

1. the art of making things
and by carving wood,
metals, etc. 2. work
representations

to cause

1

If you would like additional copies of the report or further information, please contact:

SCRUTINY
LB RICHMOND UPON THAMES

York House
Richmond Road
Twickenham
Middlesex TW1 3AA
T: 020 8891 7813
F: 020 8891 7701
E: scrutiny@richmond.gov.uk
W: www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny



CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Contents | 1 |
| Foreword | 3 |
| Executive Summary and Recommendations | 4 |
| Part I – Role and Function of the Task Group | 7 |
| Background to the Task Group..... | 7 |
| Methodology | 8 |
| Task Group Membership | 8 |
| Part II – Introduction..... | 11 |
| Requirements Under the SEN Code of Conduct | 11 |
| What is a Special Educational Need? | 11 |
| What are the Local Authority's key responsibilities? | 11 |
| School Action and School Action Plus | 12 |
| Why undertake a Statutory Assessment? | 12 |
| Statutory Assessment – Whether to Assess? | 13 |
| Statutory Assessment - The Process | 13 |
| The Significance of a Statement of SEN | 14 |
| Why issue a Note in Lieu?..... | 15 |
| The Situation in LBRUT | 16 |
| Where are Children with SEN Educated in LBRuT? | 16 |
| LBRUT'S SEN Funding Arrangements | 16 |
| LBRUT's SEN Panel | 17 |
| PART III – Main Findings..... | 18 |
| Introduction..... | 18 |
| A. The Relationship Between Parents and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT)..... | 18 |
| The Length of the Statutory Assessment Process | 18 |
| Parental Satisfaction | 19 |
| Administration..... | 19 |
| B. The Assessment, The Statement and Placements | 21 |
| A Conflict of Interest? | 21 |
| Borough Commissioned and Independent Reports | 23 |



| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| The Wording of Statements..... | 24 |
| School Placements..... | 25 |
| Autism Placements..... | 25 |
| Annual Reviews..... | 26 |
| C. Therapy Services..... | 28 |
| D. Advice Available to Parents | 30 |
| E. Multi-Agency Working | 32 |
| Conclusion | 33 |
| Table of Recommendations..... | 34 |
| Selected Reading..... | 36 |
| Glossary of Terms | 37 |
| Appendices | 38 |





FOREWORD

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT) is under a duty to ensure that all children receive high standards of education, including those with special educational needs. The Statutory Assessment process can be a stressful time for parents and children, making it vitally important that the Council does everything it can to offer both the best possible service. I am therefore very pleased to introduce this report, which makes recommendations for further improvements to what is already an excellent service.

The Task Group has gathered a significant amount of evidence over the course of its work and is indebted to all those who gave up their time to comment. Particular thanks should be given to all the parents who returned questionnaires and sent in comments. Finally, I would like to thank Geraldine Herage, Head of Services for Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties, for her expertise and advice throughout the review.

Cllr Suzette Nicholson
Chair of the SEN Statements Scrutiny Task Group



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Task Group began on 19 September 2007, with a remit to look at parental satisfaction, therapy provision, multi-agency working and the advice available to parents. The Task Group interviewed Council Officers, Clarendon and Strathmore Special Schools, the Parent Partnership Worker, representatives from Richmond and Twickenham Primary Care Trust (RTPCT) and representatives from SOS!SEN. It also sent questionnaires to all parents of a child with an SEN Statement who lived in the Borough, and it reviewed relevant documentation.
2. The Council has a duty to provide high standards of education for all children, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Many children with SEN are educated under School Action and School Action Plus, but schools or parents can refer children for statutory assessments if they consider them to have more complex needs.
3. LBRuT must undertake the statutory assessment process in line with the SEN Code of Practice, which sets out strict timescales and stages. LBRuT's SEN Panel must first decide whether to undertake a statutory assessment. If an assessment is undertaken, then the SEN Panel must decide whether to issue a statement or a note in lieu. An SEN statement carries with it extra funding to pay for any provision that is additional to that which schools would ordinarily make available to a pupil with SEN.
4. The Task Group noted that the SEN Service was rated as "Outstanding" by the Joint Area Review and that there had been significant improvements to service. The majority of parents responding to the survey were satisfied with the length of the assessment process and with LBRuT's service throughout the process. However, there was a significant minority who were not satisfied with either.
5. The Task Group heard evidence from a number of witnesses about administrative errors within the SEN service. It therefore recommended that a review of the administrative procedures be undertaken (**recommendation 1**).



6. The Task Group found no evidence to suggest that LBRuT does not run an honest and fair assessment process, although some parents' perception was that decisions were made on a funding basis alone.
7. There was some confusion amongst Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) as to what information they needed to send to the SEN Panel when making referrals; the Task Group has therefore recommended that this be addressed at the next SENCO termly meeting (**recommendation 2**). It also recommended that SENCOs be encouraged to attend SEN Panel meetings to help overcome confusion (**recommendation 3**). The Task Group also recommended further promotion of mediation where LBRuT and the parents are in dispute (**recommendation 4**).
8. Some parents believe that the Council does not fully consider any independent reports commissioned by them. LBRuT denied this but the Task Group recommends that it give an undertaking to parents that all reports produced by relevant professionals will be fully considered (**recommendation 5**). Two parents raised the same concerns about a specific school and the Task Group has recommended that these be raised directly with that school (**recommendation 6**).
9. Some parents raised concerns about provision for children with autism. The Task Group was generally impressed with the provision offered at Strathmore and Clarendon school, but recommends that all schools should achieve accreditation from the Autism Society (**recommendation 7**).
10. There were concerns raised that schools were not sending out information for annual reviews within the target 14 days. The Task Group recommends that LBRuT encourage all schools to do this and investigates any instances where it is aware of paperwork being sent out late (**recommendation 8**).
11. The Task Group recommends that the Head of Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties look at the recommendations from the final Bercow report, which is investigating issues surrounding Speech and Language Therapy. She should report back to the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on any possible local developments to improve the delivery of this service (**recommendation 9**).
12. Concerns were raised about Speech and Language Therapy. These were that RTPCT employment contracts allowed them to take holidays during the term, that RTPCT could not provide cover when staff were sick or on maternity leave and



that vacant posts had remained unfilled for long periods. The Task Group believes these problems could be solved if the service was brought within LBRuT's control and recommends a feasibility study is undertaken to investigate this **(recommendation 10 a)**. If this is not possible, the Task Group recommends that RTPCT look to employ some of its speech and language therapists on term time only contracts **(recommendation 10b)**.

