



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

**Template for
Local Authority Report
to
The Schools Adjudicator
from**

**Sefton Local Authority
to be provided by
31 October 2023**

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by
31 October 2023 and earlier if possible**

Contents

Introduction

Guidance on completing the template

Section 1 - Normal points of admission	5
A. Co-ordination.....	5
B. Looked after and previously looked after children.....	5
C. Special educational needs and/or disabilities	6
Section 2 - In-year admissions.....	7
A. Looked after children and previously looked after children.....	7
B. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.....	7
C. Fair access protocol.....	8
D. Directions.....	9
E. Other points on in-year admissions.....	10
Section 3 - Other matters.....	12
Section 4 - Feedback.....	12

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 of 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.
2. **This year's report must cover the 2022/2023 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2023.**
3. Please note that, in response to feedback on the draft template, changes have been made to section 2C of this template.
4. Please also note that the OSA and Department for Education are planning a small project to ensure that the report is as useful as possible to local authorities, the OSA, DfE and others. As a result of this, there are likely to be changes made to the template for the 2023/2024 academic year.

Guidance on completing the template

5. We have included all the guidance on completing specific parts of the template in this section. 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.
6. 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.
7. Guidance on specific questions and/or meaning of specific terms in this report:
 - a. "in-year admissions": This means admissions (that is children admitted to a school and not applications for places):
 - i. 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 primary school); and

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

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

- ii. after the end of the statutory waiting list period (31 December) to a year group which is a normal year of admission for the schools concerned (such as Year R and Year 7).

b. Not applicable means at questions:

- i. Section 1: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- ii. Section 2: Ai - iv that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- iii. Section 2: B.i. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- iv. Section 2: C.v. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

8. 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.

9. 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 points 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				√
Year 7			√	
Other relevant years of entry			n/a	

- ii. Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:
There were some issues with coordination with a neighbouring LA which came to light after NOD. The same issue as last year. We are working with that LA and are going to ask schools to share more information around out of area pupils to prevent the same issue from re-occurring in 2024.

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. 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**:

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:

All children supported with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names a Sefton school are automatically admitted to the school named within the plan, even if this is above the agreed admission number.

The sharing of information between Sefton's SEN & Inclusion Team and the School Admissions Team regarding the finalising of EHC Plans continues to work well. This has allowed the Admissions Team to have up to date information in order to complete coordination successfully.

Sefton has a minority of Secondary schools that have identified specialised adaptations and resources for children with disabilities or additional physical needs. These schools still have this aspect included within their admission arrangements (as shown below) for those schools to admit children who require specialised resources e.g. mobility difficulties/wheelchair users.

"Children identified as needing specialist facilities that go beyond expected reasonable adjustments will be given priority for this school if it is the nearest school with suitable resources".

It has been agreed that all Sefton primary schools should be able to make reasonable adaptations to ensure a child with disabilities should be able to access all provision within any primary school.

In addition, Sefton have a Complex Needs Team which is part of the Inclusion Team who can support children with their enhanced transition to school which has been shown to minimise the number of requests to move school in the Autumn Term.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. 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 does 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 the **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:

Sefton Admission Team work very closely and engage support from the Virtual School (for Sefton Looked After children) where issues are identified, and the child may require additional support.

Sefton experience some difficulties with placing Looked After children at schools within other LAs in our region.

Having an officer with specific responsibility for looked after children has been instrumental in avoiding drift and delay in getting children into school. It has also improved the quality of information being share in a timely manner.

B. 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 Do not 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:

All children supported with an Education, health and care plan that names a Sefton school are automatically admitted to the school that is named in the plan, even if this is above the agreed admission number.

The number of children seeking a new school place in year, who have complex SEN difficulties, but are without an EHCP is increasing. We now have senior early help worker who will identify when children and their families may require additional family support.

C. 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 2022 and 31 July 2023?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	47	2
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	28	32
Total	75	34

iv. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

N/A

v. How well do you consider children referred to the fair access protocol are served in in your area?

Not at all well Not well Well Very well Not applicable

vi. Please provide any comments you wish on the protocol not covered above:

The changes within the 2021 Admissions Code around the Fair Access Protocol for ‘unplaced children’ made it easier for children moving into the area to be placed more quickly. This has enabled unplaced children who have arrived at Sefton to access a school place in a timely manner.

Sefton LA created a separate Transfer Protocol for school transfer requests which was agreed with all schools and includes many of the same aspects of Fair Access Protocol. Sefton LA has increased the frequency of Fair Access Panel meetings.

Sefton’s Fair Access Panel has representation from Health, Educational Psychology and Inclusion Service, virtual school & an Early Help professional to address any additional needs. This also enables support to schools for children who are hard to place.

As Elective home education guidance has changed “an EHE child whose education is deemed unsuitable should no longer be classified as an EHE child and should be classified as CME” In serving school attendance orders identifying schools will be discussed at the fair access panel. Putting this robust system in place avoids drift and delay in getting children into school.

D. Directions

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023 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

Nil	n/a	n/a
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E. Other points on in-year admissions

i. For the schools for which the local authority co-ordinates in-year applications, in the year between 1 Aug 2022 and 31 July 2023 did you receive

- Significantly fewer applications than last year
- slightly fewer applications than last year
- about the same
- slightly more than last year
- significantly more than last year

ii. For what proportion of schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2022/2023 academic year

- None
- All
- Some but less than or equal to half
- More than half but less than all

In year admissions works well for those children including maintained schools and academies.

iii. If you wish, please provide any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised (you may wish to include here any comments about cases where it has not proved possible to find places for children):

In Year applications from those moving into the borough or seeking school transfers are increasing year on year. In Sefton we have seen an increase in the housebuilding programmes. Pupil place planning is very important in ensuring we have sufficient school places to accommodate the increased number of children resident in the area.

Children are placed through in year fair access when a shortage of places is identified. This has proved to be an effective way of dealing with this when the situation arises.

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?

Schools with atypical points of admission (14-16 years of age)

The requirement for the Local Authority to contact all children in Year 9 to advise of their options in possibly choosing a Studio or UTC school from Year 10 onwards is a costly & time-consuming administrative burden placed upon the LA. The amount of time needed to organise, compile and manually send approx. 3,000 letters to pupils' home addresses by 12 Sept each year is excessive. The cost of posting this volume of letters is also increasing each year. Exploring other ways to reach parents perhaps via social media or electronic notifications via parent apps would be a better use of resources.

It is frustrating that there is no reciprocal requirement for these schools to **automatically** inform LAs about children who have been admitted into their school for the purposes of pupil tracking. We find out when Sefton schools inform us about the move to different Key Stage 4 provisions.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2024.

The form was straight forward and easy to complete and is much preferred to versions in other years.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2023