

## 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 SEN Link officer in the Statutory Assessment and Review Service, contact the EA SEN Helpline, or you may wish to contact the following agencies:

**The Dispute Avoidance & Resolution Service DARS** is an independent service provided by Global Mediation which works towards avoiding and resolving disagreements between parents and the Authority, or parents and a school, in regard to 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.

Global Mediation

55-59 Adelaide Street, Belfast

Tel: 028 9072 6060

Email: [DARS@globalmediation.co.uk](mailto:DARS@globalmediation.co.uk)

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

2nd Floor  
Royal Courts of Justice  
Chichester Street  
Belfast BT1 3JF

Tel: 0300 200 7812

Email: [tribunalsunit@courtsni.gov.uk](mailto:tribunalsunit@courtsni.gov.uk)

## EA SEN CONTACT DETAILS

### STATUTORY ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW SERVICE

Armagh Office Tel: 028 37512200

Ballymena Office Tel: 028 25661111

Belfast Office Tel: 028 90564000

Dundonald Office Tel: 028 90566200

Omagh Office Tel: 028 82411411

### THE SEN HELPLINE

**028 9598 5960**

The **SEN Helpline** provides general advice and information to help parents of children with special educational needs access support, guidance and advice in relation to the needs of their children.

The SEN Helpline team are available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm\*

(\*except for statutory holidays)

### USEFUL DOCUMENTS

[DE \(1998\) The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs](#)

[DE \(2005\) Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs](#)



## Special Educational Needs

## The Statutory Assessment Process

## Guidance for Parents and Guardians



CYPS  
SEND Implementation  
Team

[www.eani.org.uk](http://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) agrees 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 specialist 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 advices 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.

## Time line 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. 6 weeks
- ◆ The statutory assessment takes place – advice sought from parents and professionals. 16 weeks
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ You should also state a preference for a school for your child. 18 weeks
- ◆ The EA consults with the school who have 15 days to respond.
- ◆ The EA issues the final Statement. 26 weeks