

Parliamentary Questions – ban on civil society organisations objecting to school admission arrangements

This document will be updated as and when further questions are tabled or answered

Baroness Meacher (Crossbench)

Q. Baroness Meacher (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of comments by the Chief Executive of Mumsnet stating that the Department for Education's proposal to prevent organisations from objecting to the admission arrangements of schools will "add to parental dissatisfaction". (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The Government's proposed changes are designed to make sure that the Schools Adjudicator can concentrate on parental complaints. We want to ensure that the Adjudicator is able to focus on any concerns which parents may have about the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school and that the Adjudicator is not held up by the need to consider objections referred by interest groups from outside the area. The changes are still subject to a full public consultation and the Department will give careful consideration to all the views expressed in that consultation. (22/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Meacher (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of compliance with the School Admissions Code across all schools, especially in the light of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association, *An Unholy Mess*, that claimed a widespread failure to comply among religiously selective schools in England. (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The Department will be conducting a full public consultation in due course and will give careful consideration to all the views expressed in that consultation as part of the current review of the School Admissions Code. In addition, the Schools Adjudicator reports annually to the Secretary of State on fair access. The Department is therefore also taking account of the Adjudicator's report for the 2014 -2015 school year (25/02/2016).

Q. Baroness Meacher (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government how they define "vexatious" in relation to the objections submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by secularist campaigning groups over the last two years. (01/02/2016)

A. Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools Lord Nash (Conservative): On 25 January 2016, the Secretary of State announced changes to the school admissions code, in order to give parents more of a say in the school admissions process so they can be confident the system works for them. The Government proposes that only local parents and local authorities should be able to refer objections about a school's admissions arrangements to the Schools Adjudicator. The Government wants to ensure that the Adjudicator is able to focus on any concerns which parents may have about the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school, and that adjudications are not held up by the need to consider large numbers of objections referred by interest groups from outside the area. The Department will conduct a full public consultation in due course and will give careful consideration to all the views expressed in that consultation. (12/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Meacher (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that preventing groups and organisations from objecting to school admissions arrangements will have on overall levels of compliance with the School Admissions Code. (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The Government's proposed changes are intended to ensure that the Adjudicator is able to focus on any concerns which parents may have about the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school, and that adjudications are not delayed by the need to consider large numbers of objections referred by interest groups from outside the area.

The Department does not believe that preventing other organisations from submitting objections will have a detrimental impact. The Government will be conducting a full public consultation in due course and will give careful consideration to all the views expressed in that consultation. (12/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Meacher (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how many breaches of the School Admissions Code there have been as a consequence of groups and organisations being able to object to schools' admission arrangements. (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The Schools Adjudicator reports annually to the Secretary of State on fair access, and this report includes information on the objections referred to the Schools Adjudicator and the outcomes of those objections. The Department is carefully considering the findings contained in the report and will take these into account, along with other relevant information, as part of the current review of the School Admissions Code. (12/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Meacher (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of objections submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by secularist campaign groups were upheld in the period from 2012 to 2015. (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: Since 2012, 87% of all objections submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by secularist campaign groups were upheld or partially upheld. The Office of the Schools Adjudicator Annual Report contains data about the objections referred to the OSA and the outcome of those objections.

