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## Improving the quality of statements of special educational needs

Good practice in writing statements





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# 1. Introduction

## The improvement challenge

'We need to focus on better quality and clearer statements, whether they make sense to parents, and their contribution to improving children's outcomes.'

Secretary of State, April 2009<sup>1</sup>

## Background

Guidance on the form and contents of statements of special educational needs (SEN) was first issued in 1983 (DES Circular 1/83) which stated that while the form and content were prescribed in the Education (SEN) Regulations (1983), 'the design and production of the statement will be a matter for individual LEAs'. Annex 2 then demonstrated one possible way of designing the statement.

In 1989 the guidance was updated and extended (DES Circular 22/89). This acknowledged that regulation 10(2) allowed variation to the form of statements but advised that, 'a common and consistent format for writing statements...is desirable.'

In 1994, the first SEN Code of Practice (CoP) included a chapter on statements of SEN which provided specific guidance on 'Writing the Statement'. This guidance was repeated, with some extension, in the 2001 CoP ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/\\_doc/3724/SENCodeOfPractice.pdf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/3724/SENCodeOfPractice.pdf)) supplemented in the same year by non-statutory guidance in Section 7 of the SEN Toolkit (Writing a statement of special educational needs) ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=4612](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=4612)).

## Current issues

The Lamb Inquiry, which looked at a range of issues about how to improve parental confidence in the SEN system, received evidence about the quality of statements. An analysis of a sample of statements carried out by the National Strategies for the Lamb Inquiry (2009) showed that while several met basic requirements, the majority raised various issues about their general quality and the extent to which they were fully compliant with statutory requirements. A web survey commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) noted that 'the objectives in many statements were said to be too broad, too vague and sometimes even unreachable'. The survey also found that parents felt that the language used in statements was often vague and non-specific while others found it to be complex and full of jargon.

The Lamb Inquiry concluded that further guidance on good practice in drawing up statements was needed. This should include advice on how statements should contribute more directly to good outcomes for children with SEN.

The key purpose of a statement of SEN is to describe a child's assessed SEN and then to ensure that appropriate special provision is secured to achieve the objectives set out for that child. The provision agreed in the statement should ultimately lead to accelerated progress and improved outcomes. This document provides further detail and examples of good practice – it is not, however, binding on local authorities (LAs); they are not required to have regard to it. Its aim is to provide advice for LA officers who are tasked with producing and overseeing the maintenance of statements of SEN.

<sup>1</sup> [www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry/downloads/Ed%20Balls%20to%20Brian%20Lamb%20290409.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry/downloads/Ed%20Balls%20to%20Brian%20Lamb%20290409.pdf)

## 2. Ensuring quality when writing statements of SEN

The statutory requirements regarding the form and contents of a statement of SEN are laid down in regulation 16 and Schedule 2 to the Education (SEN) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001.

Schedule 2 is included as Annexe A of the CoP and indicates that a statement of SEN must follow the format outlined below and *must* include the following information.

Part 1 *Introduction*: The child's name, address and date of birth. The child's home language and religion. The names and address(es) of the child's parents.

Part 2 *Special educational needs* (learning difficulties): Details of each and every one of the child's special educational needs as identified by the LA during statutory assessment and of the advice received, attached as appendices to the statement.

Part 3 *Special educational provision*: The special educational provision that the LA considers necessary to meet the child's special educational needs:

- a) the *objectives* that the special educational provision should aim to meet
- b) the special educational *provision* which the LA considers appropriate to meet the needs set out in Part 2, and to meet the objectives
- c) the arrangements to be made for monitoring progress in meeting those objectives, particularly for setting short-term targets for the child's progress and for reviewing his or her progress on a regular basis.

Part 4 *Placement*: The type and name of school where the special educational provision set out in Part 3 is to be made or the LA's arrangements for provision to be made other than in school.

Part 5 *Non-educational needs*: All relevant non-educational needs of the child as agreed between the health services, social services or other agencies and the LA.

Part 6 *Non-educational provision*: Details of relevant non-educational provision required to meet the non-educational needs of the child as agreed between the health services and/or social services and the LA, including the agreed arrangements for its provision.

Signature and date

The following section highlights key factors that LAs should consider in order to produce quality statements that meet all of the information requirements.

### 1. Quality of advice

The quality of a statement will be significantly determined by the quality of advice submitted during the assessment process itself, including contributions made by parents and by children and young people themselves. LAs need to ensure that they provide guidance to those giving advice and monitor the quality of this advice as it is submitted. They should provide regular feedback to those giving advice – this was emphasised in the SEN Toolkit which recommended that LAs 'provide guidelines or questionnaires to help parents and others provide advice as part of the assessment process'. The Lamb Inquiry also has recommended 'strengthened guidance from the professional bodies. This will help to improve the advice provided by a range of professionals to local authorities' (para 5:76).

## 2. A personalised statement

The Lamb Inquiry cites a parent who felt that her child's statement 'certainly didn't feel like it had been written about my boy. It could have been written about any boy with SEN' (p. 62). Each and every statement of SEN should be clearly personalised to the child who is the subject of the statement. The use of standardised phrases and sentences can detract from this and should be avoided.

## 3. Use of language

In writing a statement, the LA needs to be aware that it is primarily for the child, the parent and the school, and should therefore use clear, unambiguous language. Jargon, acronyms, or very specific educational and medical terms should either be avoided or explained in simple lay terms.

## 4. The views of the parent

The LA must seek parental advice as part of the statutory assessment. Part 2 of the statement should always make reference to parental advice, or to the views of parents as reported by advice givers. A separate paragraph entitled 'Parent views' is usually helpful.

## 5. The views of the child

The LA should also seek the views of children and young people. Part 2 of the statement should make reference to their views as provided directly by children and young people themselves or as reported by advice givers, usually as a separate paragraph entitled 'Child/young person's views'.

## 6. Background

It can be helpful to start Part 2 with a brief overview of the child's circumstances and reasons why a statutory assessment was thought to be necessary. However, the statement should be focusing on the child's current situation and proposed future learning and development so historical information should be kept to a minimum.

