



West Midlands Regional Partnership

Working in Partnership with Parents and having regard to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice

**Report of a Statement Writers Sub Group,
consisting of representatives from the
Statement Writers Group, West Midlands
Parent Partnership Network and Mediation
Works! – The regional disagreement
resolution service.**

Report Editors

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Contents

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Membership of the group | Page 3 |
| Introduction | Pages 4 & 5 |
| Structure of the Regional Recommendations | Page 5 |
| A definition of Partnership | Page 5 |
| General recommendations | Pages 5 & 6 |
| Who's who and What's what (roles and responsibilities) | Page 6 |
| Conducting meetings with Parents Preparation Meeting | Pages 6 & 7 |
| The Statutory Assessment Process Good Practice | Page 7 Pages 7 & 8 |
| Refusal to Assess | Page 8 |
| Proposed statement | Page 9 |
| Annual Reviews and Transition Planning Good practice | Page 10 Page 10 |
| Ceasing to maintain a statement Written information Good practice | Page 10 Page 11 |
| Standard letters. | Page 11 |
| Conclusion | Page 12 |
| Acknowledgements | Page 13 |
| Appendices | Pages 14 to 28 |

West Midlands Regional Partnership

**Statement Writers
Working in Partnership with Parents Subgroup**

Membership of Group

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Job Title</u> | <u>Authority / Organisation</u> |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Ian Biggs | Principal Review Officer | Birmingham LEA |
| Rita Patel | Principal Assessment Officer | Birmingham LEA |
| Dot Jose | Education Officer – SEN | Coventry LEA |
| Caroline Cole | Case Officer – SEN | Dudley LEA |
| Lisa Thorpe | Statemnting Officer | Sandwell LEA |
| Sharnjit Pabla | Statutory Assessment Officer | Sandwell LEA |
| Marion Seymour | Statemnting Officer | Shropshire LEA |
| Helen Wilkinson | Assessment Officer | Staffordshire LEA |
| Rachel Evans | Head of SEN | Staffordshire LEA |
| Sue Miller | Parent Partnership Officer | Staffordshire Parent Partnership Service |
| Lynne Bowen | Assistant Education Officer | Stoke on Trent LEA |
| Margaret Carter | Education Officer – SEN | Telford & Wrekin LEA |
| Mary Braund | Education Officer – SEN | Telford & Wrekin LEA |
| Glenis Beddows | Principal Monitoring & Assessment Officer | Walsall LEA |
| Rob Rodgers | SEN Planning & Development Manager | Walsall LEA |
| Ken Upton | Parent Partnership Officer | Walsall Parent Partnership Service |
| Judy Francis | Casework Officer | Warwickshire LEA |
| Jackie Arnold | Principal Statemnting Officer | Wolverhampton LEA |
| Wendy Wallis | Parent Partnership Officer | Wolverhampton Parent Partnership Service |
| Susanna Diegel | Regional Co-ordinator | Mediation Works |
| Bridget Jones | Regional Facilitator | West Midlands Regional Partnership |
| Annette English | Regional Facilitator | West Midlands Regional Partnership |

Introduction:

The West Midlands Regional Partnership describes its core function as being:

“To facilitate and research effective and efficient SEN and Vulnerable Children processes and services which lead to inclusive policies and practice.”

One of the ways it carries out this core function is through:

“Empowering parents/carers and families of vulnerable children and children with SEN through providing information, facilitating consultation and promoting their involvement.”

A group consisting of SEN Officers who have various responsibilities within the statutory assessment process, of parent partnership officers from the West Midlands Parent Partnership Network (WMPPN) and of a representative from the West Midlands regional mediation service, “Mediation Works!” has met during the academic year 2005/6. The purpose of the meetings has been to consider making regional recommendations on how Local Authorities (LAs) in the West Midlands can work in partnership with parents and have regard to the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (SENCOP), 2002, Chapter Two, 2:1 page 16 to 25, Working in Partnership with Parents.

“Partnership with parents pays a key role in promoting a culture of co-operation between parents, schools, LEAs and others. This is important in enabling children and young people with SEN to achieve their potential.”

Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (SENCOP), 2002, Chapter 2, 2:1, page 16, Working in Partnership with Parents.

We have been mindful that:

“These partnerships can be challenging, requiring positive attitudes by all, and in some circumstances additional support and encouragement for parents.”

Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (SENCOP), 2002, Chapter 2, 2:3, page 16, Working in Partnership with Parents.

The group has benefited from the process of working together and understanding each other’s responsibilities and roles. Some changes in practice have already resulted from the sharing of ideas and knowledge in the group. All those involved meet with parents as part of their duties.

Section 332A the Education Act , 1996 states:

A local education authority must arrange for the parent of any child in their area with special educational needs to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to those needs.

LEAs must take whatever steps they consider appropriate to make parent partnership services known to parents, head teachers, schools and others they consider appropriate.