Lord Warner (Non-affiliated)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and British Humanist Association, *An Unholy Mess*, and in particular that report's recommendations that guidance be produced for schools to help them to ensure that they comply fully with the School Admissions Code. (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: Admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and other admissions law. Where an objection is made to the Schools Adjudicator, if the arrangements are found to be unfair or fail to comply with the Code, the admission authority must make changes to ensure their arrangements are compliant without undue delay. Where an admission authority fails to implement decisions of the adjudicator, the Secretary of State may direct the admission authority to do so. We continue to keep the Code under review, and, where we consider any changes are necessary to make the admissions system work more effectively for parents, these will be subject to a full public consultation. (15/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they support objections to a school's admissions arrangements if those objections have been upheld. (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The School Admissions Code exists to ensure that places in all state funded schools are allocated in a fair and transparent manner. It is particularly important that parents feel confident that their concerns are listened to and acted upon. The Government has recently announced its intention to change its policy, to ensure that the adjudication process is focused on dealing with the concerns of those who have a direct interest in the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school. The adjudication process should not be delayed by the need to also consider large numbers of objections referred by interest groups from outside the area. These changes will be subject to a full public consultation and parliamentary approval. (15/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to comments by Professor Ted Cattle of the iCoCo Foundation regarding their proposals to prevent organisations from objecting to the admissions arrangements of schools. (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The Department's proposed changes are designed to make sure that the Schools Adjudicator can concentrate on parental complaints. The Department wants to ensure that the Adjudicator is able to prioritise the concerns parents may have about the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school. The changes are still subject to a full public consultation and the Department will give careful consideration to all the views expressed in that consultation. (15/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of their recent proposal to prevent groups and organisations from objecting to the admissions arrangements of schools, what assessment they have made of whether the average parent has the expertise to identify and object to breaches of the School Admissions Code. (01/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: Parents do not need a detailed knowledge of the School Admissions Code to be able to refer objections to the Schools Adjudicator. Many parents refer objections to the Schools Adjudicator. The Department's proposed changes are intended to ensure that the Adjudicator is able to focus on the concerns parents may have about the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school. The Department will be conducting a full public consultation in due course and will give careful consideration to all the views expressed in that consultation. (15/02/16)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken better to enforce compliance with the Schools Admissions Code among religiously selective schools, in the light of the findings of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and British Humanist Association, *An Unholy Mess*. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report *An Unholy Mess*, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign last year, that a significant number of religiously selective schools are employing religious selection criteria that was not permitted by their relevant religious authority, contrary to the School Admissions Code. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the objection submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator that a state-funded school sought to prioritise the admission of children on the basis of whether or not their parents have sex during the period of a mother's menstruation. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a number of religiously selective schools have been breaking the Equality Act 2010 by directly discriminating on the basis of race or gender. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a significant number of religiously selective schools are asking parents for information they do not need, and are not allowed to ask for, such as whether they are UK nationals or speak English as an additional language. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a significant number of religiously selective schools are not allowing all applicants to be admitted, even when a school is undersubscribed, and what steps they are taking to ensure that all schools comply with the School Admissions Code in this regard. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a significant number of religiously selective schools are not making clear in their admission

arrangements the process by which children with statements of special educational needs are admitted; and what steps they are taking to ensure that all schools have clear guidance regarding that. (02/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: Admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and other admissions law. Where an objection is made to the Schools Adjudicator, if the arrangements are found to be unfair or fail to comply with the Code, the admission authority must make changes to ensure their arrangements are compliant without undue delay. Where an admission authority fails to implement decisions of the adjudicator, the Secretary of State may direct the admission authority to do so. We continue to keep the Code under review, and, where we consider any changes are necessary to make the admissions system work more effectively for parents, these will be subject to a full public consultation. (15/02/16)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have changed their policy regarding allowing anyone or any organisation to object to a school's admissions arrangements. (01/02/2016)

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Nash on 15 February (HL5803), what assessment they have made of the criticisms of the admissions practices of a significant number of religiously selective schools in the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association; and what action they are taking to stop any such practices.

Q. Lord Warner (Non-affiliated): To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by Lord Nash on 25 February (HL5719), whether an NGO can assist individual parents, or groups of parents, to challenge the fairness of the admission arrangements in their local school or schools through the adjudication process, including legally challenging the fairness of the adjudication process itself. (03/03/2016)

Lord Harrison (Labour)

Q. Lord Harrison (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a majority of religiously selective schools may not be properly prioritising looked-after, and previously looked-after, children in their admission arrangements, and what steps they are taking to address this. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Harrison (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a significant number of religiously selective schools are still interviewing prospective pupils, despite this being banned in 2006. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Harrison (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a significant number of religiously selective schools are requiring practical or financial support for associated organisations such as churches and synagogues from parents, and what steps they are taking to address this. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Harrison (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a significant number of religiously selective schools are asking parents for information they do not need, and are not allowed to ask for, such as the predicted grades of their children, and how this could be prevented in future. (02/02/2016)