## 7. Be positive

Part 2 should always contain positive statements and observations about the child and what he or she can do.

## 8. Summary

Part 2 will contain a range of information about what the child can and cannot do as well as his or her SEN. It is therefore always helpful to draw Part 2 to a close with a summary of the assessed SEN to distinguish these from other aspects of the child's functioning.

## 9. Objectives

The objectives in Part 3 should set out the key long-term educational and developmental objectives that relate to the child's SEN. Objectives need to be stretching and challenging for the individual child, setting high expectations, and clearly identifying measurable outcomes.



The SEN CoP is clear on the objectives in a statement: 'These objectives should directly relate to the needs set out in Part 2 and should be described in terms that will allow the LEA and the school to monitor and review the child's progress over time' (para 8:34).

The Lamb Inquiry noted that 'there needs to be a much tighter focus on outcomes and a much more rigorous approach to setting out objectives in a statement. The objectives need to relate both to attainment and to wider outcomes for children'. High expectations and good progress are entitlements for all learners, including those with statements of SEN. For children with SEN and disabilities these entitlements are supported by the actions that all schools are required to take:

- to promote equality of opportunity and to anticipate and remove or minimise barriers for learners with disabilities
- to use their best endeavours to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any learner who has SEN.

There is a national target for 90 per cent of Key Stage 2 learners to make two National Curriculum levels of progress, in English, over the key stage by 2011. Targets should be set against the national target setting guidance, which is published annually by DCSF.

For learners identified as having SEN, who are working within the P scales, it is crucial to their progress that we have appropriately high expectations of them. *The Progression Guidance 2009–10*<sup>2</sup> (00553-2009BKT-EN) encourages schools to consider the progress of learners above the median. For greater ambition and challenge, comparison should be made with learners in the upper quartile.

The final statement should reflect ambitious targets and objectives for all learners, based on good quality data, the assessment advice received and the application of the principles within the Progression Guidance.

It is important that objectives are written in ways that enable:

- progress to be monitored
- outcomes to be evaluated
- decisions about future needs and provision to be made.

Objectives should generally be of a longer-term nature than the more specific, short-term targets in the child's individual learning plan. They might be expected to be achieved by a particular milestone, such as the end of a key stage, or a school phase, or a key transition phase, but they might need to be set to be achievable over a shorter period of time. Whatever the period of time over which it is anticipated the objectives might be achieved, they should be described in terms that will allow the schools and the LA to monitor and review the child's progress over time.

2 Progression Guidance 2009-10 (00553-2009BKT-EN): [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies) Search using the ref '00553-2009BKT-EN'

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## 10. Special educational provision

The Regulations describe four areas of provision that must be addressed, but they are not exclusive. The LA must specify:

- a) *any appropriate facilities and equipment, staffing arrangements and curriculum*
- b) *any appropriate modifications to the application of the National Curriculum*
- c) *any appropriate exclusions from the application of the National Curriculum, in detail, and the provision which it is proposed to substitute for any such exclusions in order to maintain a balanced and broadly based curriculum*
- d) *where residential accommodation is appropriate, that fact.*

This section must specify all the special educational provision that the LA considers appropriate for all the SEN identified in Part 2. It is also important to ensure that provision specified in Part 3 is actually **special** educational provision, and not provision that is ordinarily available. For example, reference in the statement to a 'broad and balanced curriculum' is not necessary, as this is part of universal educational provision.

## 11. Funding

Section 10 above indicates the four areas of provision that must be addressed in Part 3 of the statement. Resourcing levels or funding are not special educational provision per se, and are not a substitute for a detailed level of provision.

The LA has a statutory duty to secure special educational provision for children with statements ('*arrange that the special education provision specified in the statement is made*<sup>3</sup>) and to outline how it ensures that the provision is made. The LA's arrangements for funding statements should be subject to separate information, and the LA's funding scheme should be clear about what levels and type of special provision is funded respectively by the school and by the LA. Such information is a statutory requirement (The Special Educational Needs (Provision of Information by Local Education Authorities) (England) Regulations 2001). If necessary, LAs should review and clarify with their schools the responsibilities of each for SEN provision, including what schools are routinely expected to fund. These arrangements should be reinforced through the ways in which provision is described in Part 3.

3 Education Act 1996, S324(5)(a)(i)

## 12. Linking objectives to provision

There should be apparent correspondence between the needs, as summarised in Part 2, and both the long-term objectives and the special educational provision set out in Part 3.

The CoP advises that 'it will be helpful to the child's parents and teachers if the provision in this subsection [i.e. Part 3] is set out in the same order as the description of needs in Part 2' (para 8:36).

In drawing together the links, some LAs record an objective which is then followed by the description of the provision to meet that objective. The next objective and corresponding provision is then presented. A few LAs have presented this information in a grid with objectives on one side and the corresponding provision beside the objective. Examples of such approaches are included in exemplars for objectives and provision in pages 26–31.

## 13. Specificity about provision

Special provision identified in Part 3 should be described so that teachers and parents are clear about what is expected. For example, where the term 'programme' is used, specifics about the type of programme, how it should be delivered, and how frequently it should be delivered, must be provided.

The CoP, reflecting a series of High Court decisions with regard to specificity, advises: 'provision should normally be quantified (e.g. in terms of hours of provision, staffing arrangements) although there will be cases where some flexibility should be retained in order to meet the changing special educational needs of the child concerned' (para 8:37).

Parents reported to the Lamb Inquiry that the specification of undifferentiated hours of support assistant time was unhelpful in that it did not show how that support would meet their child's needs. By contrast, 'parents who felt the statement included specific detail about the level and type of support their child should receive reported feeling reassured that there was now a shared understanding about their child's special educational needs, the type of support they required and, in practical terms, what this support would be like at school for example' (Lamb, August 2009<sup>4</sup>). It is therefore good practice to divide the hours of teaching, specialist teaching or support assistant time into activities designed to meet the desired objectives of the statement and to describe any skills that may be required for all staff working with the child in school.

In doing this, terms such as 'regular' and 'frequently' should not be used because they are insufficiently precise. Similarly, phrases such as 'opportunities to' or 'might benefit from' are not sufficiently specific and should also be avoided.

