

Guidance to schools: using Form SAR1 to request statutory assessment

Introduction

When schools are of the opinion, based on a draft CRISP assessment, that a pupil may require statutory assessment after the next School Action Plus (SA+) Review period, they should consult the document *Criteria for Statutory Assessment: Schools (Version 3)* and conduct a High Focus SA+ review.

Further information on this process can be gained from LEA support services and from the SEN Virtual Handbook.

At the end of the High Focus SA+ review it may be decided that a request for statutory assessment should be made. This is a decision that is made by or on behalf of the Head Teacher of the school in consultation with parents, the pupil (where appropriate) and support services. Any difference of opinion about this decision amongst those the school consults should be recorded. Head Teachers deciding to request assessment are asked to specify as far as possible a Proposed Provision Plan for the next 12 months. Forms for this purpose are available from the virtual Handbook.

If a comprehensive Proposed Provision Plan is provided with all the information described in this guidance, the LEA will normally accept this information as constituting both a request for statutory assessment and formal Educational Advice. Head Teachers will be asked to provide additional information only in exceptional cases where the LEA requires specific outstanding information in order to complete the assessment.

The referral for Statutory Assessment is made on the form SAR1 (available from SENAS or from the Virtual Handbook).

These notes refer to the completion of this form and the required attachments. There is a general note at the end referring to the local context of these procedures.

Completing Form SAR1: additional notes

Section A: Pupil details

UPN : It is essential that referrals include the pupil's Unique Pupil Number (UPN) and that it should be recorded accurately. This number should be available from the school's pupil database. In the case of pupils currently without a UPN the school should assign one.

NC Year: Schools should enter the NC year of the pupil's current class.

Parents / Carers: Where there are a number of parents/carers living at different addresses please be clear about who lives at which address. If this is very complex, please indicate on the main form and attach full details on a separate sheet.

Ethnic Group: As recorded on school records

Care / Court Order: Complete this where it is known by the school. If not known, leave blank.

Section D: Checklist of Support Information attached (numbering refers to the SAR1 form numbering)

1. Behaviour will be an issue where the CRISP record shows band 4 and above on Threads 9, 10 or 11. 'Equivalence to Framework for Intervention' may be shown through utilisation of a graduated approach to behaviour change involving clear plans and reviews as part of School Action Plus. Evidence of this should be attached.
2. Previous CRISP assessment records should be attached if assessments have been made in the last 12 months.
3. Schools should attach the IEP and the Review record from the recent High Focus School Action Plus. Reports submitted as part of the HF review should be attached. If more than one consecutive HF IEP and review has been conducted attach details of all.
4. Involvement of parents in CRISP assessments is good practice. This should always be recorded alongside the names of all others involved.
5. It is recognised that in exceptional cases, it may not be possible to include the details of specialist elements of provision. However, schools (in conjunction with available support services) should draft what provision they believe will be necessary to the extent they are able.

If parts of the provision plan remain to be completed this should be made explicit and information on why it has not been possible to complete the plan should include what attempts have been made to secure the necessary information and from where such information may be gained.

6. A Teacher Assessment of the up to date attainments of the child on the National Curriculum is required in all cases. In addition, the last SATs results are required (if any). Teacher Assessments should use P levels to expand the 'W' (working towards level 1) assessment. Other relevant assessment information gained in the last 6 months may be appended if appropriate.

8. This section covers reports other than those submitted as part of the High Focus Review.

10. The LEA expects parents to be active participants in the process of meeting their children's needs. But where it has not even been possible to ascertain the parents' views despite the school's best endeavours a referral may be made in exceptional circumstances. However, this is a drastic step and it should be avoided wherever possible.

Section E: Declaration by School

This section is a formal declaration by the Head Teacher which allows for checking that the delegated tasks have been completed and that all views are represented. 'Treated as exceptional' means that the SEN Assessment Service (SENAS) will probably seek further information and/or views and that the process may therefore take longer. In such cases SENAS may also submit the full information to an independent monitoring body set up for the purpose of providing guidance to the LEA on its decisions.

2. The contributors to the 'High Focus' SA+ review must agree to the record of the review. But that record may include the details of differences of view held by contributors about any of the information or conclusions. It is important therefore that the Review is recorded carefully and that where there are differences of opinion, the school has agreed with its partners in the review process how those differences should be recorded.

This might be done through:

- i. Including the details of the alternative views in the record of the Review meeting
- ii. Appending a report from the person offering differing views

3. The same considerations apply to the CRISP (Criteria for Special Provision) Assessment. The LEA understands that there may be differences of view over any assessment but does not wish such differences to hold up the process and the proper provision for the pupil. Full information at this stage will allow the LEA to come to its decisions more quickly.

4. In almost all cases ticking this box will show that the school has fully consulted and informed parents and carers. Where this is not the case the school will have provided details (see note attached to item 11 of the previous section). Once again, full provision of information will assist the LEA in the conduct of its statutory duties to parents and carers and therefore help to expedite the procedures.

6. By their nature, what constitutes extreme and urgent circumstances cannot be fully specified. However, guidance is given in the document: *Criteria for Statutory Assessment: Schools (Version 3)* published by Birmingham City Council in September 2002 and available from SENAS and through the Virtual SEN Handbook. Head Teachers who believe that such circumstances may apply should always consult this guidance before making such an application. Advance discussion with SENAS will also be welcomed.

General Note

Through these new procedures the LEA is seeking to improve the speed and quality of the process of providing appropriate additional resources to pupils with special educational needs through a concentration on multi-agency working, assessment and provision in the time leading to request for assessment. This will mean that there is fuller and more coordinated information received by the LEA at the point where it has to decide whether there is *prima facie* case for formally assessing the needs of any pupil. The additional request for a Proposed Provision Plan at this point further enhances the quality of the information.

With schools developing the extent of their consultation with support services and partnership with parents in this process it is expected that it will be possible *at some point in the future* for the LEA to fund pupils' additional needs without the need for a Statement. Legally, this will be because the LEA no longer believes that *it* needs to determine the provision for the pupil – it can be confident in what the school is proposing in its provision plan.

Through the CRISP process, however, schools will continue to receive additional funding as though a Statement existed. This will give the benefit of reduced timescales between the determination of need for provision by the school and funding for that provision being made available. In time, as schools and support services develop the quality of this work, it should also free more time and resources which can be transferred to extra provision for pupils.

Such an outcome provides benefits for schools, parents and pupils and will enable the LEA to provide a more effective service to its users. These new procedures represent a shift towards a model of assessment and intervention that privileges partnership, flexibility and solution-focused collaborations.