13. The Task Group found that the Council's website was informative, but felt that more could be done to make this easier to find and advertise. It therefore recommends that the web link www.richmond.gov.uk/sen be created and that this is publicised widely **(recommendation 11)**.
14. The Task Group is concerned by suggestions that there are delays in diagnosing dyslexia but is encouraged that LBRuT is making training available. It therefore recommends that all schools be encouraged to take up this training **(recommendation 12)**.



PART I – ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE TASK GROUP

BACKGROUND TO THE TASK GROUP

15. In June 2007, the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee suggested undertaking a review into the process of obtaining a statement of Special Educational Need. Members suggested this topic because they had concerns about the service: the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames lost 88% of the appeals made against it in 2005/2006 and Members were also receiving significant amounts of casework on this issue. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group agreed to set up the Task Group on 23 July 2007.
16. At its first meeting on 19 September 2007, the Task Group set itself the following terms of reference:
- To establish levels of parental expectation and satisfaction with the process of obtaining a statement of special educational need, including its length, and if necessary to recommend improvements.
 - To establish whether the current provision of specialist therapies meets the needs described in the SEN Statements and, if necessary, to recommend improvements.
 - To gather opinion on how effectively all the relevant agencies work together and, if necessary, to recommend improvements.
 - To review the advice available to parents regarding the process of obtaining a statement of special educational need and, if necessary, recommend improvements.
 - Review the 14-19 provision for pupils with an SEN statement and, if necessary, to recommend improvements.
17. It became clear to the Task Group during the course of its work that a full review of 14-19 provision for pupils with an SEN Statement would have been a significant piece of work in itself. Consequently, the Task Group accepts that it has not fully met the last term of reference, although it has gathered opinion on 14-19 provision from a number of witnesses.



METHODOLOGY

18. The Task Group interviewed the following:
- The Head of Services for Children with Disabilities & Learning Difficulties and the Assistant Director of Specialist Children's Services.
 - The Parent Partnership Worker
 - Representatives from the Primary Care Trust
 - Representatives from SOS!SEN, a support group for parents of children with SEN which is based in Richmond upon Thames.
19. The Task Group visited Strathmore and Clarendon Special Schools and held interviews with the Head Teachers. During the visit to Strathmore School, Members also interviewed the school's Speech and Language Therapist. A focus group was also held with six Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), three from primary schools and three from secondary schools.
20. A questionnaire was sent to all 747 parents in the Borough who had children with statements in November 2007. 158 responses were received, which amounted to a response rate of 21%. Some parents enclosed written submissions with their questionnaire returns, which were also considered. Appendix A sets out the questionnaire responses.
21. Two Task Group members sat in on meetings of the SEN Panel. The Task Group also reviewed relevant documentation, including the SEN Code of Practice, the Council's SEN Policy and benchmarking statistics.

TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP



Cllr Suzette
Nicholson –
Chair



Cllr George
Beevor



Cllr Christine
Percival



Cllr Carol
Stratton



Paul Leonard -
Co-opted
Member



Councillor Suzette Nicholson (Task Group Chair)

22. Councillor Suzette Nicholson is a Councillor in Hampton Ward and is the Chair of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She is a trained teacher and taught full-time until being elected as a Councillor. She is the mother of four children.

Councillor Beevor

23. Councillor Beevor is a Councillor for Kew Ward and a member of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Christine Percival

24. Councillor Christine Percival is a Councillor for Barnes Ward and the Opposition Spokesman on Children with Special Needs. She is currently a member of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She has a 34-year-old son with learning disabilities.

Councillor Stratton

25. Carol Stratton represents Hampton ward and is a member of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She retired from the NHS after her election as a Councillor, having worked for most of her career as a health visitor. She has also managed health visitors, district nurses and school nurses, including the service to special schools in Richmond and Wandsworth. For the last six years of her career she specialised in child protection and was the Designated Nurse for Child Protection in Merton and Sutton PCT. She has master's degrees in Health Promotion and in Children's Studies. She has three grown up daughters, one of whom had special educational needs.

Paul Leonard

26. Familiar with Statementing procedures for special needs children in Suffolk and Hammersmith and Fulham, Paul became a Parent Governor at Strathmore School in the London Borough of Richmond in 1997 and has been involved with two successful Ofsted Inspections. His son, Christopher, is 16 years old and has multiple and complex special needs, including the need for speech and language therapy, physio- and occupational therapy.



27. He was elected Chair of Governors at Strathmore School in 2004 and is currently undertaking his second, four-year term as the Parent Governor Representative for Special Educational Needs in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. He is especially interested in obtaining better integration of education & therapy provision for children's SEN services that is cost effective and inspirational. He also had an advisory role in the preparation of the Borough's SEN information leaflets.



PART II – INTRODUCTION

REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE SEN CODE OF CONDUCT

What is a Special Educational Need?

28. Children have a Special Educational Need (SEN) if they require special educational provision, either because they have a disability that prevents or hinders access to ordinary educational facilities or because they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than children of the same age.¹ The term SEN therefore encompasses a wide range of conditions and needs.

What are the Local Authority's key responsibilities?

29. Local Authorities are under “a statutory duty to promote high standards of education for all children, including those with SEN.” In particular, an authority must:
- Quickly identify and assess the needs of children with SEN and match these with appropriate provision.
 - Provide high quality support to schools, including the provision of support services and the sharing of good practice.
 - Develop close partnerships with parents, schools, health services and the voluntary sector.
 - Undertake strategic planning for SEN provision.
 - Keep arrangements for SEN provision under review.

¹ Taken from Page 6 of the SEN Code of Practice 2001



School Action and School Action Plus

30. Children who have been identified as having a special educational need are initially supported through a process known as School Action. Under this process, a child's teachers will identify and provide interventions that are additional to, or different from, a school's usual differentiated curriculum. Any strategies employed to assist the child are recorded in an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which is shared with pupils and parents.
31. If a child continues to encounter difficulties despite the support provided under School Action, schools may seek to intervene through School Action Plus. At this stage, external support services would normally be involved. Intervention at School Action Plus can involve providing more specialist assessments, strategies, materials or support.

Why undertake a Statutory Assessment?

32. If a child with SEN demonstrates significant cause for concern, then the school or setting (such as a nursery or playgroup) may make a referral to the Local Authority requesting a statutory assessment.² Referrals can also come from parents, or from other agencies such as the health service. The statutory assessment must be carried out before a child can be issued with an SEN Statement.
33. SEN statements are normally issued when a Local Authority considers that a child needs a level of special educational provision that could not reasonably be made available from a mainstream school's usual resources. When a statement is issued, schools are given separate funding to pay for any provision recommended in the statement, which is additional to that which they would ordinarily make available to a pupil with SEN.
34. In Richmond upon Thames, this extra funding is structured and linked to criteria, which are produced by LBRuT. The amount of funding allocated is dependent on the severity and complexity of a child's needs, as assessed against these criteria. The funding is designed to pay for the additional staffing specified in part 3 of the statement.