Q. Lord Harrison (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year *An Unholy Mess* that a significant number of religiously selective schools are breaking the School Admissions Code by taking into account the past behaviour, attendance, attitude, or achievement, of children. (02/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: Admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and other admissions law. Where an objection is made to the Schools Adjudicator, if the arrangements are found to be unfair or fail to comply with the Code, the admission authority must make changes to ensure their arrangements are compliant without undue delay. Where an admission authority fails to implement decisions of the adjudicator, the Secretary of State may direct the admission authority to do so. We continue to keep the Code under review, and, where we consider any changes are necessary to make the admissions system work more effectively for parents, these will be subject to a full public consultation. (15/02/2016)

Viscount Ridley (Conservative)

Q. Viscount Ridley (Conservative): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report *An Unholy Mess*, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year, that a number of religiously selective schools have asked parents for information about their occupational, marital, and financial status as part of the admissions process, and whether they consider this to be acceptable. (08/02/2016)

Q. Viscount Ridley (Conservative): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report *An Unholy Mess*, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year, that a significant number of religiously selective schools have not conducted proper consultations on their admission arrangements, and in many cases have not published any information about their arrangements. (08/02/2016)

Q. Viscount Ridley (Conservative): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the finding of the report *An Unholy Mess*, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year, that a number of religiously selective schools have sought to require all parents to commit to supporting the particular religious ethos of the school as part of the admission process; and what assessment they have made of the impact of any such practice on the encouragement of applications from a diverse range of religious and non-religious backgrounds. (08/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: Many of the findings of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and British Humanist Association echo those reported by the Chief Schools Adjudicator in her Annual Report for the 2013/14 school year. Admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and other admissions law. Where an objection is made to the Schools Adjudicator, if the arrangements are found to be unfair or fail to comply with the Code, the admission authority must make changes to ensure their arrangements are compliant. Where an admission authority fails to implement decisions of the adjudicator, the Secretary of State may direct the admission authority to do so. We continue to keep the Code under review, and, where we consider any changes are necessary to make the admissions system work more effectively for parents, these will be subject to a full public consultation. (18/02/2016)

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour)

Q. Baroness Lister (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the degree to which religious selection in schools leads to intakes that are socio-economically unrepresentative of their local area, and of the effect of the complexity of admission arrangements employed by religiously selective schools on the representativeness of such intakes. (09/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: It is for admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, to set and determine admission arrangements that comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and other admissions law. The code requires that all admissions arrangements must be fair and do not discriminate against pupils based on their social

background, ethnicity or disability. The Schools Adjudicator investigates any objections raised in relation to schools' admissions arrangements. Where an objection and the arrangements are found to be unfair or fail to comply with the code, the admission authority must make changes to ensure their arrangements are compliant within two months. Where an admission authority fails to implement decisions of the adjudicator, the Secretary of State may direct the admission authority to do so. (23/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Lister (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Department for Education has taken to ensure that schools whose admission arrangements were objected to by the Fair Admissions Campaign in 2014 and 2015 have changed their arrangements in line with any determinations of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. (09/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: A decision made by the School's Adjudicator is binding and enforceable. Where the Adjudicator upholds an objection about a school's admission arrangements, the statutory School Admissions Code requires the school's admission authority to revise their admission arrangements to give effect to the Adjudicator's decision within two months of that decision, or by 28 February following the decision, whichever is the sooner. Should an admission authority fail to comply with this requirement, the Secretary of State is able to take action to require them to comply. (22/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Lister (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the degree to which religious selection in schools leads to intakes that are socio-economically unrepresentative of their local area, and of the effect of the complexity of admission arrangements employed by religiously selective schools on the representativeness of such intakes. (09/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: It is for admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, to set and determine admission arrangements that comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and other admissions law. The code requires that all admissions arrangements must be fair and do not discriminate against pupils based on their social background, ethnicity or disability. The Schools Adjudicator investigates any objections raised in relation to schools' admissions arrangements. Where an objection and the arrangements are found to be unfair or fail to comply with the code, the admission authority must make changes to ensure their arrangements are compliant within two months. Where an admission authority fails to implement decisions of the adjudicator, the Secretary of State may direct the admission authority to do so. (23/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Lister (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign and British Humanist Association last year claiming widespread breaches of the School Admissions Code among religiously selective schools, what assessment they have made of the impact on the number of breaches of the School Admissions Code of preventing groups and organisations from submitting objections to school admission arrangements. (09/02/2016) h15704