## 14. Brevity

Statements should be as succinct as possible while ensuring they contain the required information. It may be helpful to draw attention to particular elements of the appended advice, but these should not be repeated at length in the statement.

## 15. Statements and special schools

Where a statement names a special school, it is important that the statement outlines the particular SEN of the child and the provision required to meet those needs. The requirement for provision to be specified applies irrespective of the type of placements/arrangements made. Parents of children in special schools told the Lamb Inquiry that they find it helpful where their child's statement sets out the tailored provision that is necessary in the special school to meet their child's needs, rather than setting out a general description of what the school offers. It is good practice, where possible, to include a

4 Quality and clarity of statements - Report of the Lamb Inquiry to the Secretary of State. [www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry/downloads/LAMB%20INQUIRY%20Statements%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry/downloads/LAMB%20INQUIRY%20Statements%20FINAL.pdf)

description of the skills needed to implement the provision effectively and also set out more widely any skills that may be required for all staff working with the child in the school.

## 16. Quality assurance

The production of quality statements that meet the full statutory requirements can be demanding and it is important that LAs regularly subject their statements to quality assurance processes to ensure that all standards and requirements are consistently met.

One tool that is recommended for such quality assurance is *Making a Clear Statement* – a checklist produced by the former South West Regional Partnership and developed further by the SW Regional SEN hub. LAs may find this helpful in checking their own statements, or for undertaking a moderating exercise across a number of authorities.

The checklist can be downloaded from: [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies) and search for 'Making a clear statement'.

One LA has instigated a SEN Quality Assurance Board. Its purpose is to review a sample of statements to consider quality and compliance and to recommend further improvements. The Board includes representation from the Parent Partnership Service (PPS).

## Conclusion

There are clear statutory requirements that dictate the form and content of a statement of SEN. LAs also need to ensure they produce quality statements of SEN that contribute to improved progress and outcomes for children with SEN and that are helpful and intelligible to key stakeholders, especially parents and teachers. Parental confirmation that the wording is clear can be regarded as a 'litmus test' as to whether a statement is comprehensible and unambiguous. Later sections in this guidance are intended to provide further exemplification of each section of a statement of SEN, based on the statutory requirements and the SEN Toolkit.

# 3. Parental involvement in drafting statements

## Introduction

The 2001 SEN CoP emphasised the importance of working in partnership with parents to enable children with SEN to achieve their full potential, acknowledging the critical role that parents play in their children's education (CoP 2:2). The Code clearly sets out the expectation that schools, LAs and other services will make effective partnerships with parents and that parents will be supported through the statutory assessment process, which can be 'difficult and challenging' (CoP 2:12). LAs are urged to ensure that they are 'accessible, welcoming and value the views and involvement of parents' (CoP 2:13). To strengthen the support available to parents, the SEN and Disability Act 2001 introduced legislation enabling LAs to set up 'arm's length' PPSs to provide advice and information about matters relating to SEN.

The involvement of parents in decisions about whether to initiate an assessment, and the duty to seek and take account of their views during the process, is a statutory requirement. However, the subsequent drafting of proposed statements is usually undertaken by SEN casework officers who may never have met the parents, based solely on the advice obtained during the assessment process. Although there is provision in the legislation for parents to request a meeting with an LA officer to discuss the proposed statement, often the final statement is made having regard only to parental comments submitted in writing.

Some schools and LAs have been piloting a more parent- and child-centred approach to reviewing progress and future planning, based on person-centred planning (PCP) principles. This has been particularly helpful for children and young people with severe or complex learning difficulties who may have found it hard to participate in traditional SEN review meetings. Experience of applying some of the principles of the PCP process has led some LAs to consider how they might structure and conduct their statutory assessment arrangements and subsequent review meetings to achieve greater levels of parental engagement and contribution.

## The key features of person-centred planning

Person-centred planning guidance<sup>5</sup> describes five key features that help distinguish it from other forms of planning.

1. The person is at the centre: PCP is rooted in the values of rights, independence and choice. It requires careful listening to the person and results in informed choice about how the person wants to live and what support best suits the individual.
2. Family members and friends are full partners: PCP puts people in the context of their family and communities. The contributions that friends and families can make are recognised and valued, and the process provides a forum for creatively negotiating conflicts about what is safe, possible or desirable to improve that person's life.
3. PCP reflects a person's capacities, what is important to a person (now and for the future) and specifies the support required to make a valued contribution to his or her community.
4. PCP builds a shared commitment to action that recognises a person's rights. It is an ongoing process of working together to make changes that the person and those close to him or her agree will improve that person's quality of life.

<sup>5</sup> Valuing People: A new strategy for learning disability for the 21st Century. Guidance for implementation groups  
[www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/dynamic/valuingpeople136.jsp](http://www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/dynamic/valuingpeople136.jsp)

5. PCP leads to continual listening, learning and action and helps the person achieve his or her goals. Not only can learning from planning inform individuals, but it can also affect service delivery as a whole and inform and inspire others to greater achievements.

PCP is intended to:

- create a comprehensive portrait of who the person is and what the person wants to do with his or her life
- bring together all of the people who are important to him or her, including family, friends, neighbours, support workers and other professionals.

In some LAs, PCP has replaced the more traditional 'medical model' of assessment and planning. An example of this development is the 'team around the child' approach where professionals work in partnership to deliver an individualised service for the child and the family. Some authorities have also made efforts to apply PCP processes to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes.

In cases where LAs have used PCP, reported benefits of the process include:

- helping people work out what they want in their lives and making them feel stronger and more confident
- clarifying what support people need to pursue their aspirations
- bringing people together in joint problem solving to support the individual and promote better understanding of and commitment to that person
- helping direct and shape the contributions made from service agencies to ensure they are based upon what is important to the person from his or her perspective.

## PCP and SEN

Increasingly, with the broader children's agenda of recent years, some authorities have begun to explore how they can adapt the statutory assessment process and the format of the traditional SEN statement, to make them both more parent-friendly and better designed to secure the engagement of other agencies. While the enforceable elements of the statement relate to special educational provision, health and social care needs are recorded in the sections under non-educational needs and provision. Thus, the key principles underpinning PCP can still be regarded as forming a foundation for the improved engagement of parents in the SEN process, and, in particular in engaging in structured conversations over statements.

