



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

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

**North East Lincolnshire Local Authority
to be provided by
31 October 2026**

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Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by
31 October 2026 and earlier if possible

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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 the annual report to the Secretary of State for Education. The School Admissions Code (the Code) sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities in paragraph 6. Paragraph 3.30 specifies what must be included as a minimum in the report to the adjudicator and makes provision for the local authority to include any other matters. Paragraphs 6 and 3.30 of the Code require that each local authority publish its report locally.
2. **This year's report must cover the 2025/2026 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2026.**
3. Please note that, in response to feedback on the previous template and in the light of consultation with a group of local authorities, changes have been made to various sections of this year's template.

Guidance on completing the template

4. We have included all the guidance on completing specific parts of the template in this section. There is no requirement for local authorities to include the introduction and the guidance in their published reports, but they are free to do so if they wish.
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. The Code sets out some minimum requirements on the contents of each local authority report stating that each must cover as a minimum "information about how admission arrangements in the area of the local authority serve the interests of looked after children and previously looked after children, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, including any details of where problems have arisen."
7. The Department for Education's aim through the annual reports from local authorities is to understand how well the admissions system is working nationally, rather than to hold individual local authorities to account. By understanding the effectiveness of the system, including outcomes, the Department hopes to identify areas where the admissions system is working well and areas where it could be improved. With that in mind, when the template asks, "how well does the admission system serve the needs of

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

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

children,” the Department appreciates that it is asking local authorities to make a subjective judgement, in the understanding that everyone’s experience with the admission system will be different. The Department encourages local authorities in responding to the open questions and spaces for open comments to set out challenges that are proving difficult to overcome.

8. Guidance on specific questions and/or meaning of specific terms in this report:
 - a. “in-year admissions”: This means admissions (that is children admitted to a school and not applications for places):
 - i. to a year group which is not a normal point of entry for the school concerned (for example to Year 2 for a five to eleven primary school); and
 - ii. after the end of the statutory waiting list period (31 December) to a year group which is a normal year of admission for the schools concerned (such as Year R and Year 7).
 - b. Not applicable means that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Where questions request a comparison with the previous year, any new local authorities formed as a result of reorganisation should note this on the form.

Information requested

Section 1 - Normal points of admission

A. Co-ordination

Which of the following best describes the level of challenge for your **main admissions round in 25/26 compared to 24/25?**

Year Group	Much less challenging	Less challenging	No change	More challenging	Much more challenging
Reception				X	
Year 7				X	
Other relevant years of entry			X		

Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

In both primary and secondary coordinated admission processes, the allocation of first preferences at National Offer Day was at a reduced level than previous year (Reception – 97% compared with 100% previous year; Secondary – 92% compared with 96% previous year).

In primary, there was there was a 2% increase in number of allocations made at National Offer Day compared to previous year; in secondary, there was a 7% increase in number of allocations made at National Offer Day compared to previous year.

Significant demand for specific secondary schools led to 3% of Year 6-to-7 allocation being made for non-preference schools.

B. Looked after and previously looked after children

- i. How well 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 well 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 well 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 well 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. 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**:

The LA School Admission team ensures that all preferences are verified with the corporate PR holder for looked after children or by reference to status for previously looked after children to ensure appropriate priority is given in allocations, in full accordance with the School Admissions Code. This can, on occasion, result in additional steps required where children under care of another LA have applications submitted by non-PR holders (e.g. foster carers) however, these are systematically checked and confirmed with appropriate social care/Virtual School of home LAs as part of our coordinated process.

C. 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 at **normal points of admission**?

☐ Not at all ☐ Not well ☐ Well ☒ Very well ☐ Not applicable

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:

Ongoing challenge for the SEND team relating to the continued increase in number of EHCP assessments, frequently requiring multiple consultations due to objection and resistance from some mainstream settings.

Once named settings are confirmed, allocation of places at normal points of entry is carried out in a timely and effective manner within the LAs coordinated phased process.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. Which of the following best describes the overall level of challenge for your in-year admissions in 25/26 compared to 24/25?

Phase	Much less challenging	Less challenging	No change	More challenging	Much more challenging
Primary			X		
Secondary				X	

If you wish, please explain the factors that have changed the level of challenge for your in-year admissions:

The LA School Admissions team administers in-year allocations for the vast majority of primary schools within the county; as such, a close monitoring of adherence to statutory timescales and appropriate allocation and admission, in line with the School Admissions Code is continually in effect.

All secondary academies in the county administer their own in-year admissions, with continuing need for the LA School Admissions team to monitor and provide guidance and challenge where allocation decisions are not in line with the Code. Similarly, parents often experience delay where academies do not respond to preferences within expected timescales; this has impact upon periods of CME whilst awaiting subsequent admission into school.