A. Lord Nash: The Government's proposed changes are intended to ensure that the Adjudicator is able to focus on any concerns which parents may have about the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school, and that adjudications are not delayed by the need to consider large numbers of objections referred by interest groups from outside the area. The Department does not believe that preventing other organisations from submitting objections will have a detrimental impact. The Government will be conducting a full public consultation in due course and will give careful consideration to all the views expressed in that consultation. (12/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Lister (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the comment made in the 2014–15 annual report of the Chief Schools Adjudicator, that "the complex [admissions] arrangements of some schools do not serve local children well". (09/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The Schools Adjudicator reports annually to the Secretary of State on fair access, and this report includes information on the objections referred to the Schools Adjudicator and the outcomes of those objections. The Department is carefully considering the findings contained in the report and will take these into account, along with other relevant information, as part of the current review of the School Admissions Code. (12/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Lister (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they propose to take, if any, to reduce the complexity of the admission arrangements employed by religiously selective schools, as highlighted in the report *An Unholy Mess* published by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year, and the 2014–15 annual report of the Chief Schools Adjudicator, so that all parents are better able to understand what is required to gain admission to their local school. (09/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The Government will shortly consult on a package of changes to the School Admissions Code which will both respond to concerns from parents and to the findings in the Chief Adjudicator's Annual Report. That package will include measures to improve fairness and transparency. Admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and other admissions law. When constructing faith-based oversubscription criteria, including deciding how membership or practice of the faith will be determined, admission authorities must have regard to the guidance of their relevant religious authority, and their arrangements must comply with the statutory School Admissions Code. They must consult with their religious authority when proposing any changes to their admission arrangements. (23/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Lister (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice or guidance, if any, they propose to provide to schools, in particular to religiously selective schools, regarding compliance with the School Admissions Code, in the light of the findings of the report *An Unholy Mess*, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year, that a significant number of schools are failing to comply with the Code in various ways. (09/02/2016)

A. Lord Nash: The Government will shortly consult on a package of changes to the School Admissions Code which will both respond to concerns from parents and to the findings in the Chief Adjudicator's Annual Report. That package will include measures to improve fairness and transparency. Admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and other admissions law. When constructing faith-based oversubscription criteria, including deciding how membership or practice of the faith will be determined, admission authorities must have regard to the guidance of their relevant religious authority, and their arrangements must comply with the statutory School Admissions Code. They must consult with their religious authority when proposing any changes to their admission arrangements. (23/02/2016).

Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat)

Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding of the Chief Schools Adjudicator concerning the clarity of schools' admission arrangements, and what steps they intend to take as a result. (07/03/2016)

Baroness Massey of Darwen (Labour)

Q. Baroness Massey of Darwen (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional steps, if any, they will take to monitor and enforce compliance with the School Admissions Code in the light of their decision to limit those who can formally object to school admission arrangements; and what estimate they have made of what percentage of the objections submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by (1) parents, and (2) groups or organisations, were successful between 2012 and 2015 inclusive. (03/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Massey (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government whether it is their policy that all schools should follow the School Admissions Code, and if so, why objections to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator

that have been upheld have been described by the Secretary of State for Education as "vexatious". (03/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Massey (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to comments made by Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain, Chair of the Accord coalition, opposing proposals to prevent organisations from objecting to the admission arrangements of schools. (03/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Massey (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the report by the Fair Admissions Campaign in 2015, and in particular its recommendations that an independent body be established actively to monitor and enforce schools' admissions arrangements. (03/02/2016)

Q. Baroness Massey (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether proposed changes to who can object to school admissions arrangements will have a disproportionate impact on parents from low income backgrounds. (03/02/2016)

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Labour)

Q. Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the report *An Unholy Mess*, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year, and specifically, its recommendation that a range of standard templates for school admissions policies be created to ensure that all schools' policies are fully compliant with the School Admissions Code.

