterion risks children not being offered the school place they need, leading to an increase in the need for families to appeal for their child's school placement. This would not only increase the workload of appeal panels but would be disruptive to families and prevent the well-planned and timely transition that is necessary to meet these children's exceptional medical needs.