



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

**Template for
Local Authority Report**

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

Rotherham Local Authority

to be provided by

31 October 2022

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by
31 October 2022 and earlier if possible**

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Introduction

1. Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) requires every local authority to make an annual report to the adjudicator. The Chief Adjudicator then includes a summary of these reports in her annual report to the Secretary for State for Education. The School Admissions Code (the Code) sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities in paragraph 6. Paragraph 3.30 specifies what must be included as a minimum in the report to the adjudicator and makes provision for the local authority to include any other matters. Paragraphs 6 and 3.30 of the Code require that each local authority publish its report locally. Local authorities do not have to include this introduction and guidance in their locally published report.
2. In 2020 and 2021, we asked far fewer questions than in previous years, asking only for the minimum information required by the Code. This was in response to the pressures on local authorities and others in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, we have again sought to keep the information requested to the minimum. We have, at the request of the Department for Education, asked a small number of additional questions relating to the impact of the new Code which came into force on 1 September 2021.
3. The new Code also changes the period to be covered by reports to the adjudicator and the deadline for submitting reports to the adjudicator. **This year's report must cover the 2021/2022 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 31 October 2022.**

Guidance on completing the template

4. In a departure from previous practice, we have included all the guidance on completing specific parts of the template in this section. We hope that this will be helpful. This is in response to feedback that including guidance and definitions in the body of the template could make the report harder for readers to follow and less accessible. There is no requirement for local authorities to include the introduction and the guidance in their published reports, but they are free to do so if they wish.
5. We should be grateful if in completing questions which ask for information about primary and secondary schools and/or pupils, local authorities would follow the approach to classification of schools used in statutory provisions and in the Department for Education Statistical First Release¹ and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002².
6. Guidance on specific questions and/or meaning of specific terms in this report:
 - a. "in-year admissions": This means admission at the start of any school year to a year group which is not a normal point of entry for the school concerned (for example at the beginning of Year 2 for a five to eleven

¹ [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

² [The Education Middle School \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

primary school) **and** admission during the course of any school year after the end of the statutory waiting list period (31 December) in normal years of admission.

b. Not applicable means at questions:

Section 1: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

Section 1: B.v. that there were no schools for which the local authority was the admission authority at 1 September 2021.

Section 1: B.vi. that there were no schools in the local authority's area for which the local authority was not the admission authority at 1 September 2021.

Section 2: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

Section 2: C.i. that there were no children falling within the definition.

Section 2: D.iv. that there were no hard to place children referred to the protocol.

7. We welcome all comments that local authorities make in the comment boxes and we aim to reflect those comments in the Annual Report, but we ask for the comments to be entered under the right headings. Section 3 invites comment on any other matters not specifically addressed in this template if local authorities wish to do so. The views expressed in previous years also remain a matter of public record.
8. We ask that where possible, you return the template in Word instead of PDF formatting. A number of you have commented on the formatting of the template and we have tried to make it as accessible as possible, but we are aware that some local authorities use different versions of Word.

Information requested

Section 1 - Normal point of admission

A. Co-ordination

i. How well did co-ordination of the main admissions round work?	Not well	A large number of small problems or a major problem	Well with few small problems	Very well
Reception				X
Year 7				X
Other relevant years of entry				X

ii. Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

B. Looked after and previously looked after children

i. How does the admissions system in your local authority area serve the interests of looked after children at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

ii. How do the admissions systems in other local authority areas serve the interests of children looked after by your local authority at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

iii. How does your admissions system serve the interests of children who are looked after by other local authorities but educated in your area at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- iv. How does the admissions system in your local authority area serve the interests of previously looked after children at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- v. Please confirm that your local authority has included children adopted from state care outside England in its definition of previously looked after children in admission arrangements for schools for which it is the admission authority

Yes No Not applicable

- vi. How confident are you that all other admission authorities in your area have included children adopted from state care outside England in their definitions of previously looked after children in admission arrangements for schools for which they are the admission authority?

Confident all have Confident some have Not aware of whether all or some have Not applicable

vii If you wish, please give examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which exemplify your answers about the admission to schools of looked after and previously looked after children at **normal points of admission**:

In relation to on-time applications LAC and PLAC (including children adopted from state care outside of England) are offered school places at their school of choice and are able to start at new settings at the same time as their peers.

C. Special educational needs and/or disabilities

Please provide any comments you wish to make on the admission of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities at normal points of admission:

In relation to on-time applications children are offered school places at a school of their choice and are able to start at new settings at the same time as their peers.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. Effect of Code changes on in-year admissions

Please provide any comments you wish to make on the effect of the changes to the Code's provisions for in-year admissions. It would be particularly helpful to have comments on whether you think the changes have made it easier or not for parents to secure places for children in-year?

For the most part it is working well however not all secondary applications are receiving a response within the maximum 15-day timescale despite academies being requested to respond within 9 days initially to give time for the letter to be issued to parents within the 15 days.