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## Examples of parental involvement at the stage of drafting statements

### Case study 1

Until recently, LA1 had used an external service to write their proposed statements. Having brought that process back in-house the LA wanted to increase the direct involvement of parents in the process. For a trial period some parents whose children were being assessed for the first time were invited to meet with SEN officers to look at the advice that had been gathered prior to their child's statement being drafted. The proposed statement was then sent to those parents for consideration before they returned for a second meeting to discuss and agree the final version. The final statement was produced after this second meeting.

In Case study 1, the LA met the parent twice at the proposed statement stage. An interpreter was present for both meetings as the parent's first language was Mandarin Chinese. The PPS and a local voluntary organisation were also present to provide support and advice.

Both the parent and the casework officer involved agreed that:

- these were positive and constructive meetings
- it helped to make a complicated process more accessible for the parent
- the close involvement of the parent was very helpful in drawing up a statement that was acceptable to all.

The parent felt that she had been listened to and had been able to get 'underneath' some of the language used in the assessment.

The LA identified a number of issues about the process, including:

- capacity – the feasibility of allocating this additional amount of time in every case
- skills – a need for training where casework officers do not have prior experience of working directly with parents
- timescales – the challenge of routinely fitting this approach into the rigid and demanding statutory timescale for producing proposed and final statements.

Despite these issues, the LA did feel that in complex and potentially contentious cases, this investment of time and effort would be worthwhile if it helped to reach agreement and a shared understanding, and averted appeals to the First-tier tribunal (SEND).

## Case study 2

LA2 has been supported by Valuing People to deliver a PCP approach to its general action planning and review processes for children and young people with SEN. This has proved to be an effective process in terms of the positive engagement and contribution of parents, and the LA judges that the process has improved its relationships with parents. As a result, the LA was keen to explore whether it might be possible to apply some of the PCP principles to the SEN assessment process.

In the case of a nine-year-old boy with a range of severe SEN, the LA's PCP coordinator was asked by the SEN team to organise a meeting to discuss the advice received during the statutory assessment, choosing a venue and time based on the wishes of the family. Both parents, the PCP coordinator, the child's key worker and the SEN casework officer attended the meeting. Discussion around the statutory advice and the parents' aspirations led to an action planning wall chart being drawn up and the information from the meeting was then collated alongside the advice to assist in drawing up a draft statement.

The LA continues to apply the PCP approach to its SEN processes where possible, keeping the child and family central to the assessment process and using any appropriate evidence generated by this process when writing their statements.

## Case study 3

LA3 recently undertook a review of its process for producing proposed and final statements. As part of the review, the LA wanted to explore whether:

- the statement format and content could be revised to be more easily accessed and understood by parents
- increased direct involvement of parents in the production of the statement would help parents feel that the process was more relevant.

The LA was also aware of feedback from the Educational Psychology Service and the PPS stating that parents often found their child's statement difficult to understand.

For one statement, the parent of a child (Marie) was invited to meet with the LA SEN casework officer and the educational psychologist (EP) to discuss her child's statement at the stage when the LA had received all the advice and had begun to formulate the proposed statement. At this meeting the parent was able to discuss in detail the key issues around the contents of a draft statement, and her aspirations for the child.

The LA was then able to write a draft statement, taking full account of the parent's contribution and her views.

The parent felt that the meeting had been extremely helpful in understanding the content of the proposed statement. An additional benefit was that the EP, who will continue to work with Marie's school and who will play a key role in monitoring the statement delivery and the resulting personalised plan, was able to develop a closer relationship with the parent and an improved understanding of Marie's needs.

The authority is now considering how to ensure that more parents have opportunities for increased involvement with the PPS and EP service at even earlier stages of statement preparation.



## Benefits and issues to consider

These case studies show that the benefits of involving parents at the stage of drafting statements include:

- parents feel that they are really involved and that their views count
- issues around the statutory process can be talked about and explained within the context of decision-making discussions
- parents can contribute to the interpretation of the advice received for the assessment
- there is an increased likelihood that the final statement will be written in user-friendly language
- the likelihood of reaching agreement about the final statement is enhanced.

The LAs also reported issues that had to be addressed in order to undertake these meetings, including:

- the timescales in the statutory regulations
- capacity within the statutory assessment team
- the need for staff training
- advocacy support could require arrangements with the PPS
- childcare may be an issue for the parent(s).

## Transition planning

From the Year 9 review onwards, it is particularly important that review processes and plans are person-centred and integrated as far as possible with s139a assessments, Moving On Plans, Pathway Plans, Health Action Plans, etc., so that the process is made as simple and straightforward as possible for young people and their parents/carers. A single plan for each individual, which can be reviewed and updated throughout the transition period, is the ideal – even though separate assessments may contribute to the development, review and updating of this plan through an ongoing person-centred process. During this transition phase, colleagues from agencies such as Adult Services, Housing, Transport, Leisure/Recreation and Supported Employment, should be involved where appropriate so that resources, provision and services can be commissioned in anticipation of future needs.

## Conclusions

As part of the Lamb Inquiry, Brian Lamb noted that ‘in our discussions, parents have been very willing to talk about what would really make a difference for their child and what their longer-term aspirations are for their child. What has struck us quite forcibly is that it seems that no one has had a discussion with parents about the outcomes they aspire to for their child... There needs to be a much clearer focus on both attainment and wider outcomes for disabled children and children with SEN at every level of the system.’<sup>6</sup> The point at which all the evidence received through the statutory assessment process then needs to be collated presents an excellent opportunity for engaging parents in a structured conversation about their aspirations for their child and the identified needs and provision, and some examples of good, developing LA practice have been described.