² under section 323 of the Education Act 1996



Statutory Assessment – Whether to Assess?

35. When a referral is received, the Local Authority's first decision is whether or not to undertake a statutory assessment. It will look for convincing evidence that, despite the school and external specialists taking relevant and purposeful action, a child's learning difficulties have not been remedied sufficiently. This evidence will include the school's assessment of a child's needs, the views of other professionals and the action taken by the school. All such decisions should be based on children's individual circumstances, although guidance is provided to local authorities in Chapter 7 of the SEN Code of Practice 2001.
36. The Local Authority has six weeks from the date of receiving the referral (or notifying the parents of the referral) to decide whether or not to undertake an assessment. This includes a 29-day period within which parents can make representations to the authority.
37. If the Local Authority decides to turn down the assessment request, it must write to parents with its reasons. It must also state what special educational provision it feels the child needs. Parents have a right of appeal against this decision to the SEN and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Statutory Assessment - The Process

38. If the Local Authority decides to assess, it must obtain parental, educational, medical, psychological and social services advice. The Local Authority should also gather advice from any other relevant source. All advice must be in writing. Wherever possible, children's views should also be sought.
39. The local authority should normally receive the advice it seeks within six-weeks, and it must decide whether or not to issue a statement within ten weeks of the decision to assess. The Local Authority then has a further two weeks to send parents either:
 - a proposed statement
 - written reasons for not issuing a statement (usually in the form of a note in lieu).
40. It is this point, 18 weeks after the referral, which forms the time limit for completing a statutory assessment. This time limit is used as a performance indicator.



41. Once a proposed statement has been issued, the authority has a further eight weeks to send parents a final statement. Parents should therefore receive their child's final statement by 26 weeks – six months after the referral date.
42. There are situations in which the authority can legitimately exceed the time limit at some stages of the process (these are known as exceptions). However, as soon as an exception has been overcome, normal time limits apply again. A flow chart showing the stages and timescales in the assessment process has been attached at Appendix B.

The Significance of a Statement of SEN

43. Under section 324 of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority is responsible for arranging the special educational provision set out in part 3 of a child's statement (see below). Local Authorities have the power to intervene when a child is not receiving the provision set out in the statement, and charge any costs to the school's budget.
44. An SEN statement should provide parents and all relevant professionals with a clear and unambiguous description of a child's needs, the support required to meet them and the arrangements for providing that support. The advice gathered during the assessment process must be appended to the statement.



Why issue a Note in Lieu?

45. If the authority undertakes an assessment but ultimately decides not to issue a statement, it may produce a note in lieu. A note in lieu not only sets out the written reasons for not issuing a statement but also contains all the advice obtained throughout the assessment process. With parental permission, the note in lieu can be circulated to all relevant professionals, allowing the information gathered during the statutory assessment to be put to good use.

The Layout of an SEN Statement

| Part | Title | Description |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Introduction | Includes the child's name, address, date of birth, home language and religion. Also the names and addresses of the child's parents. |
| 2 | Special Educational Needs | Details of every special educational need identified by the assessment and of the advice received (which should be appended.) |
| 3 | Special Educational Provision | This must set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what objectives the provision aims to meet• what provision is appropriate to meet the child's needs.• The arrangements for monitoring progress against the objectives. |
| 4 | Placement | The type and name of the school where provision will be provided (or details of other arrangements). |
| 5 | Non-Educational Needs | Any relevant non-educational needs (often agreed with health or social services). |
| 6 | Non-Educational Provision | The provision (as agreed with relevant agencies) required to meet the non-educational needs outlined in part 5. This includes the agreed arrangements for how this should be provided. |



THE SITUATION IN LBRUT

Where are Children with SEN Educated in LBRuT?

46. There are two special schools in the Borough, Clarendon School and Strathmore School, which only cater for children with statements. However, the majority of children with statements are educated in mainstream schools, or special units attached to schools, as are children who are undergoing school action and school action plus. There are currently 335 pupils with an SEN Statement who are educated outside the Borough.

LBRUT'S SEN Funding Arrangements

47. Each School receives funding from the authority for provision under School Action and School Action Plus. According to a Government formula, the amount each school receives varies according to the number of its pupils who are entitled to a free school meal. Schools also receive separate funding for the provision of SENCOs and for the training of teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). Funding is also allocated through individual children's statements of SEN, as described above.
48. Schools have delegated budgets, which give governing bodies and Head Teachers flexibility to make their own spending decisions. School governing bodies are obligated by section 317 of the Education Act 1996 to use their best endeavours to ensure that children with SEN receive the help necessary to meet their needs. The governing body of every maintained school is obliged to publish information about how resources are allocated to and amongst pupils with SEN.³
49. The Council's total SEN budget amounted to approximately £8m per year in 2007/2008 and will be £10,896,960 in 2008/2009. This budget includes transport, independent placements and school funding but not interventions at school action and school action plus. This is a needs led budget, which has to focus on the individual education needs of each child. The budget is currently approximately £500,000 overspent, mainly due to increased fees and demand for out of Borough placements, transport and equipment.

³ Under Education [SEN] Regulations 1999.



LBRUT's SEN Panel

50. Decisions on whether to undertake a statutory assessment, and on the outcomes of assessments, are made by the LBRUT's SEN Panel. The Panel is chaired by the SEN Service Manager and includes the Head of the Integrated Service for Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties, the Principal Educational Psychologist, the Advisor for Additional Educational Needs, Head Teachers and other senior officers. The Council's SEN Panel is also responsible for determining whether amendments should be made to statements as a result of annual reviews.



PART III – MAIN FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

51. In 2007, the SEN Service was inspected by a team of outside inspectors conducting a Joint Area Review (JAR) and was assessed as “outstanding”. It was described as being a “comprehensive, integrated service” with “no significant weaknesses”. The JAR was published after the Task Group had begun its work and its findings, along with the evidence gathered by the Task Group, show that many of the areas about which members had expressed concerns have seen recent improvements. However, improvements can always be made and the Task Group has made recommendations below which it feels will lead to an even better service.

A. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND THE LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES (LBRUT)

The Length of the Statutory Assessment Process

52. The statutory assessment is a long process that parents can find confusing, frustrating and stressful. The Task Group received some comments to this effect and 32% of respondents to the parents’ survey were dissatisfied with the length of the assessment.
53. Because detailed rules govern the statutory assessment process, the LBRuT has little flexibility to speed it up or simplify it. It has been successful at completing assessments within statutory timescales. In 2005-06:
- 100% of the statutory assessments without exceptions were completed within the 18-week timescale.
 - 92% of assessments with exceptions were completed within the 18-week timescales.



54. These figures are better than the average for England and may go some way to explaining why a larger number of respondents (40%) were satisfied with the length of the process than were dissatisfied with it.

Parental Satisfaction

55. A majority of the parents who returned questionnaires (60%) felt that LBRuT's service during the process of assessment and obtaining the SEN statement had met their expectations, with 12% of respondents stating that their expectations had been exceeded. However, there were a significant minority (37%) of respondents who stated that the level of service was below, or significantly below, their expectations. Some parents wrote to the Task Group raising serious complaints about SEN Processes. However, these complaints formed a small minority of the responses. The children of the parents returning this questionnaire will have been assessed at different times, which means that the responses are likely to include some historical information.

Administration

56. Some parents, SOS!SEN and members of the SENCOs' focus group raised concerns over administrative errors. The Task Group did receive submissions praising the work of staff in the SEN Section but it was clear that administrative errors had led to frustration and concern for parents in a small number of cases.
57. The Task Group is aware that, in a small number of cases, proposed statements have contained the wrong child's name or have erroneously recorded a child's personal details. It also heard of an isolated incident, where LBRuT told a school that parents wanted to place their child there, when this was not the parental preference. The Task Group feels that such errors are always unacceptable, because they are easily avoided and because they undermine parents' trust in the accuracy of the process. Senior Managers accept this and have told the Task Group that apologies have been issued in all instances.
58. SOS!SEN also told the Task Group: that parents were not always clear what version of a statement had been sent out, which caused confusion; that statements had been sent out with track changes showing; that out of office messages were not always left on; and that parents and schools were not always notified when the named SEN Officer changed. These issues have the potential



to undermine clear communication between the Council and parents. With such a complex process, it is vital that every possible effort is made to minimise confusion and delays.

59. Given these concerns, the Task Group recommends that Senior Managers review all administrative procedures, paying particular attention to the issues highlighted above.

Recommendation 1: *That Senior Managers review all administrative procedures, paying particular attention to the issues highlighted in the report, and report back to the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 November 2008 with details of the measures taken to overcome them.*



B. THE ASSESSMENT, THE STATEMENT AND PLACEMENTS

A Conflict of Interest?

60. A report of the Education and Skills Parliamentary Select Committee, which investigated SEN Assessment and Funding in 2007, found that:
- “No matter how diligent a Local Authority is in conducting honest assessments of children’s special educational needs, the current system will inevitably lead to situations where families who are dissatisfied with the outcome will conclude that the assessment was tainted by the need to restrict costs. This does nothing for the credibility of the Local Authority assessment process, and potentially leaves disgruntled families with a lack of trust in local and national systems.”
61. Some parents do feel that the Local Authority has such a conflict of interest. A small number of parents wrote to the Task Group, stating that they had to battle with the authority to achieve the educational provision they felt their child needed. Many of these parents had taken the authority to SENDIST, sometimes on more than one occasion.
62. One SENCO at the focus group thought that the Borough had a blanket policy of not issuing statements to children who did not meet the SEN Panel’s criteria. Some parents and SENCOs also said that LBRuT did not assess children until their needs had become too severe.
63. Ian Coates, Head of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Division at what was the Department for Education and Skills, wrote to all local authorities in 2005 on this issue. His letter stated that Local Authorities could develop criteria to use as guidelines when making decisions. However, local authorities must be prepared to depart from those criteria where there is a compelling reason to do so.
64. LBRuT has developed the criteria as a basis for making decisions, which is entirely legitimate. Senior Managers have also told the Task Group that there are no blanket policies in place and that the individual needs of the child are always considered.
65. The Task Group has heard evidence of some unacceptable practices in the past and clearly the historic appeals figures show that there had been issues of concern; in 2005-2006, the LBRuT lost 22 of the 25 appeals made to SENDIST. However, this has improved significantly; in 2006-2007, parents withdrew 6 of the



18 appeals to SENDIST after further negotiations with the authority. Only 8 of these appeals were eventually upheld. SOS!SEN has also accepted that the service has been improving.

66. A number of SENCOs at the focus group were confused about what information they needed to send to the SEN Panel when applying for a statutory assessment. It was clear that this had led to delays and frustration. In particular, some SENCOs were not aware that a pro forma was available to send to the panel. This surprised Senior Managers. They stated that the Authority provided regular training for SENCOs and that schools could also apply for additional funding in order to train their staff. However, it is clear to the Task Group that there are still unresolved issues.
67. The Task Group therefore recommends that the Advisor for Additional Needs raises these issues with SENCOs at their regular termly meetings and highlight steps to tackle this confusion. The Task Group also thinks that it would be beneficial for SENCOs to sit in on SEN Panel meetings, so that they have a clearer understanding of the process and what the panel require.

Recommendation 2: *That the Advisor for Additional Needs raises the issues of what information schools need to send to the SEN Panel at SENCOs' next regular termly meetings and highlight steps to tackle this confusion.*

Recommendation 3: *That LBRuT encourages SENCOs to attend SEN Panel meetings.*

68. The Task Group agrees with the Select Committee's finding that there will always be some disagreements between the SEN Panel and parents and that under the current system, some parents will always feel that LBRuT is trying to cut costs. The overriding impression of Members attending SEN Panel meetings was the amount of care that was taken to ensure that a child's needs were fully identified and that appropriate provision was put in place despite budgetary restrictions. The Joint Area Review undertaken in 2007 backs up this impression, as it found that services for children with learning difficulties and disabilities were "Outstanding". The Task Group is therefore confident that the assessment process run by LBRuT is honest and focuses specifically on meeting the needs of the child.



69. The Task Group welcomes the fact that all parents and their representatives are now invited to meet with senior officers when an appeal is lodged and that this resulted in six appeals being withdrawn in 2006-2007. However, it would like this dialogue to take place before an appeal is lodged wherever possible. The Task Group would also like to see greater use of mediation between parents and the authority before tribunals are heard.

Recommendation 4: That LBRuT promotes the use of mediation with all parents who have lodged an appeal and raise parents' awareness of this service at the beginning of the statementing process.

