

What if the EA decides not to issue a statement or if you disagree with what we say?

We will always be willing to hear and consider your views. If we cannot agree, you have a right to go to mediation and/or to appeal.

If you need help or advice at any stage, you can speak to your named person in the Statutory Assessment and Review Service or you may wish to contact the following agencies:

The SEN Advice and Information Service helps parents of children with special educational needs access support, guidance, and advice in relation to the needs of their children.

The Dispute Avoidance & Resolution Service is an independent service which works towards avoiding and resolving disagreements between parents and the Authority, or parents and a school, regarding children with SEN. The service provides a forum for exploring differences, identifying points of agreement, and finding a way forward which is acceptable to all involved.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal is an independent body which hears parents' appeals against the Authority's decisions on Statutory Assessments and Statements of Special Educational Needs.

More details of both these services can be found on the Authority's website:

www.eani.org.uk

CONTACT DETAILS

SEN Helpdesk

Tel: 028 9598 5960

When you call the SEN Helpdesk you will be given several options:

Choose option 1:

To select a local area office for specific SEN queries about a particular child

Choose option 2:

For all general SEN queries.

Choose option 3:

To make a request for consideration for Statutory Assessment

Dispute Avoidance & Resolution Service (DARS)

Global Mediation

55-59 Adelaide Street, Belfast Tel: 028 9072 6060

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

Tel: 028 9072 4887

Email: tribunalsunit@courtsni.gov.uk

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

DE, The Code of Practice on the Identification & Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998) and the Supplement to the Code (2005).



Special Educational Needs

The Statutory Assessment Process

Guidance for Parents and Carers



CYPS SEND Implementation & Development Team
www.eani.org.uk

What is a Statutory Assessment?

A Statutory Assessment is a formal and detailed process to find out what your child's special needs are, and what additional help they may need in school.

When will a child get a Statutory Assessment?

A child may need a statutory assessment before going to nursery school if they have very severe and complex needs or, for children and young people already at school, if the extra support they have been getting for their special educational needs is not helping.

How long does a Statutory Assessment take?

If the Education Authority (EA) agree that your child needs a statutory assessment, we will aim to complete it within 26 weeks. We will give you a named person with whom you will be able to discuss any questions or concerns regarding the assessment. This person must also gather any information available from:

- You - to get your views about your child
- Where appropriate, your child
- Teachers at your child's school
- An educational psychologist
- Medical professionals
- Specialist teachers from the EA's pupil support services if they are involved
- Social services if they know your child
- Anyone else working with your child that you think we need to talk to.

This information is called advice and should let us know what your child can and cannot do and what special help they may need.

What happens when the Education Authority has collected all the necessary information/advice?

At this point we must decide whether your child needs a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This is a legally enforceable document which describes your child's special needs and the additional support that is required in school.

Does a Statutory Assessment always lead to a Statement being issued?

The information gathered during the assessment may indicate ways in which the education setting can meet your child's needs without the need for a statement. If this is the case the EA will tell you of this decision within 18 weeks. Sometimes there can be a little delay if we are waiting for important information to come in, or if schools are on holiday.

What is a Proposed Statement?

If we decide that a Statement is needed, we will write a first version called a "Proposed Statement." This will describe your child's special educational needs and the additional support proposed for your child. A copy of the Proposed Statement will be sent to you along with copies of the advices so that you can read it all.

At this time, we will also ask you which school you would prefer your child to go to - this may be the same school that they are already attending. You can contact us if you think we need to make changes. You have 15 days to make comments, to ask us for a meeting or to accept the Proposed Statement.

Timeline from the beginning of the Statutory Assessment to the issue of a Statement.

- The EA receives a request for a Statutory Assessment. The EA must tell parents about this request. This is the *start date*.
- The EA decides whether a Statutory Assessment is needed and must tell parents about its decision. If the EA is not proceeding, we must tell you how to appeal. **[WEEK 0 - 6]**
- The statutory assessment takes place – advice sought from parents and professionals. **[WEEK 6- 16]**
- The EA informs parents of its decision to **either** issue a Proposed Statement **or**, to issue a Note in Lieu and details of the appeal process. Within 15 days of receiving the Proposed Statement parents must respond either:
 - agreeing that the draft is accurate
 - asking for changes
 - asking for a meeting. **[WEEK 16-18]**
- You should also state a preference for a school for your child.
- The EA consults with the school who have 15 days to respond.
- The EA issues the final Statement. **[WEEK 18-26]**