Q. Lord Hunt (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what general steps they plan to take to ensure that all schools change their admission arrangements in line with recommendations by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

A. Lord Nash: Where the Schools Adjudicator determines that a school's admission arrangements do not comply with the School Admissions Code, the admission authority has a statutory duty to revise its admission arrangements. The school must comply with the Adjudicator's decision within two months of the decision or by 28 February following the decision, whichever is sooner, unless an alternative timescale is specified by the Adjudicator. An Adjudicator's decision is binding and enforceable by the Secretary of State. (03/03/2016).

Q. Lord Hunt (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of objections submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator about the admission arrangements of schools were submitted by (1) groups and organisations, and (2) local parents, in each of the years from 2012 to 2015 inclusive.

Q. Lord Hunt (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to enforce better compliance with the School Admissions Code among religiously selective schools in the light of the findings of the report *An Unholy Mess*, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign and the British Humanist Association last year.

Q. Lord Hunt (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government, of all the schools that have had their admission arrangements objected to in (1) 2014, and (2) 2015, what percentage were found not to have violated the School Admissions Code at least once.

A. Lord Nash: In 2013/14, the percentage of objections referred to the adjudicator which were not upheld was 14%. In 2014/15 the percentage was 20%. (03/03/2016)

Q. Lord Hunt (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government, of the schools that had their admission arrangements objected to in (1) 2014, and (2) 2015, what was the average number of School Admissions Code breaches found in each case. (29/02/2016)

Ruth Cadbury MP (Labour)

Q. Ruth Cadbury (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average number of days was for a determination to be made by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator after an objection to a school's admission arrangements was submitted in each the last four years. (10/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb MP: The information requested is held by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA). The OSA Annual Report contains data about the objections referred to the OSA and the outcome of those objections: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parents-to-get-greater-say-in-the-school-admissions-process> (24/02/2016)

Q. Ruth Cadbury (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what representations she received from religious organisations on steps to prevent civil society organisations from objecting to school admission arrangements prior to her announcing proposals to limit such objections to local parents and councils. (19/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: The Department's proposed changes are intended to ensure that the Adjudicator is able to focus on the concerns parents may have about the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school, and is not held up by the need also to consider objections referred by interest groups from outside the area. We do not believe that preventing other organisations from submitting objections will have a detrimental impact. A full public consultation will be conducted in due course and careful consideration will be given to all the views expressed in that consultation. (24/02/2016)

Q. Ruth Cadbury (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that charities or other civil society organisations who wish to object to the **admission** arrangements of a school can do so on behalf of parents local to that school. (19/02/2016).

A. Nick Gibb: The Department's proposed changes in relation to objections are designed to ensure that the Schools Adjudicator is able to focus on the concerns parents may have about the fairness of the admission arrangements of their local school and is not held up by the need also to consider objections referred by interest groups from outside the area. Local authorities will continue to have the right to object so that they are able to act on behalf of the local community. We will be conducting a full public consultation in due course and will give careful consideration to all the views expressed in that consultation. (24/02/2016)

Holly Lynch MP (Labour)

Q. Holly Lynch (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will undertake a national review of the operation of admissions procedures and the School Admissions Code. (19/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: The Department for Education is intending to make changes to the School Admissions Code to improve the admissions system for parents and schools. This will be subject to a full public consultation to allow anyone with an interest to provide their views. It will also be subject to parliamentary scrutiny. Details of the consultation will be announced in due course. To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what procedures are in place to ensure that head teachers follow the School Admissions Code. (29/02/2016)

Jeff Smith MP (Labour)

Q. Jeff Smith (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of implications for her policies of the finding in the Fair Admissions Campaign's report, entitled An unholy mess, published in October 2015, that schools which are their own admission authorities are consistently failing to comply with the School Admissions Code. (11/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: Many of the findings of the report echo those reported by the Chief Schools Adjudicator in her Annual Report for the 2013/14 school year. The Government will shortly consult on a package of changes to the School Admissions Code which will both respond to concerns from parents and to the findings in the Chief Adjudicator's Annual Report. That package will include measures to improve fairness and transparency. (26/02/2016)