We recommend that LAs:

- trial the involvement of parents at the point of drafting a statement, and involve PPS
- encourage parental attendance at meetings during the statement drafting process whenever possible, especially where the case is complex or the parent may have difficulty accessing language

6 Letter from Brian Lamb to the Secretary of State, 8 December 2008. [www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry/downloads/BLlettertoSoSDec808.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry/downloads/BLlettertoSoSDec808.pdf)

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- build on and incorporate previous PCP or CAF review meeting evidence in statements wherever possible
- keep under review the opportunities for face-to-face meetings with parents throughout the assessment period
- review guidance to those giving advice, strengthening it where appropriate, and emphasising the need to minimise the use of jargon, or to provide simple and clear interpretation.

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# Statements of special educational needs: Exemplars

# Part 1 – Introduction

## Requirement

- The format and contents of statements of SEN are prescribed in Schedule 2 of the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001. All LAs **must** follow this format.
- Schedule 2 is reproduced in Annexe A of the CoP.

## Example 1 – Fei Yen

<b>Upriver Council</b>			
<b>Statement of special educational needs</b>			
<b>Part 1: Introduction</b>			
In accordance with section 324 of the Education Act 1996 ('the Act'), and the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001 ('the Regulations'), the following final statement is made on 22 January 2009 by Upriver Council ('the authority') in respect of Fei Yen Sulaki whose particulars are mentioned below. This is her first statement of special educational needs.			
<b>Child</b>			
Surname:	Sulaki	Other Names:	Fei Yen
Home address:			
19 Bush Grove		Sex:	Female
Bush Green		Date of birth:	02.12.04
BG11 3JR		Home language:	Mandarin Chinese
		Religion:	Not known
<b>Child's parents or guardian</b>			
Surname:	Sulaki	Other names:	Freida and Mehmet
Home address:		Relationship to child:	Parents
See above		Telephone:	0100 -0100100

When assessing the child's special educational needs under Section 323 of the Act, the authority took into consideration, in accordance with regulation 11 of the Regulations, the evidence as set out in the appendices listed below:

A	Parental advice Parental representations	Mr and Mrs Sulaki	29.10.2008 12.09.2008
B	Educational advice	Janet Gotneep R. Shahna	17.10.2008
C	Medical advice	Dr R. Taylor	07.10.2008
	Speech and language therapist	Rebecca Smith	14.11.2008
	Occupational therapist	Rossa Luthian	17.11.2008
D	Psychological advice	Jeanette Prolunt	29.10.2008
E	Social services	Shiana Lee	31.10.2008
F	Other advice – KIDS	Robert Harolds	04.11.2008

## Example 2 – Daniel

### Woodtown County Council

### Statement of special educational needs

#### Part 1: Introduction

1. In accordance with section 324 of the Education Act 1996 ('the Act') and Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001 ('the Regulations'), the following first, final statement is made on 8 January 2009 by Woodtown Council ('the authority') in respect of Daniel whose particulars are mentioned below.

Child		Child's parent or person responsible	
Surname: Leigh	Other names: Daniel	Name: Peter Leigh	Name: Carol Leigh
Home address: 13 Hail Street Woodtown WT12 3DR	Sex: Male	Home address: 13 Hail Street Woodtown WT12 3DR	Home address: 13 Hail Street Woodtown WT12 3DR
Date of birth: 26 July 1999	Religion: Not known	Telephone number: 0123-456789	Telephone number: 0123-456789
Home language: English		Relationship to child: Father	Relationship to child: Mother

2. When assessing Daniel's educational needs under Section 323 of the Act the authority took into consideration, in accordance with regulation 11 of the Regulations, the evidence and advice set out in the Appendices A to F to this statement.

	Source of advice	Advice giver	Date of advice
A	Parental advice	Carol and Peter Leigh	19/09/2008
B	Educational advice	Martin O'Leone	20/10/2008
B	Educational advice	Ruth Patchard	20/10/2008
C	Medical advice	Dr Gadeer Khan	03/11/2008
	Occupational therapy	Wirana Fulti	25/10/2008
	Physiotherapy	n/a	n/a
	Speech and language therapy	Stephanie Williams	05/11/2008

D	Psychological advice	Phil Green-Smith	21/10/2008
E	Social care	Javinda Ali	01/11/2008
F	Advice from others	Dr C. Hilton	15/10/2008

# Part 2 – Special educational needs

## Requirement

- Part 2 *Special Educational Needs* (learning difficulties): Details of each and every one of the child's SEN as identified by the LA during statutory assessment and of the advice received, attached as appendices to the statement.

## Key points from the SEN Toolkit

- Part 2 of the statement should describe in detail all the child's SEN as identified during the assessment. This part should also include a description of the child's current functioning – what the child can and cannot do – which is also drawn from the advice received as part of the assessment.
- It is useful to imagine a stranger, perhaps a new teacher, needing to read the statement in order to know how they are going to teach the child. Thus Part 2 should set out clearly the nature and severity of the child's difficulties and the implications of these difficulties for the child's learning needs in the context of a classroom.
- It is good practice to start Part 2 with a general and positive paragraph setting out the child's strengths and interests, as well as areas for development.
- Where parental advice has been received, it is good practice to make a reference in Part 2 to at least one piece of information from the advice.

## Examples

Two examples of fully completed Part 2 sections of statements of SEN follow.

- **Example 3:** Fei Yen is a four-year-old girl whose home language is Mandarin Chinese. She attends a nursery school where she has demonstrated a range of difficulties in engaging with learning and play.
- **Example 4:** Daniel is a nine-year-old boy. He has had increasing difficulties in making progress at school. He lives with his parents and younger sister.



## Example 3 – Fei Yen

### Part 2: Special educational needs

#### Background

- Fei Yen is a four-year-old girl who lives at home with her parents and younger brother. The home language is Mandarin Chinese and an interpreter is required to translate information for parents.
- Fei Yen currently attends a nursery school where she has a range of difficulties with the learning and play aspects of the school day. The assessment advice makes it clear that Fei Yen's learning difficulties do not result solely, or even largely, from English not being the language spoken at home.

#### Current levels of functioning

##### (i) Educational

- Fei Yen can point to body parts and understands these in Mandarin but cannot do this in English.
- She can sit and look at picture books for about five minutes.
- Fei Yen can use some social words spontaneously such as 'bye-bye' and makes sounds and gestures. She enjoys songs and nursery rhymes.