Borough Commissioned and Independent Reports

70. The Task Group heard that increasing numbers of parents were spending significant sums of money to commission independent reports. It was SOS!SEN's opinion that such reports were often of a much higher quality than those produced on behalf of the LBRuT. Some of the SENCOs interviewed also suggested that independent reports often picked up issues not covered by the Local Authority.
71. SOS!SEN, and some SENCOs, believed that LBRuT treated independent reports less favourably than reports it had commissioned. It believed that LBRuT's attitude was that reports paid for by parents would recommend what parents wanted to hear. SOS!SEN told the Task Group that this was not the case, as all independent experts had to conform to their own professional codes of practice. SOS!SEN's view was that, in general, LBRuT does not give parent's views sufficient attention.
72. The Task Group affirms that any reports commissioned by parents must be fully considered as part of the assessment process, as long as qualified professionals produce them. Senior Managers have advised the Task Group that this already happens. Wherever there are conflicts of professional opinion, the SEN panel will take a final view in the best interest of the child. Given the concerns raised, the Task Group feels that LBRuT should give an undertaking to parents that all relevant reports will be fully considered.
73. SOS!SEN were also concerned that quality control was not exercised over Local Authority commissioned reports; it stated that LBRuT should be prepared to



challenge medical reports that did not provide sufficient detail on a child's needs or the provision required to meet them. SOS!SEN were particularly concerned that reports produced for LBRuT did not always recommend quantified levels of provision to overcome need. The Task Group has put these points to Senior Managers and been informed that local authorities are not qualified to refute reports written by medical professionals. The issue of whether to quantify provision is discussed in the section below.

Recommendation 5: That LBRuT issues an undertaking to parents' that all relevant parentally commissioned reports will be fully considered as part of the assessment process.

The Wording of Statements

74. The wording of statements has been, and continues to be, a contentious issue. SOS!SEN and some parents have expressed the view that a number of statements are worded vaguely.
75. The judgement of Hale LJ in R (on the application of IPSEA Ltd) v The Secretary of State for Education and Skills⁴ says that “the statement clearly has to spell out the provision appropriate to meet the particular needs of, and objectives identified for, the individual child” and that “any flexibility built into the statement must be there to meet the needs of the child and not the needs of the system”. The Ian Coates letter from 2005 reinforces this finding and states that there must be no blanket restriction on quantifying the amount of provision.
76. SOS!SEN said that the description of needs under part 2 of the statement was not always sufficiently detailed. 6% of the parents who responded to the questionnaire also raised the issue of vague statements. However, 74% felt that their child's statements did provide an adequate description of their child's needs, with the remaining responses either raising different concerns or answering “Don't Know”.
77. SOS!SEN also stated that that the educational provision is often not sufficiently specific and quantified in part 3 of the statement and similar views were expressed by some parents. The Task Group has heard conflicting evidence on this point from special schools with one stating that the amount of therapy

⁴ [2003] ELR 393



provision should be quantified and the other stating that it should not as flexibility was necessary as children's needs changed.

78. There is a feeling amongst some parents that LBRuT writes vague statements to reduce the amount of money it needs to spend. However, the Task Group has seen nothing to suggest that LBRuT is not operating in line with case law and the Ian Coates letter. This view is backed up by the Joint Area Review, which found that ultimately, "pupils with special educational needs make good progress at school".
79. Both SENCOs and SOS!SEN questioned the wording of objectives in the statements. One witness also told the Task Group that the quality of statements had deteriorated, as they were no longer written in house. Senior Managers informed the Task Group that statements were drafted independently of the authority to increase objectivity.

School Placements

80. 71% of parents stated that their child's school was meeting their child's needs. However, 22% of parents had concerns about the special educational provision that their child was receiving. The reasons given were varied, but the most common included concerns about the provision of Speech and Language Therapy, the lack of one to one support, concerns about how schools handled children with autism and children's needs not being understood by school staff. The issues surrounding Speech and Language Therapy and one on one support are discussed later in the report. Some parents also raised concerns that children with the profoundest needs did not have facilities available locally.
81. There was a specific concern raised by two parents at one school that they had to chase the school to provide for their child's needs. The Task Group recommends that these issues be raised directly with the school.

Recommendation 6: *That LBRuT raises the issue of parents having to chase a particular school to provide for their child's needs with that school.*

Autism Placements

82. SOS!SEN raised the point that children with autism were often placed in a unit or school for children with severe learning difficulties. SOS!SEN suggested that this



policy was followed because the Borough had to fill places at its schools. However, one special school told the Task Group that it was increasingly concerned about exceeding its pupil capacity. This suggests that LBRuT does not have significant vacancies at its schools that it needs to fill.

83. One school stated that, in its opinion, autism specific schools were often not best for autistic children, because they needed to learn how to engage with other non-autistic people. It felt that it met children's individual needs in a mixed setting.
84. Whilst Members accept that Strathmore School would ideally have more space to provide quiet areas for children with autism, they were impressed by the level of support offered to autistic children at both Clarendon and Strathmore. The Joint Area Review report also acknowledges that there have been recent improvements in the facilities offered to children with autism across the Borough, including the Gateway unit at Whitton School. The Task Group is aware that LBRuT will be applying to have special schools accredited by the National Autism Society and feels that this will be a welcome development.

Recommendation 7: That all LBRuT special schools work towards accreditation from the National Autism Society.

Annual Reviews

85. There were concerns raised by parents and SOS!SEN about the handling of annual reviews. SOS!SEN stated that the paperwork for these reviews was often sent out later than 14 days before the meeting, which was the target date. Arranging annual reviews is the responsibility of individual schools. The Task Group agrees that such delays are undesirable and recommends that LBRuT urge all schools to send out information by this deadline.

Recommendation 8: That LBRuT encourage all schools to send out annual review paperwork 14 days before an annual review and investigate all reported incidents where paperwork has been sent out late.

86. A Head Teacher stated that there could be long gaps before LBRuT updated statements, after the SEN Panel had agreed recommendations arising from annual reviews. He was aware of instances that had taken as long as three to four years, although he stated clearly that this had not affected the provision children were given, because schools and the authority knew what the outcomes



had been. A small number of parents also commented that statements were not adequately reviewed and updated. Senior Managers informed the Task Group that, unless the statement needed to be amended due to a change of placement or clear change in a child's needs, statements were not routinely updated. Senior Managers felt that updating statements each year would place undue strain on administrative resources. The Task Group is satisfied that the current arrangement is not causing any significant concerns.