Q. Jeff Smith MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to her Department's press release, Parents to get greater say in the school admissions process, when her Department plans to launch its consultations on proposed revisions to the School Admissions Code. (11/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: We are currently considering what possible changes it would be appropriate to make to the School Admissions Code to support parents and schools, in addition to those that we have already announced. We will conduct a full public consultation in due course. 926/02/2016)

Q. Jeff Smith (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policy on school admissions of the finding of the report, An Unholy Mess, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign in October 2015, relating to information made available on requirements for religious observance as part of the admissions process for certain religiously selective schools. (19/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: Admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code (the code) and other admissions law. Where an objection is made to the Schools Adjudicator, if the arrangements are found to be unfair or fail to comply with the code, the admission authority must make changes to ensure their arrangements comply within two months of a determination. This includes requiring schools to amend their supplementary information forms when they do not comply with the code. We support the right of schools with a religious designation to prioritise children of their faith designation but the code requires that any measure of religious activity used for admission purposes must be as laid out by their faith body. The Government will shortly consult on a package of changes to the School Admissions code which will both respond to concerns from parents and to the findings in the Chief Adjudicator's Annual Report. That package will include measures to improve fairness and transparency. (29/02/2016)

Q. Jeff Smith (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policy on school admissions of the finding of the report, An Unholy Mess, published by the Fair Admissions Campaign in October 2015, on the use of supplementary information forms which assume that parents are of the opposite sex; and if she will take steps to ensure that such forms are not used by schools in future. (19/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: Admission authorities for all state-funded schools, including schools with a religious designation, are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code (the code) and other admissions law. Where an objection is made to the Schools Adjudicator, if the arrangements are found to be unfair or fail to comply with the code, the admission authority must make changes to ensure their arrangements comply within two months of a determination. This includes requiring schools to amend their supplementary information forms when they do not comply with the code. We support the right of schools with a religious designation to prioritise children of their faith designation but the code requires that any measure of religious activity used for admission purposes must be as laid out by their faith body. The Government will shortly consult on a package of changes to the School Admissions code which will both respond to concerns from parents and to the findings in the Chief Adjudicator's Annual Report. That package will include measures to improve fairness and transparency. (29/02/2016)

Q. Jeff Smith (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many vexatious complaints there have been against faith schools from secularist campaign groups in each of the last three years. (19/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: The information requested is held by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA). The OSA Annual Report contains data about the objections referred to the OSA and the outcome of those objections:<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parents-to-get-greater-say-in-the-school-admissions-process> (29/02/2016)

Steve McCabe MP (Labour)

Q. Steve McCabe (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will establish a regulatory body to enforce the School Admissions Code.

A. Nick Gibb: It is the role of the Schools Adjudicator to determine whether school admission arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code. Where they do not, the school's admission authority is required to revise the arrangements. Currently, anyone who believes a school's admission arrangements may not comply with the Code may refer them to the Adjudicator. We propose that, in future, only local parents and local authorities should be able to do so. We want to ensure that the Adjudicator is able to focus on the concerns that parents may have about their local school's admission arrangements. We will be conducting a full public consultation in due course. (29/02/2016)

Q. Steve McCabe (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the objections received by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator in relation to the School Admissions Code by (a) all parties, (b) civil society organisations and (c) individuals in a school's local area have not been upheld in each of the last five years. (19/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: Figures relating to all objections received by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator are published in the Chief Adjudicator's annual report, which can be found on GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/osa-annual-report. (29/02/2016)

Q. Steve McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of preventing civil society organisations from submitting complaints about school admission arrangements on the transparency and accountability of the admissions system.(19/02/2016)

A. Nick Gibb: I refer my honourable friend to the answer to parliamentary question number HL5704.

Jim Cunningham MP (Labour)

Q. Jim Cunningham (Labour):To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what representations she has received from faith schools on admissions and staffing policies in such schools; and if she will make a statement. (10/02/2016)

A. Edward Timpson: The Department greatly values the role of Church and other faith schools in our education system. Ministers and officials meet representatives of these schools on a regular basis to discuss a range of topics including staffing and admissions.(23/02/2016)