##### (ii) Communication

- Fei Yen can say a few words in Mandarin Chinese but generally does not use language at present to communicate except to go to the toilet. She uses gestures, touching and vocalising to adults when she wants their attention.
- Fei Yen's parents indicate that Fei Yen relies on them to use gestures so that she can understand what they want her to do. Her mother reports that even in Mandarin, Fei Yen seems to understand very little.
- The speech and language therapist assessment shows that Fei Yen is very delayed in developing her spoken skills and also in being able to understand what others say to her.

##### (iii) Personal, social and emotional

- Fei Yen can indicate when she needs to go to the toilet. She uses a spoon to feed herself but cannot yet dress herself without help.
- Fei Yen has not yet begun to make friends or engage constructively with other children. Her nursery school reports that she rarely interacts with other children and does not make eye contact with them.
- Fei Yen finds group activities difficult and refuses to come to the carpet at nursery, preferring to continue with her chosen activity.
- When Fei Yen gets upset she sometimes engages in actions such as pulling her hair, biting her hand and grinding her teeth.
- Fei Yen's parents report that she has no sense of danger.

(iv) Physical, sensory and medical

- Fei Yen's hearing and vision are reported to be good.
- Fei Yen has full mobility and can run but she is not yet able to pedal a bicycle or kick a ball.
- Fei Yen cannot yet hold a pencil well which suggests that her fine motor skills are delayed.

### The views of Fei Yen's parents

Fei Yen's mother reports that Fei Yen enjoys going to her nursery school. They find that she can sit and concentrate when watching cartoons on TV. They are very keen for her to go to the same school as her older brother, a mainstream school close to the family home.

### Fei Yen's views

Fei Yen has difficulties with speaking which means that it is very hard for her to express her views to adults and other children. Observation suggests that she likes the company of adults and enjoys active play, such as climbing on a climbing frame and running, and also play with water and painting.

### Summary

In summary Fei Yen has the following special educational needs:

1. Significant difficulties in language, both in understanding what others say and in using speech herself.
2. Delays in developing physical movements of all types.
3. Lack of skills in playing and communicating with other children (social interaction skills).
4. Poor self-help skills, such as feeding and dressing.
5. Significant difficulties in developing basic reading and number skills.

## Example 4 – Daniel

### Part 2: Special educational needs

#### Background

Daniel is a nine-year-old boy who has attended the same primary school since he was four years old. He has had increasing difficulties in making progress at school. He lives with his mum, dad and younger sister.

Medical advice for this assessment shows that Daniel has difficulties in communicating and socialising with others – known as an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). He is also easily distracted, does not concentrate well, and is often very active – a condition known as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

#### Current levels of functioning

##### (i) Educational

Areas of strength for Daniel are that he:

- responds well to working with experienced and skilled staff
- makes good eye contact with familiar adults
- responds well to rewards and strategies, such as time to finish tasks and visual cues
- can count up to 20 aloud, match objects to numbers and recognise the numbers on a clock
- likes practical and craft activities, and outdoor activities such as tennis and swimming.

Significant difficulties that are impacting on his educational development are that Daniel:

- is now reading at P level 7, having made only one level of progress in the past 12 months
- has a short attention span, is easily distracted, and has difficulty doing activities for more than 10 minutes at a time
- has difficulty coping with changes in his routine and changes in activity
- repeats words over and over again when hyperactive
- often uses 'growling' noises when 'in a world of his own'.

##### (ii) Communication

- Daniel uses mainly learned phrases and short sentences to communicate his needs and wishes.
- Daniel does not yet take part in two-way conversations or exchanges of information with others.
- He can understand and follow instructions containing three key words in one-to-one situations but needs more guidance and attention in a group or class to understand what is required.

##### (iii) Personal, social and emotional

- Daniel responds well to a firm and consistent approach.
- He has difficulty relating to other children at school.

- Daniel can dress himself and eat independently, but can be clumsy due to poorly developed skills in using his arms and hands.
- Daniel has aggressive behaviours and is not able to control his frustration.

(iv) Physical and sensory

- Daniel has some difficulty with his fine motor skills as far as the coordinated use of arms and hands is concerned.
- Daniel has some difficulties with eating, sometimes spitting out food.
- Daniel has medication for ADHD, but this does not appear yet to have extended his concentration. He can be unpredictable in his behaviour – one moment hyperactive and aggressive, the next ‘in a world of his own’.

### Parental views

Daniel’s parents worry about his development, and would like him to be able to do more things for himself at home, such as holding conversations with them and play on his own for longer periods of time. They report that he enjoys the company of his brother and sister but does not play with other children. They are supportive of his school, and always help where they can. They are worried about how staff will manage him at secondary school, and hope that he will be able to build up some friendships with other pupils when he transfers.

### Daniel’s views

Daniel finds it difficult to communicate his needs and wishes, and hence his views. However, observation and other reports indicate that he likes being with the same people from day to day and he appears to enjoy school.

### Summary

Daniel’s current functioning and the authority’s assessment of his learning difficulties are set out above. To summarise, his areas of special educational needs are:

1. Significant difficulties with his concentration, motivation and application, which affect his ability to learn in all subjects.
2. Difficulties in coping with the structure of the school day.
3. Delay in the development of his spoken skills.
4. Delays in the development of social skills.
5. Some difficulties with the development of fine motor skills, for example the skilled use of hands, fingers, arms.
6. Unpredictable behaviour and difficulty in managing his anger and frustration.

# Part 3 – Special educational provision

## Requirement

- Part 3 *Special educational provision*: The special educational provision that the LA considers necessary to meet the child's SEN:
  - the *objectives* that the special educational provision should aim to meet
  - the *special educational provision* which the LA considers appropriate to meet the needs set out in Part 2, and to meet the objectives
  - the arrangements to be made for monitoring progress in meeting those objectives, particularly for setting short-term targets for the child's progress and for reviewing his or her progress on a regular basis.

## Key points from the SEN Toolkit

- Part 3 of the statement must specify all the provision to be made by the LA and the school to meet the child's SEN.
- Part 3 is split into three sections: a) Objectives b) Provision c) Monitoring.