WMRP has a strong history of regional collaboration and working with WMPPN. This collaboration has contributed to the establishment of a regional disagreement resolution service, "Mediation Works! used by all 14 West Midlands Local Authorities.

"Many organisations have expertise in disagreement resolution and can be a valuable resource in providing trained and experienced independent facilitators. LEAs should therefore consider working in partnership with other organisations in making their arrangements for disagreement resolution services."

Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (SENCOP), 2002, Chapter 2, 2:30 page 25, Working in Partnership with Parents.

The following recommendations are presented for those officers working in the "front line" and are intended to assist with working in partnership with parents on a day-to-day basis.

Structure of the Regional Recommendations

The regional recommendations agreed by the group are presented under the following headings:

- A definition of Partnership
- General Recommendations
- Who's Who and What's What (Roles and Responsibilities)
- Conducting Meetings with Parents
- The Statutory Assessment Process
- Refusal to Assess
- Proposed Statement
- Annual Reviews and Transition Planning
- Ceasing to maintain a Statement of SEN
- Standard Letters

A definition of Partnership

The group considered carefully what partnership means and decided upon the following definition:

True Partnership is when everyone involved values and respects each other's roles and views. There must be a genuine, shared commitment based on a relationship of equality and trust, to work together to reach an effective outcome.

General recommendations

These recommendations apply to all situations concerning statutory procedures and working in partnership with parents.

- Information for parents should be available in written or other accessible formats
- All written information should be in plain English, e.g. all leaflets and correspondence relating to the statutory assessment process.
- Parents should be encouraged to use Parent Partnership Services if necessary.

Who's who and What's what (roles and responsibilities)

The group agreed that parents need to understand roles and responsibilities and made the following suggestions as to how this information could be best communicated in the spirit of working in partnership;

- Involve Parent Partnership Service and parents/carers from the outset
- Have a visual (organisational) chart with roles and responsibilities (not names or telephone numbers) in addition to listing. This could be the start of an LA's document and may be useful for staff as well as parents/carers.
- Reflect new terminology and arrangements in documentation I:e LA instead of Local Education Authority (LEA), but explain the changes. Start with an explanation of these changes and terminology and explain that LAs are at different stages in this process.
- Have appropriate and easy to understand titles (I:e not 'glossary'). "Who's who and what's what" instead of 'roles and responsibilities' is suggested and this may need to be in two separate documents.
- Use plain English
- Look at examples of documentation that other LAs have produced or other organisations. Think about style, including text size, layout, print colours as well as content.

Conducting meetings with Parents

Meetings with LA officers can be stressful for parents who are concerned about a child's SEN. Ideas to make this a less stressful experience follow:

Preparation

- Some parent partnership services offer a pre-meeting session to assist the parent to plan for the meeting
- An invitation list should be put together by the person who initiates the meeting together with other interested parties
- Keep numbers manageable
- Identify roles (minute taker, decision makers, information/advice providers, support)
- Venue/timing to make everyone feel comfortable/at ease (consider a time limit)
- Who chairs? It could be someone without a vested interest if possible and appropriate

- Agree an agenda and setting priorities.
- Agree on type of record
- Distribute paperwork before the meeting if possible and ensure that all are aware of the major issues to be discussed.
- If possible, notify parents which professionals will be attending prior to the meeting.

Meeting

- Set ground rules for all.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place for a welcome, for refreshments and practicalities
- Ensure privacy and suitable room set up
- Give an introduction and explain roles of participants
- Ensure that the Chair identifies the purpose of meeting
- Give everyone the opportunity to speak, time to think, and arrange time out if needed

The Statutory Assessment Process

Information about the statutory process is often provided in a written format. Some suggestions follow about what should be provided and how:

- Details of how to request a statutory assessment.
- A Statutory Assessment pack for parents of pre-school and school age children, including information on: -
 - Outline of the statutory assessment process and possible outcomes, e.g. statement, Note in Lieu
 - Who can help e.g. parent partnership services, national and local voluntary organisations
 - Being involved - How to express your views e.g. completing parent advice.
 - Key people involved in the process and the role they play.
 - Jargon buster.
 - Local special educational provision.
 - Your personal record of dates and people involved.
 - If you cannot agree, e.g. mediation and SENDIST information. This information may already be produced by the parent partnership service. The regional mediation service, 'Mediation Works!' produce a leaflet about the service.
- Consulting with parents through the parent partnership service about the content before printing leaflets and packs is recommended.