C. THERAPY SERVICES

87. In 2006, therapy services, which include physiotherapy, speech and language, and occupational therapy, were brought back in house from an outsourced provider. A new team was recruited in summer 2006 to provide these services, and an NHS modernisation exercise was undertaken with the aim of improving capacity and demand management. Joint funding is also now in place between the Richmond and Twickenham Primary Care Trust (RTPCT) and LBRuT for specialist, bespoke equipment for children with therapy needs in the home and at school.
88. SENCOs were very positive about the therapy provision arrangements in primary schools. They stated that there had definitely been recent improvements and that it was especially helpful to have in-school therapy provision, because this had led to a reduction in bureaucracy and had created a very comprehensive service. SENCOs were particular pleased at how well the therapists linked with parents.
89. However, a number of witnesses felt that the current provision of speech and language therapy was inadequate. Both special schools had suffered, to varying degrees, from the availability of speech and language therapy provision although one had seen a recent improvement. The schools raised concerns over speech and language therapist vacancies and over speech and language therapists being able to take leave during term time. The PCT stated that there had been specific problems trying to recruit an experienced speech and language therapist, partly because the cost of living in Richmond made it hard to recruit.
90. SENCOs in secondary schools were very concerned that there was no speech and language therapy support for secondary schools, which meant parents had to undertake face-to-face referrals outside of schools. A number of parents also cited the lack of speech and language therapy as reasons why they felt their child's school was not meeting their needs, and as a reason why they did not feel their child had access to appropriate input from all professionals. However, the Task Group has been informed that guidance from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence advises that there is little value in Speech and Language Therapy being provided to secondary aged children.⁵

⁵ The task group has since been told that this is not correct by a member of the Bercow Review and Local PCT Head of Speech and Language Therapy. The comment originated from the PCT but it apparently is only one view. It came from a consultation document that makes reference to little evidence for secondary support."



91. RTPCT accepted that there were some shortfalls in speech and language therapy provision. It said that there had been particular problems surrounding the move between Year 6 and Year 7, something that SENCOs also mentioned. However, RTPCT stated that it had to operate within budgetary constraints when providing therapy services. The Local Authority is currently funding 4.6 posts; 3.6 Speech and Language Therapy posts and 1 Occupational Therapy post. The remaining posts are funded by the PCT.
92. It was mentioned by a number of witnesses that when therapists went on maternity leave or sick leave, their posts were not covered. RTPCT stated that this cost had to be met from within its budget and that there was often not enough money available to cover periods of leave where a staff member was still being paid. However, arrangements were sometimes made for specific cases.
93. One of the special schools stated that they would prefer Speech and Language therapy to be provided by LBRuT, rather than by RTPCT. The Task Group can see merit in this suggestion. LBRuT is responsible for the statement and for ensuring the provision of any therapies if they are specified in part 3 of the statement. It would therefore make sense for LBRuT to have control over the delivery of the service. This would also resolve the problem of PCT contracts allowing staff to take leave in term times. The Task Group therefore recommends that the possibility of moving speech and language therapy provision to LBRuT be considered and that a feasibility report be prepared within six months.
94. If it is not possible to bring the service into LBRuT, then the Task Group recommends that RTPCT look to employ some of the Speech and Language therapists on term-time only contracts to prevent leave being taken in term-time. However, this is on the proviso that such contracts do not have a negative impact on recruitment.
95. The Task Group is aware that there is currently a Cross Party Government Task Group looking into the issues of Speech and Language Therapy and that the national Berrow Report is out for consultation. The Task Group therefore requests that the Head of Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties look at the recommendations from the final Berrow report and report on any possible local developments to improve the delivery of this service.

Recommendation 9: That the Head of Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties report on any possible local developments arising out of



the Bercow report, in order to improve the delivery of the Speech and Language Service.

Recommendation 10a: *That a feasibility study is undertaken into the Speech and Language Therapy Service being run by LBRuT and the results be reported back to the Task Group within six months.*

Recommendation 10b: *That, if it is not possible for the service to be run by LBRuT, RTPCT begin changing the contracts offered to some speech and language therapists to term-time only.*

D. ADVICE AVAILABLE TO PARENTS

96. Only 53% of parents returning the survey had accessed advice from the LBRuT on the statutory assessments process. 77% of people who did access advice from LBRuT found it to be effective in helping them participate in the statutory assessment process. 56% of respondents had also accessed advice from other sources, the main ones being SOS!SEN, other SEN societies, schools, lawyers and the parent partnership worker.
97. The Borough currently funds a parent partnership worker, who is employed through Richmond Centre for Voluntary Service. This is currently a statutory requirement. SENCOs stated that they found the parent partnership worker to be a very useful resource and that they often recommended that parents spoke to her. The Task Group also recognises the valuable role that the parent partnership worker can play in supporting parents. LBRuT also provides SEN leaflets, which were praised by the Joint Area Review report.
98. The results of the parents' survey do suggest that the LBRuT could do more to explain the statutory timescales to parents, as 29% of respondents did not feel that these were explained adequately. Given that this is a similar number of respondents to the number who were dissatisfied with the length of the process, better explanation of these could be an effective method of increasing overall satisfaction. There is clear information on timescales available on the LBRuT's website but this should be made easier to find and be better promoted. An easy to remember web address, such as www.richmond.gov.uk/sen, could be created and publicised on staff e-mail signatures and SEN Literature.



Recommendation 11: That the web-link www.richmond.gov.uk/sen be created and publicised on e-mail signatures and SEN Literature.



E. MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

99. Senior Managers informed the Task Group that there were proposals for a more complex statutory assessment cases to be discussed by a panel that is jointly funded by both the RTPCT and LBRuT. The Task Group feel this would be a welcome boost to multi-agency working and is supportive of these proposals.
100. RTPCT felt that the sharing of information between agencies could be improved. It suggested that “passports” were begun for children from a very early age to allow for the planning of future care. They stated that the documentation used at present was quite fragmented and focused on education. It did not provide the strength of information required for a multi-agency approach. The RTPCT thought that a much more child-focused document was needed. The RTPCT stated that many authorities continued with the personal child health record (“red book”) for this reason. RTPCT also stated that some children wrote short statements ahead of their annual reviews, and suggested that it might be worth including these in more developed documentation.
101. Senior Management told the Task Group that the introduction of Contact Point, an IT based solution that would increase compatibility between LBRuT’s and RTPCT’s computers, and the Common Assessment Framework, should address RTPCT’s concerns.
102. The Task Group was concerned by suggestions that there were delays in diagnosing dyslexia. It was told by officers that training is available to schools; a course is being run on specific learning difficulties through the University of London and the specific learning difficulties will form a central part of the new Inclusion Development Programme, which will begin in May. The Task Group is encouraged by this and proposes a further recommendation, which encourages all schools to take up this training.

