



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

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

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

Report Cleared by: Name - Abi Preston

Job Title – Director of Education and SEND

Telephone number

Email:

Date submitted:

By: Name – Laura Baldry

Job Title – School Placement & Admissions Manager

Telephone number –

Email:

Website: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#)

**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	6
C. Special educational needs and/or disabilities.....	7
Section 2 - In-year admissions.....	9
A. Looked after children and previously looked after children	9
B. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10
C. Fair access protocol.....	11
D. Directions.....	12
E. Other points on in-year admissions.....	13
Section 3 - Other matters.....	15
Section 4 - Feedback.....	15

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				✓

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

Reception Co-ordination

Hillingdon was ranked first in West London for offering children and their parents their first-choice school on Primary National Offer Day.

The council is also third out of all London boroughs for offering families their first choice.

In total, 94.93 per cent of children received their first choice in Hillingdon, which is significantly higher than the London average of 88.57 per cent.

Furthermore, 99.36 per cent of applicants in Hillingdon were offered one of their top three schools, and 99.5 per cent was offered one of their top six schools.

On National Offer Day Hillingdon offered 100% of our applicants a school place.

Hillingdon has also achieved the highest position in the capital for meeting first preference offers, which was well above the London average of 87 per cent.

Year 7 co-ordination

This year the council received 3,634 secondary school applications; this a slight decrease compared to last year. Of those, 69.37% of Hillingdon pupils received their first choice. Hillingdon also achieved higher than the London average for applicants offered one of their top three preference schools at 89.45%, compared to London's 89.26%.

95% per cent were offered one of their preferred places – a 1% increase.

On National Offer Day Hillingdon offered 100% of our applicants a school place.

Hillingdon had a rise in the number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) applying to mainstream secondary schools. This saw a significant rise in Year 6 pupils with an Education, Health, and Care Plan consulting with mainstream schools.

Over previous years, we experienced delays in offer files being shared from two authorities outside of London, which prompted us to reevaluate our internal processes and implement significant improvements putting measures in place to ensure this issue did not reoccur. These efforts had led to closer collaboration in seeking information and communicating effectively with other education departments. As a result, this year has been notably smoother, with streamlined operations and enhanced efficiency in data sharing.

Year 10 co-ordination

Hillingdon has four schools that admit children into Year 10. Two of which have opted out of the Local Authority Co-ordination scheme. Applicants submit their applications to these schools directly. The other two are from the same Academy Trust who continue to take part in co-ordination. We processed 19 applications for these schools, and these were all received after National Offer Day. The two schools who take part in co-ordination almost exclusively admit pupils from within their own Academy Trust later in the academic year due to parental preference. This year, we experienced a slight delay in receiving application outcomes from the Academy Trust that we co-ordinate for. This has been raised with the Academy Trust; however, it did not impact the outcomes of children's applications as the Trust had contacted them directly. Hillingdon Council will continue to discuss the future direction for coordination of their studio schools, so they will be solely responsible for their own admissions process.

Hillingdon continue to comply with our statutory requirement to write to parents and carers of all pupils of Year 9 age, to tell them about schools in or within travelling distance of the Local Authority area that admit pupils at the beginning of Year 10.

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

- i. 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**:

For those children who are LAC or PLAC within LBH we can confirm their status through information sharing processes with the relevant teams.

However, children who are looked after or previously looked after by other Local Authorities (residing in Hillingdon) often require more intensive resources to gain confirmation of the applicant's status. Although this task is always completed in a timely manner the level of resource is far greater than gaining confirmation from a Hillingdon looked after or previously looked after applicant.

We do experience some delays when trying to confirm LAC pupils who are placed in Hillingdon but looked after by an out of London borough as we have limited contacts. When we have contacted relevant officers or teams, we ensure that the details are recorded.

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:

For the last few years, we have seen a significant rise in Year 6 pupils with an Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP) who we are consulting with mainstream schools for placements in Secondary schools.

As secondary iteration started prior to the statutory deadline for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) teams to name schools for pupils with an EHCP, the Admissions team had to start iteration holding unconfirmed places for children.

Hillingdon's SEND team had to regularly update the School Placement and Admissions team so that places could be put back into the system. At the end of iteration (and after the SEND statutory deadline of 15 February) a small number of children with an EHCP had a school 'type' named on their EHCP i.e., Mainstream, or special school. This meant that it was still necessary to finalise named schools for a small number of children with an EHCP after National Offer Day.

This process continues to be under review for upcoming years to manage the increase in pupils with an EHCP moving through the phased transfer stage as it is projected there will be a further increase in the number of children moving into a

mainstream school in Year 7 with an EHCP. For children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), admission into schools is managed by the SEND Team. The admission process requires consultation with all settings (including mainstream) and a consultation can only be rejected on the grounds that: the setting is unsuitable for age, ability or aptitude or special educational needs of the child or young person ; or -it is incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others and the LA shows that there are no reasonable steps that it could take to prevent the incompatibility. Not too dissimilar with national trends, there continues to be challenges around mainstream schools' confidence in their ability to meet a wide range of special educational needs.

This is being addressed by the SEND & Inclusion service through the development and co-production of an 'Ordinarily Available Provision' framework as well as ongoing support for school leads and SENCOs through SENCO forums and Educational Psychology consultations. With an increasing uptake of school leads and SENCOs participating in weekly SEND panels, key stakeholders are understanding of the decision-making process and expectations of settings to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. The SEND Team have continued discussions with schools around admissions of children and young people with EHCPs and work hard to secure the parents' preferred setting wherever possible.