Good Practice

There are other ways in which parents can be involved in the statutory process. Here are some good practice examples;

- Parents should be informed from the outset about the local parent partnership service and their role, this could be through a leaflet but preferably also through personal contact.
- Statutory Assessment information events for parents, e.g. monthly drop-in sessions lead by a LA officer with parent partnership service support.
- Parents to be informed of a named contact during the process, e.g. assessment officer, caseworker.
- LA to make contact with parents to discuss their concerns, following a parental request for statutory assessment.
- Following a refusal to assess decision, parents should have the option to meet with the LA and/or school.
- Maintaining contact with parents during the process, e.g. telephone or letter.
- Face to face meetings to discuss draft/proposed statement.
- Following a Note in Lieu, the LA officer, school and parent meet together to discuss how the Note in Lieu recommendations will be implemented.
- In the event of a disagreement parents should be informed of who can help them. If they have not already been involved; the parent partnership service and the regional mediation service are useful contacts. Information about how to appeal to SENDIST must be provided.
- LA to obtain the views of child through encouragement of the parent and/or school suggesting use of support/advocacy services where appropriate.
- Establish a parent forum to give a voice to parents of children and young people going through the statutory assessment process.

Refusal to Assess

A decision not to carry out a statutory assessment will not be a welcome decision for most parents. Here are some suggestions about how to minimise the stress caused;

- Offer a meeting with the LA officer (consideration of venue implications needed)
- Make the decision clear in the letter.
- Refer to LA guidelines for a refusal to assess decision
- Include recommendations for future action
- Offer to reconsider if new information is received or after a period of time
- Keep it short and to the point (Staffordshire example, Appendix 1)
- Send a copy of the letter to the school or write a different letter
- Include information on what has been recommended for future provision at school action or school action plus.
- Include all legal requirements including SENDIST information and deadline

- Give information on how to contact parent partnership services and the Mediation Service – Mediation Works!
- Give simple rationale for the decision.

Proposed statement

While most parents welcome the decision to write a statement of special educational needs, the following suggestions may help to explain to parents the contents of what is a complex document;

- Include a paragraph about the contact officer details at the beginning of the letter
- Use sub headings (see Coventry example, Appendix 2)
 - How do I express my preference for a school?
 - What if I disagree with the statement?
 - What help is available?
 - What happens next?
- Identify the 6 parts of the statement (Coventry, Sandwell and Wolverhampton examples, Appendix 3), this is a 'must' in the Code of Practice
- Include a paragraph re: non-maintained schools etc (Wolverhampton example, Appendix 3) stating where the list can be obtained from rather than attaching a list of the above schools. The group notes that this may not comply with the Code of Practice Regulations 14 and 15. However, it is noted that some parents find receipt of the list of schools intimidating. It is suggested that a copy of the list could be made available in each school, in each parent partnership service and on the web to avoid stress. Efforts must be made to ensure that all parents can obtain a copy of the list to comply with the regulations.
- Include an opening paragraph to give contact details of someone to contact in the LA for advice and guidance (see Sandwell example, Appendix.3). This should be preceded by advice to read this letter/proposed statement carefully. The importance of parental views should also be emphasised here.
- Give advice about transport e.g naming a school further away than a local one may mean that the LA consider that the parent is responsible for transport (Telford example, Appendix 4)
- Make clear that contacting the local parent partnership service as soon as possible is advisable and does not affect the right to appeal to SENDIST.
- Explain that a translation service is available. A regional logo could be designed to indicate this and the LA phone number could be included to access the service. It is suggested that the West Midlands Regional Partnership could assist with the regional logo and further discussions will take place concerning this.

Annual Reviews and Transition Planning

The West Midlands Regional Partnership has played an active role in facilitating discussion about the annual review and transition plan process with SEN officers in the region. A key recommendation is that:

- Written information should be provided on all reviews and transition planning, including where to access information and advice e.g. parent partnership service.

Good practice

The group was able to agree the following actions as good practice;

- Recommend to schools that information about the parent partnership service is included in Annual Review invitation letters to parents.
- LA officers talking to schools about prior circulation of meeting paperwork, e.g. agenda, reports, people involved in the meeting.
- Best efforts are made by LA officers to attend all annual reviews, especially where parents request it.
- LA Officers influence good practice at all review meetings e.g. ensure parents and the child/young person are encouraged to make a contribution to the proceedings.
- In the case of Transition Reviews, promote the involvement of a Connexions Personal Advisor.

Ceasing to maintain a statement

Again it is recognised that this LA decision may be stressful and cause anxiety for some parents. It is recommended that the following information should be provided.

Written information

- About when and why a statement may be ceased.
- Correspondence advising parents of the LA's intention to cease a statement must be in plain English.
- Give an indication that the child/young person is making good progress at the previous annual review
- Start and finish the letter on a positive note about the child's progress
- Leicestershire letter gives an example of information about the school's responsibilities (Appendix 5)
- At a prior annual review an indicator letter stating that the LA may soon consider ceasing the statement should be sent. The letter should be carefully phrased.
- Consider acknowledgement of progress for the child (Wolverhampton certificate, Appendix 6)

- Explain that no response from a parent is legally accepted as an agreement

Good practice

- Consultation with parents should take place at the Annual Review prior to the LA's decision to cease to maintain a statement.
- Parents need to fully understand the implications and how support in school will continue for their child.
- Parents are informed at the Annual Review prior to the young person leaving school that the statement will cease unless the young person is remaining in full time education in a school.