Recommendation 12: That all schools be encouraged to take up the training on specific learning difficulties being made available by LBRuT.



CONCLUSION

103. The strength of Richmond's statutory assessment process is demonstrated by the very positive JAR report it received in January 2008. The statutory deadlines are being achieved, tribunals are falling and more money will soon be forthcoming for SEN provision. The Task Group concurs with the JAR report, which found that the service provided in Richmond upon Thames is "comprehensive".
104. Although it is clear that some parents still perceive the Council to base assessment decisions on funding grounds, rather than on the basis of a child's needs, the Task Group has found no specific evidence of this. It is therefore satisfied that LBRuT provides a fair, honest service.
105. The Task Group has found areas where improvements could be made. Administrative procedures need to be tightened, speech and language therapy provision needs to be increased and there could be better communication between relevant agencies. However, the Task Group feels that this is now a greatly improved service that the vast majority of parents are satisfied with.



TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

| Rec. No. | Recommendation | For action by: |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 1 | <i>That Senior Managers review all administrative procedures, paying particular attention to the issues highlighted in the report, and report back to the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 November 2008 with details of the measures taken to overcome them.</i> | LBRuT |
| 2 | <i>That the Advisor for Additional Needs raises the issues of what information schools need to send to the SEN Panel at SENCOs' next regular termly meetings and highlight steps to tackle this confusion.</i> | LBRuT |
| 3 | <i>That LBRuT encourage SENCOs to attend SEN Panel meetings.</i> | LBRuT |
| 4 | <i>That LBRuT promotes the use of mediation with all parents who have lodged an appeal and raise parents' awareness of this service at the beginning of the statementing process</i> | LBRuT |
| 5 | <i>That LBRuT issues an undertaking to parents' that all relevant parentally commissioned reports will be fully considered as part of the assessment process.</i> | LBRuT |
| 6 | <i>That LBRuT raises the issue of parents having to chase a particular school to provide for their child's needs with that school.</i> | LBRuT |
| 7 | <i>That all LBRuT special schools work towards accreditation from the National Autism Society.</i> | LBRuT |
| 8 | <i>That LBRuT encourage all schools to send out annual review paperwork 14 days before an annual review and investigate all reported incidents where paperwork has been sent out late.</i> | LBRuT |
| 9 | <i>That the Head of Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties report on any possible local developments arising out of the Bercow report, in order to improve the delivery of the Speech and Language Service.</i> | LBRuT |
| 10a | <i>That a feasibility study is undertaken into the Speech and Language Therapy Service being run by LBRuT and the results be reported back to the Task Group within six months.</i> | LBRuT |
| 10b | <i>That, if it is not possible for the service to be run by LBRuT, RTPCT begin changing the contracts offered to some speech and language therapists to term-time only.</i> | RTPCT |
| 11 | <i>That the web-link www.richmond.gov.uk/sen be created and publicised on e-mail signatures and SEN Literature.</i> | LBRuT |



| Rec. No. | Recommendation | For action by: |
|-------------|--|-------------------|
| 12 | <i>That all schools be encouraged to take up the training on specific learning difficulties (which includes dyslexia) being made available by LBRuT.</i> | Schools |



SELECTED READING

- SEN Code of Practice
- Education and Skills Select Committee Report: SEN Assessment and Funding, 2007
- http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/education_and_learning/education_special_educational_needs.htm
- The SEN Leaflets:
 - Statutory Assessment: Getting started
 - Parent Partnership Service
 - A young person's guide to statutory assessment
 - Who is involved with special education needs?
 - Your child under five with special education needs at home
 - Your child with special needs in a nursery or playgroup
 - The Individual Education Plan
 - What to do if we don't agree with decisions about your child's special education needs
 - Secondary School Transfer
 - The Annual Review
 - If your child with special education needs will soon be 16
 - Choosing a primary school
 - Statutory assessment: Final statement
 - Moving into or out of Richmond upon Thames



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| JAR | Joint Area Review |
| LBRuT | London Borough Of Richmond Upon Thames |
| LSA | Learning Support Assistant |
| RTPCT | Richmond and Twickenham Primary Care Trust |
| SEN | Special Educational Need |
| SENCO | Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator |
| SOS!SEN | A parents' support and advice group based in Richmond upon Thames |



APPENDICES

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Appendix A | Parents' Questionnaire Results |
| Appendix B | Flow Chart showing Statutory Assessment Process Timescales |
| Appendix C | Completed Statutory Assessments set against appeals to SENDIST |



Appendix A – Parents’ Questionnaire Results

Question 1 – Which school does your child attend?

1. Which school does your child attend?

| | |
|---|----|
| Clarendon School | 15 |
| Strathmore School | 9 |
| Orleans Park | 6 |
| Blossom House School, Wimbledon | 6 |
| Christ's, Richmond | 5 |
| St Mary's Primary, CofE | 5 |
| St James's Roman Catholic School | 4 |
| More House School, Frensham | 4 |
| Chase Bridge Primary School, Twick | 4 |
| Trafalgar Juniors School | 3 |
| Archdeacon Cambridge School | 3 |
| Heathfield Infant & Juniors School, Whitton | 3 |
| Hampton Infant & Junior School | 3 |
| Barnes Primary School | 3 |
| St Mary's and St Peters, Teddington | 3 |
| White Lodge Nursery | 2 |
| Marshgate Primary School | 2 |
| The Vineyard | 2 |
| Marjory Kinnon School, Hounslow | 2 |
| Bishop Perrin CofE | 2 |
| Darrell Primary School | 2 |
| Hillingdon Manor School | 2 |
| East Sheen Primary School | 2 |
| Gumley House Convent School | 2 |
| Waldegrave Girls School, Twickenham | 2 |
| Shene School | 2 |
| Bishop Wand School, Sunbury | 2 |
| Auriol Junior School | 2 |
| Buckingham Primary School | 2 |
| Stanley Juniors School | 2 |
| Richmond College | 2 |
| Meath School | 2 |
| The Knowl Hill School | 1 |
| Croft House in Appleby, Cumbria | 1 |
| The Russell Unit, Petersham | 1 |
| Lowther Primary School | 1 |
| Richmond College | 1 |
| Bedelsford School, Kingston | 1 |
| Linden Lodge School | 1 |
| Meadlands Primary School | 1 |
| Stanley Infant Nursery School | 1 |
| Sybil Elgar School | 1 |
| Freemantles, Surrey | 1 |
| Greenmead | 1 |



| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Collis | 1 |
| Sacred Heart | 1 |
| St Johns, Seaford | 1 |
| Collingham College | 1 |
| Fairley House | 1 |
| Springhallows, Ealing | 1 |
| St Dominics | 1 |
| St Marys School, Bexhill-on-Sea | 1 |
| The Moat School, Fulham | 1 |
| Asquith Nursery | 1 |
| Vicarage Nursery School | 1 |
| Field Heath House | 1 |
| Bruern Abbey School, Oxfordshire | 1 |
| Grey Court School | 1 |
| St Mary Magdalen RC Primary School | 1 |
| Jigsaw Nursery | 1 |
| Mary Hare | 1 |
| St Richards, Ham | 1 |
| Oldfield House Unit | 1 |
| Grateley School House, Andover | 1 |
| <i>Individual Programme</i> | 1 |
| Whitton Gateway | 1 |
| Wood Lane High School | 1 |
| Claremont Fan Court | 1 |
| The Green School for Girls, Isleworth | 1 |
| St Catherines School | 1 |
| Kingston College | 1 |
| St John the Baptist | 1 |
| Eagle House | 1 |
| Hampton Hill Junior School | 1 |
| Oaklodge School, Wandsworth | 1 |
| Orleans Infant School | 1 |
| No response | 4 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

Question 2 – During the Statementing Process, did the service provided by the Local Authority meet your expectations?

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Significantly above my expectations | 4 |
| Above my expectations | 16 |
| Met my expectations | 75 |
| Below my expectations | 29 |
| Significantly below my expectations | 30 |
| No response | 2 |
| Do not know | 1 |
| Provided by school | 1 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

Question 3 – Were the statutory timescales adequately explained to you?



| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Yes | 93 |
| No | 46 |
| Don't Know | 18 |
| No answer | 1 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

Question 4 - How satisfied were you with the length of the statementing process?

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Very satisfied | 27 |
| Fairly satisfied | 36 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 41 |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 28 |
| Very dissatisfied | 24 |
| No answer | 1 |
| Do not remember | 1 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

Question 5 - Were you able to access advice from Richmond Council on the statementing process?

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Yes | 85 |
| No | 59 |
| Do not know | 2 |
| No answer | 12 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

Question 6 – How effective was the advice you received in helping you to participate in the statementing process?

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Very effective | 19 |
| Fairly effective | 31 |
| Moderately effective | 16 |
| Fairly ineffective | 15 |
| Totally ineffective | 2 |
| No answer | 2 |
| TOTAL | 85 |

Question 7 – Did you access advice from anyone other than Richmond Council?

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Yes | 89 |
| No | 60 |
| No answer | 9 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

If Yes, who?

| | |
|---|----|
| Other SEN related Societies eg Ipsea, NAS | 28 |
|---|----|



| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| School | 21 |
| Lawyers | 17 |
| SOS: SEN | 17 |
| Parent Partnership Worker | 13 |
| Other parents | 12 |
| Personal Contacts | 10 |
| Online | 6 |
| SEN School Co-ordinators | 4 |
| Educational Psychologist | 4 |
| GP | 3 |
| Other Council | 2 |
| Kings Road Nursery | 1 |
| Previous knowledge | 1 |
| MP | 1 |

Question 8 – Does your Child’s Statement contain an accurate description of his or her needs?

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| Yes | 117 |
| No | 27 |
| Don't Know | 11 |
| No answer III | 3 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

If no, brief description of why not:

Ambiguous question as child's needs change.
Concerns expressed that the Council does not review and update statements
Certain conditions not mentioned on statement
With some of those who responded yes, this was accompanied with a remark like "eventually"
Concerns that the needs of those children with autism to socialise is underplayed
Concerns that the statement is too generalised and / or vague

Question 9 – Are your child’s needs being met by his or her School?

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| Yes | 113 |
| No | 34 |
| Don't know | 2 |
| Most of the time | 2 |
| Yes and No | 5 |
| No answer | 2 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

If no, brief description of why not:

Lack of one on one attention
Parents have to chase school to provide child's needs
OK but more could be done
Academic needs not met
Not accessing all classes
Integration with attached mainstream school
No Speech and Language



Statement not kept to
 Not receiving hours to cope with transition
 Teachers not aware of child's needs
 Poor understanding of autism
 Staff not adequately trained
 Not accessing necessary dyslexia support
 Physio not provided

Of those answering yes:

Had to send child to out of borough school against desire to stay local
 There has been no formal annual review but good relations with staff
 Staff are excellent
 Child misses out on specialist services due to mainstream school
 Comments such as "yes finally"
 Only after tribunal
 But hours will be cut

Question 10 – Is the current input from different professionals sufficient to meet your child's needs?

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Yes | 84 |
| No | 44 |
| Yes and no | 6 |
| Don't know | 13 |
| Not Applicable | 5 |
| No answer | 6 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

If no, brief description of why not:

Physically disabled children have to go out of Borough.
 Insufficient Speech and Language Therapy
 Insufficient Occupational Therapy
 Insufficient Physiotherapy
 Provision on statement inadequate but actual provision ok
 Feel "abandoned" by professionals as child is out of state system
 Nobody works together
 Transport appalling
 Funding mechanisms not adequate - money not provided for specialist dyslexia teacher
 No/poor input for LA
 Limited by bureaucratic constraints
 Better communication needed
 Health professionals do not work well
 Educational Psychology Provision not adequate
 More one to one teaching needed
 In borough provision for adolescents is insufficient
 Poor transition process
 Social needs not met
 Lack of imaginative play equipment
 No worker responsible for co-ordinating assessment (case co-ordinators needed)
 Not enough CAMHS Input



Life skills not taught
 No help on feeding problems
 Statement rescinded due to lack of sixth form provision
 Assessments take too long
 No help outside of school
 Need a specialist unit for VI pupils
 Speech and language should be more integral to teaching
 Specialist autistic advice needed

Question 11 – How effectively do you think your child’s school, your child’s therapists and the Council are working together to meet his or her child’s needs?

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Very Effectively | 53 |
| Fairly Effectively | 53 |
| Fairly Ineffectively | 13 |
| Very Ineffectively | 21 |
| Don't Know | 9 |
| No answer | 8 |
| N/A | 1 |
| TOTAL | 158 |

Question 12 – Is the education provision for SEN Statemented pupils between the ages of 14-19 sufficient to meet their needs?

Those who answered:

| | |
|-------|----|
| Yes | 24 |
| No | 29 |
| Total | 53 |

