



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

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

Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority

to be provided by

31 October 2022

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Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by **31 October 2022 and earlier if possible**

Contents

Introduction

Guidance on completing the template

Section 1 - Normal point of admission.....	5
A. Co-ordination	5
B. Looked after and previously looked after children.....	5
C. Special educational needs and disabilities	6
Section 2 - In-year admissions	7
A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions	8
B. Looked after children and previously looked after children	8
C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities	9
D. Fair access protocol.....	9
E. Directions	9
F. General comments on in-year admissions.....	10
Section 3 - Other Matters	10
Section 4 – Feedback	12

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 for 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. Local authorities do not have to include this introduction and guidance in their locally published report.
2. In 2020 and 2021, we asked far fewer questions than in previous years, asking only for the minimum information required by the Code. This was in response to the pressures on local authorities and others in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, we have again sought to keep the information requested to the minimum. We have, at the request of the Department for Education, asked a small number of additional questions relating to the impact of the new Code which came into force on 1 September 2021.
3. The new Code also changes the period to be covered by reports to the adjudicator and the deadline for submitting reports to the adjudicator. **This year's report must cover the 2021/2022 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 31 October 2022.**

Guidance on completing the template

4. In a departure from previous practice, we have included all the guidance on completing specific parts of the template in this section. We hope that this will be helpful. This is in response to feedback that including guidance and definitions in the body of the template could make the report harder for readers to follow and less accessible. 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.
5. 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.
6. Guidance on specific questions and/or meaning of specific terms in this report:
 - a. "in-year admissions": This means admission 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

¹ [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

² [The Education Middle School \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

primary school) **and** admission during the course of any school year after the end of the statutory waiting list period (31 December) in normal years of admission.

b. Not applicable means at questions:

Section 1: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

Section 1: B.v. that there were no schools for which the local authority was the admission authority at 1 September 2021.

Section 1: B.vi. that there were no schools in the local authority's area for which the local authority was not the admission authority at 1 September 2021.

Section 2: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

Section 2: C.i. that there were no children falling within the definition.

Section 2: D.iv. that there were no hard to place children referred to the protocol.

7. 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.
8. 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 point of admission

A. Co-ordination

i. How well did co-ordination of the main admissions round work?	Not well	A large number of small problems or a major problem	Well with few small problems	Very well
Reception				Yes
Year 7			Yes	
Other relevant years of entry				

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

A neighbouring council sent late changes to their secondary transfer offers after their published co-ordination dates which significantly impacted the final allocations. A decision was made not to import their final file as it would have resulted in us having to undo our allocations which in turn would have impacted on other authorities and therefore would have been a strong possibility of not meeting the national offer date.

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

- v. Please confirm that your local authority has included children adopted from state care outside England in its definition of previously looked after children in admission arrangements for schools for which it is the admission authority

Yes No Not applicable

- vi. How confident are you that all other admission authorities in your area have included children adopted from state care outside England in their definitions of previously looked after children in admission arrangements for schools for which they are the admission authority?

Confident all have Confident some have Not aware of whether all or some have Not applicable

vii 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**:

Looked after and previously looked after children are given the highest priority criteria when reviewing the applications submitted for the normal admission rounds. Should an application for a looked after or previously looked after child be submitted after the closing date for applications, schools and academies are expected to allocate a place over PA if necessary to accommodate.

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:

The online application system is open for parents/carers of children with an Education, Health and Care plan to apply for a place in either mainstream or special provision. By sharing the system both SEN and Admission Teams can work closely together to ensure places are allocated at the named schools in accordance with the finalised plans. This has worked extremely well with the secondary transfers as the SEN timeframes coincide with the statutory dates published for admissions.

While numbers of Education, Health and Care Plans in nursery 2 has increased due to early identification of need significant numbers of requests for assessment continue to be received through that year. More often than not the plans are not finalised until late in the process if not exceeding the national offer day. This results in having to admit above PAN as excepted pupils for many schools. If an earlier timeframe is introduced, this would assist in minimising the requirement to exceed PANs, especially in schools with a PAN of 30 which add pressure to the schools resources.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. Effect of Code changes on in-year admissions

Please provide any comments you wish to make on the effect of the changes to the Code's provisions for in-year admissions. It would be particularly helpful to have comments on whether you think the changes have made it easier or not for parents to secure places for children in-year?

We have found it extremely helpful to have the response dates introduced in the Code as we are now able to hold the schools/academies accountable for responding within the published timeframe to parents/carers applying for a school place.

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

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

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

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- 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:

C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

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

Not at all 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:

As the population of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care plan continues to grow this is putting immense pressure on the availability of specialist provision within the borough. The SEN Team received more than 160 requests for change of setting from mainstream schools to specialist provision in the last academic year. The impact of this is that availability of space is now at a premium and it is taking much longer than desired to place students in appropriate provision.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an education, health and care plan are considered equally, schools where necessary, utilise the fair access protocol to ensure the children are offered a suitable school place.

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

D. 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 2021 and 31 July 2022?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	1	18
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	1	196
Total	2	214

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

Not at all well Not well Well Very well Not applicable

v. Please provide any comments you wish on the protocol not covered above. It would be particularly helpful to have any comments on the impact of the Code changes on the operation of the FAP in your area and the ability to secure places for vulnerable children:

In CW&C we have secondary In-year Fair Access Panels one for each side of the borough which take place monthly. Primary panels are called as required. The panels are well attended by Head teachers or their representatives. We have a robust evidence based data system which underpins every panel decision. The In-year Fair Access Policy is reviewed annually by all stakeholders and is adapted to meet local need as and when required.

The new code has really tightened up those children who are referred as school have to compare their 'overburdened' position against other schools before referring. Schools are provided with updated data every month in order to accurately assess their own position when compared to other schools.

E. Directions

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2021 and 31 July 2022 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

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

Section 3 - Other matters

Are there any other matters that the local authority would like to raise that have not been covered by the questions above?

PANs only relevant to the normal point of entry and not for In Year causes difficulties when schools decide to adjust in higher year groups. We have some schools that cap their admission number below their PAN for In Year admissions. This causes confusion as to whether they have places available and for future sufficiency planning.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2023.

Later date works better to gather full information for the whole year.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2022