Standard letters.

Appendix seven contains information about the standard letters in use in West Midlands LAs. The list is by no means exhaustive and does not include all the correspondence that parents may receive concerning the statutory processes.

Appendix eight lists the letters contributed by the West Midlands LAs that contributed to our consideration of good practice. The group agreed that the following actions could be helpful for parents;

- Seek the advice of the Plain English Campaign (PEC). LAs could work with PEC to achieve the Crystal mark for their standard letters. Advice already received from PEC is that arial font 12 is the most readable and that justifying text is not helpful.
- Involve a lay person with no knowledge of the statutory assessment process to check that letters are accessible. A parent forum could also be set up to discuss the content of letters.
- Have regard to Regulations 14 and 15 in the SEN Code of Practice. The Regulations say that they must be substantially as per the schedules, all the content must be included.
- The length of sentences, simple words, font size, length of paragraphs, length of total letter should be considered carefully.
- Explain which agency does what in the letter or in an additional pack (PPS, SENDIST, Mediation, LA)
- Put the pupils name only at the top (not DOB or school) in the letter to parents. Headed notepaper should be used for the letter, with a copy for the file with full information included.
- All letters should 'match' in style, layout etc.
- Consider showing amendments in italics or underline or bold.
- Consider an initial paragraph to say that it is important to read the whole of the letter.

Conclusion:

This document is written in the spirit of working in partnership with parents and making an effort to ensure that complex procedures and difficult decisions are conveyed in the most helpful manner possible. The list of recommendations is open to additions. However, we hope that it contributes to the process described at being at the heart of the West Midlands Regional Partnership's core function;

“Empowering parents/carers and families of vulnerable children and children with SEN through providing information, facilitating consultation and promoting their involvement.”

Acknowledgements

The West Midlands Regional Partnership would like to thank all those authorities who contributed examples of standard letters. Please see Appendix eight for a list of letters contributed.

Appendix 1
Information Short and to the Point:
Staffordshire Letter on Refusing to Assess

My ref: AST2N/**Your ref:** **Date:**

Dear

RE: **NAME OF CHILD (**DATE OF BIRTH**)**

I wrote to you recently to tell you that ****child's name****'s details have been referred to the County Council Education Service for a decision, under section 323 of the Education Act 1996, as to whether a statutory assessment is needed.

Having now considered ****child's name****'s case file and the information that has been provided, the Education Service has decided that whilst ****child's name**** does have particular special educational needs, the information available does not demonstrate that a statutory assessment is necessary at this time.

However, to meet ****child's name****'s needs the school will be expected to deliver any necessary support from their own resources. ****Inclusion team member's name**** from the District Inclusion Support Team will contact you and ****child's name****'s school shortly to discuss this support.

Please note that you do have the right to appeal against this decision to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) at the address given at the end of this letter.

In addition, you may wish to speak with ****named officer**** on ****telephone number**** who can arrange to meet with you.

You may also wish to contact the Parent Partnership Service who will help you to express any views you may have and provide you with someone to attend any meeting with you. They can be contacted on 01785 356921.

If you disagree with the Education Service's decision, you can also contact the Midlands SEN Mediation Service, to see if they can help resolve any differences.

Mediation is a process where a neutral third party (a mediator) helps people to discuss their differences and find acceptable solutions. They are an independent service and can be contacted on 01952 275038. More information on this service can be found in the booklet 'Using Mediation to Resolve Disagreements' in your parent pack. Copies are also available from the Parent Partnership Service on 01785 356921.

For your information, making contact with the Education Service or the use of mediation does not affect your right of appeal to the SENDIST.

The Tribunal can be contacted at:-
SENDIST,
Mowden Hall
Staindrop Road
Darlington
DL3 9BG

However, the law states that an appeal should be submitted no later than 2 months after receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 2
Use of Sub-headings:
Coventry Letter Accompanying a Proposed Statement

****Name of Officer****

Head of District

Dear *(name of parents)*

I am pleased to enclose a copy of ***'s proposed statement of special educational needs. We have attached to it copies of all the advice we were given during ***'s assessment for the statement.

If you want to meet us to talk about the statement you need to tell us within 15 days of receiving this letter. This is not the final statement. You can ask for changes to be made to it. The rest of this letter tells you how you can do this.

As you will see the statement is in six parts:

Part 1 Introduction

Part 2 Special Educational Needs

Part 3 Special Educational Provision, including objectives and monitoring arrangements

Part 4 Placement

Part 5 Non-educational Needs

Part 6 Non-educational Provision

How do I express my preference for a school?

