



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

**Local Authority Report**

to

**The Schools Adjudicator**

from

**Stockton-On-Tees Local Authority**

to be provided by

**30 June 2020**

**Report Cleared by: Name Martin Gray**

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**Date submitted: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

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**Please email your completed report to: [osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk](mailto:osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk)  
by 30 June 2020 and earlier if possible**

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## Introduction and guidance on completing the report – Revised April 2020

1. Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) requires every local authority to make an annual report to the adjudicator. The Chief Adjudicator then includes a summary of these reports in her annual report to the Secretary for State for Education. The School Admissions Code (the Code) sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities in paragraph 6. Paragraph 3.23 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. This is a revised template issued in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. This template requests local authorities only for:
  - a) information about how admission arrangements in the area of the local authority serve the interests of looked after children and previously looked after children, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, including any details of where problems have arisen;
  - b) an assessment of the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols and co-ordination in their area, including how many children were admitted to each school under them.
3. We would be grateful if local authorities would follow the approach used in statutory provisions and in the Department for Education Statistical First Release<sup>1</sup> and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002<sup>2</sup>.
4. Local authorities are, of course, free to comment on any other matters not specifically addressed in this template if they wish to do so under section 3. The views expressed by local authorities in previous years also remain a matter of public record.
5. The report **must** be returned to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by **30 June 2020**.

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<sup>1</sup> [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Education Middle School \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

## Information requested

### Section 1 - Normal point of admission

#### A. Co-ordination

i. How well did co-ordination of the main admissions round work?	Not well	A large number of small problems or a major problem	Well with few small problems	Very well
Reception				X
Year 7				X
Other relevant years of entry				
ii. Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:				

#### B. Looked after and previously looked after children

- i. How well 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<sup>3</sup>

- ii. How well 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<sup>3</sup>

- iii. How well 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<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>3</sup> 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>3</sup>

- v. Priority in admission arrangements for 2021 for adopted children previously in care abroad. Please comment on the use of a priority in admission arrangements for a child adopted who was previously in care abroad if you wish.

This criteria was adopted across the LA and in most other Admission Authority policies, however to date no children have been allocated a place due to no relevant applications.

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

### C. Special educational needs and disabilities

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

## Section 2 - In-year<sup>4</sup> admissions

### A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions

Please provide any comments on the co-ordination of **in year admissions** if you wish.

This is an area that has become more difficult to manage in recent years due to the difficulties during the processing of applications for certain preference schools. Secondary schools and in particular Academies often prove difficult to deal with and slow the request for a place down especially those with numerous places citing numerous reasons. In recent times we have enhanced our Transfer request form to aid preference schools in their decision making but this has not had the desired effect as we would have liked.

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<sup>4</sup> By in-year we mean admission at the start of any school year 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 admission during the course of any school year after the end of the statutory waiting list period (ie 31 December) in normal years of admission.

**B. Looked after children and previously looked after children**

i. How well does the **in-year admissions** 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<sup>5</sup>

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

Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>6</sup>

iii. How well does your **in-year admissions** 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<sup>6</sup>

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

Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>6</sup>

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:

We have had experiences were the request for places both into and out of the area have taken far too long to process to enable a young person to start quickly. Once again we find certain Secondary Academies less willing to support a request despite legislation.

**C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities**

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

Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>6</sup>

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**?

<sup>5</sup> 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

<sup>6</sup> 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

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

iii. Please give examples of 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:

The latter category in-year request again can prove difficult to process quickly enough resulting in these young people being out of education longer than is necessary. Have to say this is usually Secondary academies again.

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

**D. Fair access protocol**

i. Has your fair access protocol been agreed<sup>7</sup> 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 April 2019 and 31 March 2020?

Type of school	Number of children admitted	
	Primary aged children	Secondary aged children
Community and voluntary controlled		
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies		3
Total		3

<sup>7</sup> An existing protocol remains binding on all schools up until the point at which a new one is adopted.

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

Not at all    Not well    Well    Very well    Not applicable<sup>8</sup>

v. Please make any relevant comment on the protocol not covered above if you wish.

This is generally due to those transfers that are received, consultation stalls with those schools involved leading to arrange a Fair Access panel to discuss. The turnaround for completion again takes far too long despite clear timeline and process of escalation. In Stockton we take the approach that to Direct an Academy to admit via OSA is the very last resort. This unfortunately lends itself to these requests taking far too long to resolve.

**E.** Any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised if you wish.

### **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?

We have concerns that we still receive numerous in year requests every year despite improving the transfer request form, increasing places and improving schools. The ease at which families want to change schools for their children is a concern – although many with genuine reasons out of their control. Since lockdown has been imposed those that were pending have been put on hold but in recent weeks the volume of requests have increased and as we have nearly all schools not fully operating across all year groups means many families are stuck awaiting decisions for their children. I feel especially concerned for those new to Stockton may become disaffected and anxious due to not having any contact with a school. Many of our Secondary academies will not engage until possibly the autumn term even if they are able to.

### **Section 4 - Feedback**

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2021.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Not applicable' would mean that there were no hard to place children for which the protocol was required.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to Lisa Short at [OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk](mailto:OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk) by 30 June 2020