



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

**Local Authority Report**

to

**The Schools Adjudicator**

from

**North Somerset Local Authority**

to be provided by

**30 June 2021**

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**[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator)**

**Please email your completed report to: [osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk](mailto:osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk)  
by 30 June 2021 and earlier if possible**

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## Introduction and guidance on completing the report

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.

2. This template requests the same information as that set out in the revised template we sent on 15 April 2020:

- a) information about how admission arrangements in 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 should 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. In the template last year we did not ask about the determination of admission arrangements because of continued constraints on local authorities. Again, we have not asked for that information this year, but we intend to return to this area in future years given the importance of determination and checking compliance of all admission authorities. It is a key role for the local authority's leadership to encourage schools to determine arrangements in line with the provisions in the Code.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. The report **must** be returned to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by **30 June 2021**.

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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		X		

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

We had a system issue with our Infant to Junior applications that took a number of weeks for our software supplier to come up with a fix for. No other transfer groups were affected

#### 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 2022 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:

We have updated our own policies and advised other own Admissions Authorities within North Somerset to review and update their policies so that they comply with the new code requirements from September 2021 with regards to Internationally Adopted Previously Looked after Children.

vi. If you wish, please give any 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**:

For most schools in the North Somerset Council area, looked after children and previously looked after children who are subject to adoption or special guardianship order, are given priority in the oversubscription criteria. The only exception is our three Catholic schools who place non-Catholic looked after and previously looked after children after all other Catholic criteria. This is in line with their Trust requirements.

Such children have also been allocated places over number as permitted exceptions to infant class size limits

### 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:

As per the School Admissions Code, any child with an Education, Health and Care Plan, is given priority at the school named in their statement/plan.

No North Somerset school has a criterion for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan. These children are allocated places in the same way as any other child. All mainstream schools are equally able to manage children with additional needs. If these children cannot travel to their school due to their additional needs, they may appeal to the Council's Transport Appeal Panel for assistance.

## 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:

The majority of our schools delegate application processing to us at the LA as part of a traded service. However, all our secondaries and a few of our primaries choose to make their own decisions. Where an applicant has expressed multiple preferences it can cause confusion when individual schools are directly offering places rather than coordinating and ensuring that only the highest possible preference offer is made.

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

- i. How well 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<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?

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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 (31 December) in normal years of admission.

<sup>5</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>5</sup>

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

Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>5</sup>

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

Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>5</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:

### 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>5</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**?

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

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

As per the School Admissions Code, any child with an Education, Health and Care Plan is given priority at a school that has been named in their statement/plan.

North Somerset schools do not include a criterion in their over subscription criteria for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan. These children are allocated places in the same way as any other child, including use of the Fair Access Protocol.

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>6</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 2020 and 31 March 2021?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	0	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	2
Total	0	2

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>7</sup>

v. Please make any relevant comment on the protocol not covered above if you wish: Covid lockdowns have skewed the FAP admissions process for the reporting period which is why we have on two listed above.

The protocol enables the needs of pupils and of schools to be equitably considered. North Somerset uses a scoring matrix to ensure no school is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools, or who have challenging behaviour. If a school feels that it cannot cater for a young person they will submit an In Year Fair Access (IYFA) request. If the decision of the

<sup>6</sup> An existing protocol remains binding on all schools up until the point at which a new one is adopted.

<sup>7</sup> 'Not applicable' would mean that there were no hard to place children for which the protocol was required.

Fair Access Panel works against the desire of the school, the LA's powers to 'direct' can be made more complex if the student is at an own admission authority school. This has the consequence that it takes longer to place some of our most complex and vulnerable students, and often parents will change their school preference(s) to ensure their child is not out of education nor being offered a place at a school who has referred them to the Fair Access Panel.

If the LA, as the broker, could be granted powers of direction for Fair Access cases to all schools and academies, this would mean that pupils would miss less full-time education and their re-integration could be administered more quickly and effectively and serve hard to place children "Very Well".

However, our secondary phase inclusion panel is very well established and attended. As a result, schools often agree managed moves for pupils before it gets to the point of a family applying to change schools and there being a Fair Access referral.

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

### **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?

No

### **Section 4 - Feedback**

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2022.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk](mailto:OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk) by 30 June 2021