We have left part 4 blank so that you can tell us where you think *** should be educated. You can tell us which maintained (Local Education Authority) school, including an LEA-maintained special school, you would like *** to go to and tell us the reasons. To help you decide, a list of all the maintained (*primary/secondary*) schools in Coventry is attached. I would encourage you to visit as many schools as you wish. You might find it helpful to take the proposed statement with you and discuss with the Headteacher how your child's needs will be met by the school.

[A list of all primary and secondary schools, depending on whether the child requires primary or secondary education must be attached to this letter].

If you suggest the name of a maintained school, including a maintained special school, we must name the school in part 4 of the statement unless –

- a) the school is unsuitable to ***'s age, ability or aptitude or to (*his/her*) special educational needs, or
- b) the attendance of *** at the school would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom (*he/she*) would be educated or the efficient use of resources.

If you think that *** should attend a non-maintained special school or an independent school you can suggest the name of a school and tell us why you think that school should be named in ***'s statement. A list of non-maintained special schools and independent schools approved by the Secretary of State is attached to help you. However, I do believe that ***'s needs can be met within a school in Coventry, and I feel that the most suitable school for *** would be **((a year 6/rising 5 option) mainstream secondary school with the support of a teaching assistant for ** hours a week. I understand *** has been allocated a place at *** School).**

[Such lists of independent and non-maintained special schools as the Secretary of State and the National Assembly of Wales may issue from time to time must be attached to this letter]

If you want to tell us the name of a school you want *** to go to you must do so within 15 days of getting this letter. However, if you attend a meeting with us to discuss this statement after getting this letter you will have another 15 days from that meeting to suggest a school.

What if I disagree with the Statement?

You can also tell us if you disagree with what the statement says. If you do disagree with the statement you must also tell us within 15 days of getting this letter, or 15 days from when you meet us to talk about the statement. If you still disagree with the statement, or any of the advice given during the assessment after you meet us, you can ask us for another meeting to discuss the advice you disagree with but you must ask us within 15 days of the first meeting. We will arrange for the person who gave the advice, or someone else they suggest, to attend this new meeting. We can arrange more than one meeting if necessary, if you disagree with more than one part of the advice.

What help is available?

Deciding what is right for your child is a very important matter, and you may well wish to receive further information and support from:-

- **** of the SEN Section – telephone no. 7683 ****
- Your child's Headteacher – telephone no. ****
- The Parent Partnership Service which can offer you sources of independent support and advice – telephone no. 7667 8365.

They can also put you in touch with the Midlands Mediation Service, an informal independent service set up to help resolve or prevent any disagreements between you and the authority. You can also contact the Midlands Mediation Service direct on telephone number 01952 275038. Using either of these services does not prevent you from appealing to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal about parts 2, 3 or 4 of the Statement at the same time; your rights are not affected and an appeal to the Tribunal can run at the same time as any disagreement resolution.

You might find it helpful to read the Information Pack for Parents and Carers that was sent to you previously.

What happens next?

Once all these stages are finished we will send you a final statement that will have part 4 completed.

When you receive the final statement, if you disagree with parts 2, 3 or 4 you can appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). The Tribunal can hold a hearing to decide what should be in these parts of ***'s statement. You have to appeal to the Tribunal within two months of getting the final statement. A booklet, Special Educational Needs: How to appeal, can be obtained from the Tribunal at SENDIST, SEN Appeals, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BG, telephone 01325 392 555 or e-mail tribunalqueries@sendist.gov.uk. Website: www.sendist.gov.uk.

I have enclosed a form for you to express your agreement with, or any concerns about, the Statement and to state your preference of school. Please indicate on the form if you wish to arrange a meeting with an Education Officer to discuss the proposed statement.

Please return the form in the envelope provided by *.**

If you have any questions, now or at any time, about this process or about the statement itself, please contact (*name*) on 7683 ****.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

For the Director of Children, Learning & Young People

Because of legal requirements, I must tell you that this letter is a "Notice" pursuant to paragraph 2 of Schedule 27 of the Education Act 1996 and as required by Section 12 of the Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations 1994.

Appendix 3
**Information About the Parts of a Statement of SEN:
Sandwell Letter Accompanying a Proposed Statement**

Dear,

I am pleased to enclose a copy of (Child's name) proposed statement of special educational needs. We have attached to it copies of all the advice we were given during (Child's name) assessment for the statement.

If you want to meet us to talk about the statement you need to tell us within 15 days of receiving this letter. This is not the final statement. You can ask for changes to be made to it. The rest of this letter tells you how you can do this.

As you will see the statement is in six parts:

| | |
|--------|---|
| Part 1 | Introduction |
| Part 2 | Special Educational Needs |
| Part 3 | Special Educational Provision, including objectives and monitoring arrangements |
| Part 4 | Placement |
| Part 5 | Non-educational Needs |
| Part 6 | Non-educational Provision |

We have left part 4 blank so that you can tell us where you think (Child's name) should be educated. Please complete this form even if you would like (to continue attending his present school. You can tell us which maintained (Local Education Authority) school, including an LEA-maintained special school, you would like (Child's Name) to go to and tell us the reasons. To help you decide, a list of all the maintained (special) schools in the area is attached.