## Objectives

This sub-section should set out the main educational and developmental long-term objectives to be achieved by the special educational provision. They should be described in a way that enables schools, the LA and parents to review the child's progress over time.

Objectives should directly relate to the SEN described in Part 2.

## Provision

This section must specify all the special educational provision that the LA considers appropriate for all the SEN identified in Part 2.

The Regulations describe four areas of provision that must be addressed, but they are not exclusive. The LA must specify:

- a) any appropriate facilities and equipment, staffing arrangements and curriculum
- b) any appropriate modifications to the application of the National Curriculum
- c) any appropriate exclusions from the application of the National Curriculum, in detail, and the provision which it is proposed to substitute for any such exclusions in order to maintain a balanced and broadly based curriculum
- d) where residential accommodation is appropriate, that fact.

A statement should specify the special educational provision necessary to meet the SEN of the child. It should detail appropriate provision to meet each identified need and quantify provision as necessary. Provision should be described in such a way as to leave no room for doubt about what is to be provided, who will provide it and how it will be delivered.

## Monitoring

It will always be necessary for LAs to monitor, with the school or other setting, the child's progress towards identified outcomes, however provision is described. This should be written into the statement.

## Objectives and provision

### Example 5

#### **Objective (where John is at P8 in reading at the end of Key Stage 1)**

John will develop his reading skills so that he is reading at level 2b in English by the end of Year 6. This means he will be able to read some key words on sight and use blending to decode unfamiliar words. He will be able to recall straightforward information from the text with some simple statements about what he has liked and disliked.

#### **Special educational provision**

John will be provided with a personalised reading and spelling programme that is delivered at least three times a week, for at least 20 minutes per session. This programme will be delivered by a teacher or a specialist teaching assistant (TA) who has good knowledge of how literacy is acquired. John's progress will be monitored closely by his class teacher who will ensure that there are monthly assessments of his progress in phonological, memory and vocabulary skills. John will continue to receive Quality First teaching and his class teacher should make adjustments to this to take account of and support John's literacy skills. The weekly and half-termly reading targets that the class teacher sets should incorporate the targets in his personalised reading programme.

At least once a month John's teacher will meet his parents so they know the areas where he is having difficulty and share strategies that they can use at home to help him.

At the end of each term John's teacher will meet his parents to outline how they can continue to support John's programme to ensure that his progress does not regress over the holiday period.

## Example 6

Objectives	Special educational provision
Follow a daily structured timetable	Robert's teacher will create a daily pictorial timetable, initially using familiar photographs and pictures. At the start of each morning and afternoon session, this will be presented to him for about 15 minutes each session by the teacher and/or TA. Over time as Robert progresses, the timetable will become less individualised. The teacher will also show Robert's parents how to use the system at home, and meet them every four weeks to review progress.
Move from one activity to another at the appropriate time.	Towards the end of each teaching session during the school day, a TA will spend a few minutes preparing Robert to move to the next activity. His personalised pictorial timetable, timers, rewards and individual communication system, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), should be used to support this process.  The teacher will help Robert's parents to follow a similar structure at home, and will communicate through a home-school record at least once a week about the key strategies and successes.
Communicate his wants, needs and choices from two to three options using a PECS.	Robert's teacher will provide him with a structured PECS system, and a detailed programme to help him learn to use it.  The programme will be overseen by the teacher, but delivered by TAs – likely to require a total of about five hours of support per week. This will need to be delivered flexibly. All classroom-based staff will be trained to support the PECS system that Robert uses.  A speech and language therapist will provide further support to the school and parents in development of this programme, and will also carry out ongoing monitoring and support, totalling at least two hours per month.

## Example 7

Objectives	Special educational provision
<p>To develop the use and understanding of spoken language, particularly her ability with word finding and word retrieval. By the end of Year 6, Malie will be holding conversations with other children and adults, describing in simple detail things about her everyday life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A language programme delivered for a minimum of 15 minutes each day individually or with one other child.</li> <li>● The programme will be devised by a speech and language therapist.</li> <li>● At least one of the weekly sessions will be taught by Malie's teacher. The remaining sessions will be delivered by a TA who has received training from the therapist.</li> <li>● The speech and language therapist will monitor Malie's progress and review the programme once each term, which may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– joint target setting with school staff</li> <li>– evaluation of the programme through discussion with school staff and Malie's parents</li> <li>– demonstration of activities/strategies</li> <li>– observation in class.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Example 8

Objective	Special educational provision
<p>To develop her gross and fine motor skills so that Susie can use her arms, legs, hands and feet well in activities such as running, walking and picking things up. By the age of nine years, Susie will be expected to be walking and running on her own, without adult supervision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In addition to full access to the everyday physical experiences available in school, Susie will be provided with specialist programmes that focus on the movement of muscles.</li> <li>● The programmes will be designed by an occupational therapist (OT) and implemented by teachers throughout the school day. As part of the programme, a support assistant will work on specific activities with Susie for at least 15 minutes each day.</li> <li>● The OT will work directly with Susie twice every half-term for at least 50 minutes each time.</li> <li>● The OT will meet with staff once every half-term to review and update programmes, and provide training and advice.</li> </ul>



## Example 9

Objectives	Special educational provision
<p>To develop Ali's literacy skills, in particular his sight vocabulary, spelling and handwriting, so that he can read and understand everyday materials on his own. By the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11 years) Ali will have achieved at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● level 2A in reading</li> <li>● level 2B in writing</li> <li>● level 2B in spelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In addition to the literacy hour, which will be planned to take account of Ali's needs, he will receive a specific literacy programme with both individual and small group teaching. His school will ensure that, as part of the programme, Ali is provided with literacy materials with speech options, such as talking books, spelling and phonic games and activities, talking word processors and on-screen word banks.</li> <li>● To teach and reinforce his literacy programme, each week Ali will be taught individually for at least one 20-minute session by a teacher in his school, with four other 20-minute sessions being provided as part of a small group led by a trained TA.</li> <li>● The school will provide Ali with a hand-held spellchecker to use throughout all lessons.</li> <li>● Strategies for teaching the programme are highlighted in the report by the EP (Appendix D).</li> </ul>