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:

The process works well regarding the Virtual School submitting applications and the timeliness of distribution to schools by the School Placement and Admissions Team. In the main, we obtain offers in a timely manner.

The London Inter Authority Admissions Group have an agreed London Protocol for the in-year admission of Children Looked After. The Protocol has been written in conjunction with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance 'Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

However, the speed of the process and the responsiveness of schools can occasionally be slow, and delay offers and increase the length of time that Children Looked After are without a school. In respect of other LAs it is an inconsistent picture with some LA's placing children quickly and others not so. This is very much dependent on the year group of the child and the availability of suitable provision particularly in the relation to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and children with social, emotional, mental health (SEMH). Depending on the

complexity of the child's need, again placing children with SEMH is challenging (this challenge exists in Hillingdon too).

SEN processes out of borough are inconsistent and in the main we have Children Looked After out of education for periods of time longer than expected. Wherever possible and whether in or out of borough, some interim tuition is provided by either the Virtual School or SEN to any child without a school place.

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:

For the last few years, we have seen a significant rise in pupils with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) who were consulting with mainstream schools for placements. For children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), admission into schools is managed by the SEND Team.

The admission process requires consultation with all settings (including mainstream) and a consultation can only be rejected on the grounds that: a - the setting is unsuitable for age, ability or aptitude or special educational needs of the child or young person; or -it is incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others and the LA shows that there are no reasonable steps that it could take to prevent the incompatibility. Not too dissimilar with national trends, there continues to be challenges around mainstream schools' confidence in their ability to meet a wide range of special educational needs.

This is being addressed by the SEND & Inclusion service through the development and co-production of an 'Ordinarily Available Provision' framework as well as ongoing support for school leads and SENCOs through SENCO forums and Educational Psychology consultations. With an increasing uptake of school leads

and SENCOs participating in weekly SEND panels, key stakeholders are understanding of the decision-making process and expectations of settings to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

The SEND Team have continued discussions with schools around admissions of children and young people with EHCPs and work hard to secure the parents' preferred setting wherever possible.

For CYP with SEND where settings cannot access regular pathways of support via SEND Advisory Service or SEND Service, there is special exceptional funding available for settings who had unexpected admission of the CYP with very complex needs and require immediate support to allow time for appropriate assessment processed to be initiated.

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	0	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	201
Total	0	201

- 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?

We saw a 47.7% increase in the number of secondary school referrals this year compared to last year. The highest numbers of referrals remain for Secondary placements which were made for Children who have not been able to secure a school place within five school weeks of the date of application and who are out of

education and children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees, and asylum seekers.

We experienced a rise in Year 8 pupil referrals to Fair Access due to the majority of our secondary schools being at full capacity in this year group. The schools with available vacancies in Year 8 were situated in the same geographical area, and the travel time was considered unreasonable for those pupils due to their location in our borough. Consequently, 34% of the placements were facilitated through Fair Access for Year 8 pupils.

We are still facing challenges from schools concerning pupils placed through the FAP (Fair Access Protocol), leading to avoidable delays in their enrolment at the designated schools. As part of our annual process, we must review our Fair Access Protocol, taking into consideration of the challenges we have experienced throughout the year. This is to ensure that specific sections of the protocol are strengthened, with the aim to reduce the number of challenges in the upcoming academic year. We are currently in the process of reviewing our protocol which includes updating particular areas that schools have raised that we would like to strengthen and make clearer. This review should be complete by mid-November 2023.

- 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:

As mentioned last year, the majority of children placed through our Fair Access Panel meetings lived in the south of the borough. Due to this, several schools in the south of the borough have highlighted concerns regarding the placement of pupils being disproportionate compared to schools in the north of the borough. We always try to be fair and transparent with all our placements, however we must take into account the travel times for children, and this can be a challenge due to the size and layout of our borough.

Whenever an applicant has listed a school north of the borough, the panel will consider this school as a suitable placement even if considered not within a reasonable distance. This then helps to fairly distribute where possible.

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
0	0	0

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

iii. If you wish, please provide any comments about how **well in-year admissions** works for children who are **not** looked after or previously looked after and/or do not have SEND:

The majority of our schools regularly update us on their vacancies, starters and any children that have declined an offer. This helps ensure children are admitted to schools in a timely manner. Additionally, when parents decline offers, it allows us to contact them, and if required, make the necessary referrals to our Children Missing Education team for those children out of education following a refusal for a reasonable school offer.

iv. 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):

We are facing some delays in receiving outcomes of applications, particularly from secondary schools within the 15-school day response requirement. Therefore, we are having to chase schools on their outcomes, along with managing the expectations of parents where we are being chased for updates on their children's application status.

We have reminded schools in our weekly bulletin and within the AOB's of our Fair Access minutes of their statutory requirements and when they should be advising the LA and parents of the outcomes of their application. We will continue to monitor and manage this moving forward.

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?

Section 4 - Feedback

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

We have recently created guidance for parents, designed to provide clarity and understanding in situations where disputes over parental responsibility impact our application processing procedures. This guidance outlines the expected steps required to ensure a smooth resolution process. By making this information available, we aim to promote effective communication, transparency, and cooperation between all parties involved. We anticipate that this proactive measure will contribute to a more streamlined and efficient application processing experience for everyone.

Thank you for completing this template.

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