If you suggest the name of a maintained school, including a maintained special school, we must name the school in part 4 of the statement unless -

- (a) the school is unsuitable to (Child's Name) age, ability or aptitude or to his special educational needs, or
- (b) the attendance of (Child's Name) at the school would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom he would be educated or the efficient use of resources.

If you think that (Child's Name) should attend a non-maintained special school or an independent school you can suggest the name of a school and tell us why you think that school should be named in (Child's Name) statement. A list of non-maintained special schools and independent schools approved by the Secretary of State and the National Assembly for Wales is attached to help you.

If you want to tell us the name of a school you want (Child's Name) to go to you must do so within 15 days of getting this letter. However, if you attend a meeting with us to discuss this statement after getting this letter you will have another 15 days from that meeting to suggest a school. You can also tell us if you disagree with what the statement says. If you do disagree with the statement you must also tell us within 15 days of getting this letter, or 15 days from when you meet us to talk about the statement. If you still disagree with the statement, or any of the advice given during the assessment after you meet us, you can ask us for another

meeting to discuss the advice you disagree with but you must ask us within 15 days of the first meeting.

We will arrange for the person who gave the advice, or someone else they suggest, to attend this new meeting. We can arrange more than one meeting if necessary, if you disagree with more than one part of the advice.

Once all these stages are finished we will send you a final statement that will have part 4 completed.

If you have any concerns or questions about this process, or disagree with any part of the statement you may wish to get advice or support from the local parent partnership service. They can be contacted on 0121-5537087 or by writing to The Parent Partnership Service, West Bromwich Connexions, 155-157 High Street, West Bromwich, B70 7QX.

They can also put you in touch with the informal arrangements set up to help resolve or prevent any disagreements between you and the authority. Using either of these services does not prevent you from appealing to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal about Parts 2, 3 or 4 of the Statement at the same time; your rights are not affected and an appeal to the Tribunal can run at the same time as any disagreement resolution.

When you receive the final statement, if you disagree with parts 2, 3 or 4 you can appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal. The Tribunal can hold a hearing to decide what should be in these parts of (Child's Name) statement. You have to appeal to the Tribunal within two months of getting the final statement. The address of the Tribunal is Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BG. A free booklet is available from the Tribunal and their telephone helpline is 01325 391 042. Information about appeals can also be viewed on the Tribunal's website: www.sentribunal.gov.uk.

If you have any questions, now or at any time, about this process or about the statement itself, the Assessment Officer can be contacted at the address at the top of this letter or by telephone on 0121-569-2200.

I enclose a form for you to write down your choice of school and any comments you would like to add, together with a reply envelope.

Please do not hesitate to contact the SEN Services Unit, on the above number, with any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely

Statementing Officer

Appendix 3
**Information About the Parts of a Statement of SEN:
Wolverhampton Letter Accompanying a Proposed Statement**

Dear (Parent's name)

The assessment of (child's name)'s special educational needs is now complete and I am pleased to enclose a copy of the proposed statement which includes, as appendices, all the advice received in connection with the assessment. The statement, which is not the final statement (you can ask for changes to be made), is in six parts:

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| Part 1 | - | Introduction |
| Part 2 | - | Special Educational Needs |
| Part 3 | - | Special Education Provision, including objectives and Monitoring arrangements |
| Part 4 | - | Placement, which at this stage is left blank so that you can tell us where you think your child should be educated |
| Part 5 | - | Non-educational needs |
| Part 6 | - | Non-educational provision |

Should you wish to meet with an officer to talk about the statement you need to tell us within 15 days of your receiving this letter. You may also make written representations about the statement and you can tell us which local education authority maintained school (including a special school) you would like your child to attend and why. A list of all the maintained schools in this Authority's area is enclosed to help you, together with a form PR2 on which you can make any comments and express a preference for a school. The completed form should be returned, in the pre-paid envelope provided, within 15 days of your receiving this letter, unless you request a meeting, in which case you will have 15 days from the meeting date to return the form.

We must name the maintained school, which you prefer, in Part 4 of the statement unless

- (a) the school is unsuitable to your child's age, ability or aptitude or special educational needs: or
- (b) your child's attendance at the school would be incompatible with the provision or efficient education for the children with whom **(he/she)** would be educated or the efficient use of resources.

If you do not express a preference for a school, one may be chosen for you, using the same criteria and in the case of your child the Authority feels that **(proposed type of school)** would be appropriate. If you would be happy with such a school please tell us by using the relevant part of the form PR2.

You may think that **(child's name)** should attend a non-maintained special school or an independent school in which case you may suggest the name of the school and tell us why you think the school should be named in the statement, but you should note that the Authority is not obliged to name such a school. A list of non-maintained special schools and independent schools approved by the Secretary of State, together with the National Assembly for Wales, can be obtained from the Special Needs Administration Team at the above address or by ringing the telephone number at the top of this letter.