## Example 10

Objective	Special educational provision
<p>Chris needs to improve his responses to challenging situations in the school playground, so that within two years, he is no longer involved in significant behavioural incidents with other pupils in the playground.</p>	<p>A behaviour programme using strategies described in the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme, with targets to improve the way Chris gets on with other pupils, particularly in the playground, will be planned by the class teacher with half-termly advice from a specialist behaviour teacher.</p> <p>The programme will be shared with all adults in the school who will respond to Chris's behaviour in a consistent way.</p> <p>The class teacher will review Chris's behaviour once a week with him, celebrating success and planning future strategies.</p> <p>Every six weeks, the class teacher will meet Chris and his mother to review his progress.</p>

## Example 11

Objective	Special educational provision
<p>Maya needs to increase the use of her residual vision and develop her listening skills so that by the age of six years she is able to play safely with the full range of play equipment in the nursery.</p>	<p>The school will make the following provision for Maya:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All school staff will be aware of Maya’s medical and health needs and will take anticipatory actions to ensure her health and safety.</li> <li>● Daily planned play support that ensures her health and safety and inclusion within learning activities.</li> <li>● Good acoustic conditions in which to work.</li> <li>● Guidance throughout the day to develop language to ensure she fully understands concepts including opportunities to handle materials/experience events to reinforce vocabulary.</li> <li>● The use of visual aids, prepared in advance for Maya to hold and use.</li> <li>● Strategies to develop listening skills and auditory memory (as listed in the speech and language therapist’s report – Appendix C).</li> <li>● Close adult supervision in all areas of learning in a one-to-one and small group situation.</li> </ul> <p>The school will also ensure that there is time each week for teachers to liaise with support staff around the content and focus of sessions, to enable them to modify materials appropriately.</p> <p>There will also be 30-minute teaching sessions once a fortnight from the LA’s Mobility Officer.</p>

## Example 12

Objective	Special educational provision
<p>Fred needs to improve his language skills so that within two years he can ask simple questions such as where, why and what relating to everyday tasks and understand the responses.</p>	<p>Fred's teacher needs to plan an individual teaching and learning programme. Advice will be provided by both the school's SENCo and by the speech and language therapist.</p> <p>The programme will include Fred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● being encouraged by adults at school to offer fuller descriptions or explanations of events</li> <li>● developing his ability to work and communicate with individual children and in small groups</li> <li>● working with more socially competent peers in the classroom</li> <li>● listening to, understanding and acting upon simple instructions</li> <li>● being encouraged to mix with other children in and out of school.</li> </ul> <p>The programme will be delivered for at least 20 minutes per day, at least twice a week being taught by his teacher, and the remainder by a trained support assistant.</p> <p>A speech and language therapist will assess and monitor his language and communication skills and provide advice to school staff – at least two hours each half-term.</p>

## Monitoring arrangements

### Example 13

In addition to the school's usual arrangements for reviewing progress and target setting for all, the following arrangements are necessary:

- The school, in consultation with Marie's parents, will agree short-term educational targets for Marie and incorporate them into an individualised learning plan within the first two months after this statement is finalised.
- This plan will be monitored, evaluated and updated at least twice a year.
- Marie should be actively involved in setting her targets and monitoring them.
- Marie's teacher will meet her parents at least once every six weeks to share progress.
- At the annual review in Year 5, Marie's transfer to secondary school will be discussed and planned and, as Marie's objectives describe targets up to the end of Key Stage 2, a full review will be required during Year 6, with either a new statement being issued for Year 7 or a decision being made that a statement is no longer required.

## Example 14

- The school will set short-term targets as part of Daniel's individual learning plan. These targets and strategies will be linked to the overall objectives and provision as set out in this statement.
- Daniel and his parents/carers must be involved in setting targets and in monitoring his performance.
- A plan that includes Daniel's targets and his detailed support arrangements should be submitted to the authority within two months.
- Daniel's views should always be sought and recorded as part of all assessment and review processes.
- Every year, this statement will be monitored by the authority through the annual review process. As Daniel is due for secondary transfer in September 2012, there will be a full review of his statement by no later than the winter term 2011 to plan for this transfer.

# Part 4 – Placement

## Requirement

- Part 4 *Placement*: The type and name of school where the special educational provision set out in Part 3 is to be made or the LA's arrangements for provision to be made other than in school.
- **Note:** When issuing a draft statement, Part 4 **must** be left blank.

## Examples

- Two examples of Part 4 completed as part of the **final statement** are provided below.

### Example 15

Part 4: Placement	
Type of school	Name of school
A mainstream primary school	Middletown Primary School

### Example 16

Part 4: Placement
<b>Type of school:</b> A maintained day special school for children with physical and neurological impairment
<b>Name of school:</b> Greentrees School

# Parts 5 and 6 – Non-educational needs and non-educational provision

## Requirement

- Part 5 *Non-educational needs*: All relevant non-educational needs of the child as agreed between the health services, social services or other agencies and the LA.
- Part 6 *Non-educational provision*: Details of relevant non-educational provision required to meet the non-educational needs of the child as agreed between the health services and/or social services and the LA, including the agreed arrangements for its provision.

## Examples

- Three examples of Parts 5 and 6 completed are provided on the following pages.

### Example 17

Part 5: Non-educational needs	Part 6: Non-educational provision
General developmental delay. The medical advice indicates some difficulties with Linda's behaviour and emotional development but no intervention is judged to be required at the moment.	Linda's development will be reviewed by a developmental paediatrician once a year. Her parents have been advised that Linda can be referred to a clinical psychologist at any time.

### Example 18

Part 5: Non-educational needs	Part 6: Non-educational provision
Conrad does have astigmatism which is corrected by glasses.	Annual monitoring by an optician.

## Example 19

Part 5: Non-educational needs	Part 6: Non-educational provision
Daniel needs to take medication for ADHD daily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The Child and Family Consultation Service (CFCS) will continue to have oversight of his medication.</li><li>● School and parents will monitor the effect of this on Daniel's behaviour.</li><li>● CFCS will hold a review every four months involving the family and the school.</li></ul>

Audience: Local authority special educational needs officers

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