Where there are delays, this is as a consequence of additional needs being identified at the point of application and the request for multi – agency involvement with advice / support to advise in relation to a successful transition.

B. Looked after children and previously looked after children

- i. How does the **in-year admission** system serve children who are looked after by your local authority and who are being educated in your area?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- ii. How do the **in-year admission** systems in other local authority areas serve the interests of your looked after children?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- iii. How does your **in-year admission** system serve the interests of children who are looked after by other local authorities but educated in your area?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- iv. How does your **in-year admission** system serve the interests of previously looked after children?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

v. If you wish, please give examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which support or exemplify your answers about **in-year admissions** for looked after and previously looked after children:

Overall well, however, We have experienced some delays going beyond the statutory timescales for Rotherham LAC placed outside of authority and for LAC from other LAs being placed into Rotherham.

This is particularly prevalent and challenging for those young people with additional needs, particularly Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs with a history of exclusions and in the secondary phase. This can lead to delay as a result of a request for multi-agency advice and support needed to clarify support needed for a child to assist a successful transition.

The Local Authority are currently working on the creation of SEMH resource bases attached to mainstream schools with the intention of having dedicated SEMH support available immediately in the local area to assist with a supported transition.

C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

i. How well served are children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have an education, health and care plan that names a school when they need to be **admitted in-year**?

Not at all well Not well Well Very well Not applicable

ii. How well served are children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an education, health and care plan when they need to be **admitted in-year**?

Not at all well Not well Well Very well Don't know

iii. Please give examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which support or exemplify your answers about **in-year admissions** for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities:

There have been occasional cases in borough where delays have occurred for in year admissions for children with EHCPs in particular children with SEMH. This is particularly within the secondary phase. This has however been addressed by the establishment of an LA outreach support service and the opening of a SEMH Free School that also offers outreach support for mainstream schools.

The LA is also in the course of establishing SEMH resource bases attached to mainstream schools to assist transition.

One secondary aged young person placed out of Borough with an EHCP had 6 consultations with 15 schools declining to offer a place, due to being unable to

meet need or being full. This caused a significant delay in establishing a school place.

iv. If you wish, please provide any comments about **in-year admissions** in respect of other children:

D. Fair access protocol

i. Do you have a fair access protocol agreed with the majority of state-funded mainstream schools in your area?

Yes for primary

Yes for secondary

ii. If you have not been able to tick both boxes above, please explain why:

iii. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 August 2021 and 31 July 2022?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	4	0 (there are no community and voluntary controlled secondary schools in the borough)
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	3	18
Total	7	18

iv. How well do you consider hard to place children are served by the fair access protocol in your area?

Not at all well Not well Well Very well Not applicable

v. Please provide any comments you wish on the protocol not covered above. It would be particularly helpful to have any comments on the impact of the Code changes on the operation of the FAP in your area and the ability to secure places for vulnerable children:

All schools/academies take part in the Primary and Secondary Fair Access Protocols.

For the secondary phase - schools/academies work collaboratively to offer places for young people via a partnership working model which has been in operation for several years. The protocol works on a 2-tier system, whereby cases are referred to the respective partnership and where placement cannot be offered / agreed, cases are escalated to a strategic panel to direct placement. The Strategic Panel comprises a headteacher from each of the 3 partnerships and LA Officer representatives. As the FAP has become more established, more cases are placed at a partnership level with only the most complex cases being escalated to the strategic level panel for determination of placement.

Many of the cases referred to Fair Access continue to have had significant levels of support required for the young person e.g. social care, transient families, SEMH needs, etc. The LA has worked with schools/academies and offered alternative provision (AP) for some young people where this was felt the most appropriate educational provision for them. Referrals and placements in AP are kept under review by the strategic panel and referred to partnerships where a transition to mainstream is appropriate.

For the primary phase - there have been a very small number of Fair Access cases this academic year as with previous years, as parents have been able to secure school places for their children via the admission and appeals routes in the majority of cases.

The Primary FAP operates on a 2-tier system, whereby cases are initially referred to a local partnership of schools and the panel which consists of headteachers in the local area and LA Officers will determine placement.

Where the local partnership cannot determine a placement, the case is escalated to a Strategic panel of headteachers from outside the local geographical area and LA Officers and a placement determined. The strategic level panel has only been required to be convened once and a placement subsequently determined after considering the views of the local partnership and wider professionals advice given the complexities of the case.

E. Directions

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2021 and 31 July 2022 to maintained schools for which the local authority is not the admission authority to admit children (including children looked after by the local authority but resident in another area)?

Total Number of children	Of which, looked after	Of which, not looked after
0	0	0

F. If you wish, please provide any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised:

The challenges around limited resources in schools to meet the needs of pupils has become more prevalent for a number of schools/academies, in relation to the possible allocation of places under the Fair Access Protocol.

The development of SEMH resource units attached to schools and the establishment of an outreach service will support placements as the resources are developed.

Section 3 - Other matters

Are there any other matters that the local authority would like to raise that have not been covered by the questions above?

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2023.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2022