Once all these stages are complete you will be sent a final statement which will include the name of a school in Part 4. If you have any concerns about this process, or disagree with any part of the statement, you may wish to get advice from the local Parent Partnership Service, who can be contacted by telephone (01902 556945) or by writing to the Jennie Lee Centre, Lichfield Road, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 3HT. There are also informal arrangements in place to help to resolve or prevent any disagreement with the Authority. These arrangements are managed by Midlands SEN

Mediation Service (Telephone 01952 275038) and you can contact this service yourself, or the Parent Partnership Service can provide you with information. Using either of these services does not prevent you from appealing to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal about Parts 2, 3 and 4 of the statement (see next paragraph), since an appeal can run at the same time as any disagreement resolution process.

When you receive the final statement, if you disagree with parts, 2, 3 and 4 you can appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal, which can arrange a hearing to decide what should be in these parts of the statement. Whilst it is hoped that any disagreement can be resolved through further discussion, if you decide to appeal you must do so within two months of your receiving the final statement and the address of the Tribunal will be included in the letter accompanying the statement.

If you have any questions, now or at any time, however, please do not hesitate to contact the Special Needs Administration Team at the above address, where staff will be happy to talk to you and be of help.

Yours sincerely

**For and on behalf of
DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

Appendix 4
Advice About Transport:
Telford Letter Accompanying a Proposed Statement

Dear Mr,

Child name
School

I am pleased to enclose a copy of (child's name) proposed statement of special educational needs (SEN). I have attached copies of all the advice sent to me as part of his statutory assessment.

Naming a school

You will see that the statement is written in 6 parts and that Part 4 has not been completed. This is because you now have the chance to say which school you wish (child's name) to attend. Usually children with statements continue to attend their current school and the advice received during (child's name) assessment recommends that his needs can be met at **REFER TO PART 4**. However, if you would prefer a different school please let me know within 15 days of the date of this letter.

To help you decide I am sending you a list of **primary/secondary** schools within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin. I am also attaching a form for you to fill in and return to me with the name of your preferred school. Please add any comments if you wish to explain your choice.

If you wish to name a school other than the one named above and the LEA agrees that (child's name) can attend that school, then you would have the responsibility for transport to that school.

The wording of the statement

If you disagree with the content of (child's name) statement you are entitled to tell the LEA about this. You can write to me or ask me to arrange a meeting for you to discuss your views with an LEA officer. If you wish to do this you must contact me within 15 days of the date of this letter.

If, having met with an officer, there are still disagreements about the advice collected through (child's name) assessment you can ask me to call another meeting with the person who gave the advice or another relevant person. Again, you must ask me to arrange this no later than 15 days from the date of your meeting with the LEA officer.

If you need help with any part of this process you can get advice and support from the local parent partnership service on 01952 291350. You can also contact Midlands SEN Mediation Service on 01952 275038 or www.midlandssenmediation.com who can help you to resolve or prevent any disagreements between you and the LEA. If you use either of these services it will not affect your right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Finally

If I do not hear from you within 15 days of the date of this letter I will issue (child's name) final statement with Part 4 completed to name **PROPOSED SCHOOL**.

After you have received (child's name) final statement, if you still disagree with any information in Parts 2, 3 or 4 you can appeal to the Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). Details of how to appeal to the Tribunal will be sent to you with a copy of William's final statement.

If you have any queries about this letter or if you would like any more information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Gill Kinson
Senior Administrative Officer (SEN)

Appendix 5
Ceasing to Maintain a Statement:
Leicestershire's Letter Giving Advice About the School's
Responsibilities

Dear

RE:

I write, on behalf of the Director of Education, with reference to the Annual Review of the current Statement of Special Educational Needs for your **son/daughter**.

Having studied all the reports submitted to the LEA following the review meeting, it has been concluded that %'s special educational needs are not now so significant as to require the continuation of a Statement for **him/her** and the Authority is therefore proposing to cease to maintain %'s Statement. In coming to this decision, the LEA has had due regard to the National Code of Practice and the LEA's own criteria for maintaining a Statement.

The reason for this, briefly, is that there is evidence from the review meeting that.....

The school is required to continue to address %'s special educational needs. It is normally expected that the school's special needs co-ordinator ensures that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is drawn up. The IEP should contain reference to:-

- The nature of %'s difficulties and strengths
- Short term targets set for, or by, %
- Teaching strategies to be used
- Provision to be put in place
- When the plan is to be reviewed
- Success and/or exit criteria
- Outcomes (to be recorded when the IEP is reviewed)

%'s school and SEN co-ordinator should ensure that the existing IEP be revised to ensure the following:

- Appropriate steps be taken to increasingly differentiate and/or modify the curriculum
- The organisation of targeted additional adult support (teaching and/or non teaching)
- Opportunities for the pupil to receive individual or small group tuition
- Access to ICT and more specialised teaching resources/equipment
- Arrangements agreed with external agencies to monitor, evaluate and review the plan.

