

What is a Statement of Special Educational Needs?

At the end of the statutory assessment, if the Local Educational Authority (LEA) believes your child needs more help than the pre-school setting or school can reasonably be expected to give, they will decide to write a statement of special educational needs.

A statement of special educational needs is a legal document which sets out your child's needs and describes how those needs will be met. It is written taking into account all the reports produced during the statutory assessment.

Before the statement is finalised, the local education authority must send you a proposed (draft), along with a copy of all the reports sent in during the statutory assessment.

What does the proposed statement look like?

The proposed statement is divided into six parts:

Part 1: Introduction (your child's name, date of birth, your name, address and other details).

Part 2: Special educational needs (a description of your child's special educational needs).

Part 3: Special educational provision (the special educational help that is needed for your child and which must be provided).

Part 4: Placement (the setting or school which is thought to be appropriate for your child – this will be blank at this stage).

Part 5: Non-educational needs (any non-educational difficulties that your child has).

Part 6: Non-educational provision (the non-educational help that should be provided).

What happened next?

If you are happy with the proposed statement and the reports, you have 15 days in which to tell the LEA which school you would like your child to attend.

If you are not happy, the next step is to tell the LEA about your concerns and try to sort out any problems. The Parent Partnership Service is there to help you. There is a leaflet in this pack about this service.

When is the proposed statement finalised?

Within 8 weeks of issuing the proposed statement, the Local Education Authority must produce the final statement, in which the school must be named.

What happens if I'm still not happy with the statement?

If you still have concerns, there are aspects of the statement against which you can appeal to the Independent Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

When will my child start to get the help described in the statement?

The statement takes legal effect as soon as the Local Education Authority has signed it. Although it can take a little time to finalised support arrangements, for example, if a new member of staff needs to be recruited.

How long does the statement last?

This depends on the progress your child makes. Sometimes a child needs a statement throughout his or her schooling. Sometimes such good progress is made that a statement is no longer necessary.

The statement must be reviewed at least once a year. The setting or school will translate the statement into a detailed action plan by producing an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which should be reviewed at least twice a year and ideally each term. You must be invited to the Annual Review and should be involved in reviewing each IEP.