The SEN Code of Practice recommends that IEPs be reviewed at least twice a year and, ideally, termly. One review could coincide with the routine parents' evening.

The provision overall should be informed by flexible approaches to whole curriculum planning for individual pupils as necessitated by the National Curriculum 2000 guidance on meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The SENCO should ensure that there are clear assessment processes enabling %'s progress to be measured within a given time span.

I should point out that the school will continue to monitor and review the arrangements and programmes of study that it has established for % with the objective of maintaining **his/her** educational progress. %'s school can seek further advice or support from the LEA's Educational Psychology Service and/or Specialist Teaching Service if the school is of the view that such support is required.

If you wish to discuss the points raised above then please contact me on 0116 2656354 or by e-mail. Alternatively, a meeting can be arranged. If you wish to seek further help and

guidance in this matter, then Ms J Wagstaff or Ms Helga Gardiner, Parent Partnership Officers (telephone 0116 2714137) may be of assistance. The Parent Partnership Scheme can also put you in touch with informal arrangements set up to help resolve or prevent disagreements between yourself and the Authority. Using either of these services does not prevent you from appealing to the SEN Tribunal and any appeal can run at the same time as any disagreement resolution.

Should you wish to lodge an appeal, then this should be done within two months from the date of this letter and sent to the SEN Tribunal, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington DL3 9BG, telephone: 01325 391047. To allow you due time to consider this the LEA is not permitted to bring %'s statement to an end until at least eight weeks from the date of this letter has elapsed. Hence even if you agree to its ending, the Statement will be maintained for another two months as a minimum.

If you would welcome any further discussion of the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Helen Morgan
Casework Officer
Special Educational Needs Assessment Service

Appendix 6
Ceasing to Maintain a Statement:
Wolverhampton Certificate of Achievement

Certificate of Achievement

This certificate is presented to

Name of Recipient

*In ceasing to maintain your statement of special educational needs and
in recognition of your outstanding accomplishments*

A Duly Authorised Officer of the Authority



Appendix Seven
Examples of letters used during the statutory assessment and statements process.

- Considering letter – acknowledgement to parents
- Notification – ‘no’ to statutory assessment, these letters are individual and may be customised from standard formats.
- 29 day letter (+ information letter and parental advice form)
- Request for advice to professionals (reminders – could be telephone call)
- Reminders to parents re attendance at medicals
- Decision letter – if yes, for some sent in advance, others with a copy of the statement). If no + Note in Lieu (non standard). It was recognised that if a yes decision was made and a letter advising this sent without the proposed statement this could be considered bureaucratic. However, parental confidence may be built by this procedure.
- Consulting letter to school (if parents have a proposed statement). This is a ‘must’, there is a duty to consult schools before naming, even when the child is already attending the school.
- Final statement
- Notification of an Annual Review to LAS.
- Response to Annual Review – standard if no change decision.
- Amendments following the Annual Review
- Cease to maintain
- Reassessment
- Welcome letter when a child with a statement enters the authority (Telford and Wrekin). This was agreed to be good practice.

Appendix Eight
Standard Letters Contributed from West Midlands Authorities

| Authority | Standard Letter |
|------------------|---|
| Coventry | De-Statementing letter following Annual Review |
| Coventry | Final Statement – parents in agreement |
| Coventry | Final Statement – parents not in agreement |
| Coventry | Final Statement – parents not replied |
| Coventry | Proposed Statement letter |
| Coventry | Parent letter confirming school request for statutory assessment has been refused |
| Dudley | Amended Statement letter |
| Dudley | Final Statement letter |
| Dudley | Letter following parental request |
| Dudley | Note in Lieu letter |
| Dudley | Proposal to assess child letter |
| Dudley | Proposed Statement – Letter to parents |
| Dudley | Secondary transfer letter |
| Sandwell | Amended Statement letter – Secondary transfer |
| Sandwell | Final Statement letter |
| Sandwell | Letter to parents –Note in Lieu |
| Sandwell | Letter to parents in response to a parental request |
| Sandwell | Letter to parents – assessment agreed |
| Sandwell | Letter to parents – Proposed Statement |
| Wolverhampton | Letter to parents – preference of school |
| Telford & Wrekin | Amended Final Statement Letter |
| Telford & Wrekin | Assessment agreed letter |
| Telford & Wrekin | Cease to maintain statement at next Annual Review |
| Telford & Wrekin | Cease to maintain statement |
| Telford & Wrekin | Secondary transfer letter |
| Wolverhampton | Cease to maintain statement letter |
| Wolverhampton | Letter to parents – assessment being considered |
| Wolverhampton | Letter to parent – Proposed Statement |