The practice of under-PAN refusals ("operational PANs") of own-admission authorities in in-year applications creates uncertainty in the availability of places (particularly in higher/KS4 year groups) and leads to an on-going reliance upon the Fair Access Protocol in order to secure secondary school placement. In some instances, challenge has also been required to ensure that academies do not refuse admission requests in under-determined PAN year of entry (Reception/Year 7) for mid-term submissions.

B. Looked after children and previously looked after children

- i. How well 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 well does the **in-year admission** systems in other local authority areas serve the interests of your looked after children?

☐ Not at all ☐ Not well ☒ Well ☐ Very well ☐ Not applicable

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

☐ Not at all ☐ Not well ☒ Well ☐ Very well ☐ Not applicable

- iv. How well does your **in-year admission** system serve the interests of previously looked after children?

☐ Not at all ☐ Not well ☒ Well ☐ Very well ☐ Not applicable

- v. If you wish, please give examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which support or exemplify your answers about **in-year admissions** for looked after and previously looked after children:

The LA School Admissions Team works collaboratively with our Virtual School for Children In Care and sits within the same service area. This enables close working to ensure that allocation of places and subsequent admission are monitored and processed appropriately.

Some delays in admission have been experienced where children in care of other LAs have been placed in North East Lincolnshire and, despite the support of the School Admissions team, there has been inertia in response from home LA virtual school/social care in progressing submission of applications – leading to extended period as CME.

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:

With continued increase in the number of EHCPs, the LA experiences challenges with mainstream schools accepting consultations for setting. The SEND team regularly experience objection and resistance, frequently having to undertake multiple consultations for the same student without a positive response. This leads to delays in the time required to challenge and in additional meetings with schools/colleges in order to progress child admission.

Admission for children with SEND who do not have an EHCP are processed in the same manner as all other children, in line with the School Admissions Code, for in-year admissions. Published admissions criteria is applied in processing of preferences for schools which have Service Level Agreements with the LA for administration of allocations. The LA School Admissions team ensures that placements are fairly allocated. In some cases, discussion and clarification is required to ensure own-admission authority academies issue appropriate responses to requests in line with the Code, and in order to address delays in confirmation of offers or physical admission into school within a reasonable time following allocation.

D. Fair access protocol

What proportion of the state-funded mainstream schools in your area have said that they agree to the local authority fair access protocol?

Primary

Between 0% and 49% ☐

Between 50% and 74% ☐

Between 75% and 89% ☐

Between 90% and 99% ☐

100% ☒

Secondary

Between 0% and 49% ☐

Between 50% and 74% ☐

Between 75% and 89% ☐

Between 90% and 99% ☐

100% ☒

If you have below 75% for either phase, please explain why:

- i. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	0	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	67
Total	0	67

- ii. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

An overall reduction in the number of cases brought to Fair Access from previous year (67 compared to previous 87) can, in part, be attributed to the impact that guidance and challenge to academy in-year decision-making has allowed more applicants to secure places through the in-year process. In addition, a more structured Fair Access allocation process, employed over the last year, has made the process more effective and impressed upon academies that, wherever possible, places should be obtained through in-year processes in first instance.

- iii. How well do you consider children referred to the Fair Access Protocol are served in in your area?

☐ Not at all well ☐ Not well ☒ Well ☐ Very well ☐ Not applicable

iv. Please provide any comments you wish on the protocol not covered above:

As per observation in previous years, allocation of place offers through Fair Access is not always matched with effective and timely admission into the associated academy. This can be due to drift in the academy's arrangements for admission post-allocation and/or to lack of engagement on the part of child/parent. The LA School Admissions and CME team seek to address both through update and monitoring of admission reports from academies and referral to education welfare for pursuit of attendance however, if there were provision for the mandatory enrolment of pupils to the associated Fair Access-allocated setting, then this would reduce CME periods and open instances of school avoidance/non-engagement to the appropriate attendance policies of schools in first instance.

E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children³

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 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. Other points on in-year admissions

i. For the schools for which the local authority co-ordinates in-year applications, in the year between 1 Aug 2025 and 31 July 2026 did you receive

- ☐ Significantly fewer applications than last year
☐ slightly fewer applications than last year
☐ about the same
☐ slightly more than last year
☒ significantly more than last year

ii. For what proportion of **primary** schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2025/2026 academic year

- Between 0% and 24% ☐
 Between 25% and 49% ☐

³ It is important that only Directions to maintained schools are included here. Numbers of Directions to academies are already held by the Department.

Between 50% and 74% ☐

Between 75% and 100% ☒

- iii. For what proportion of **secondary** schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2025/2026 academic year

Between 0% and 24% ☒

Between 25% and 49% ☐

Between 50% and 74% ☐

Between 75% and 100% ☐

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

Continued experience of instances where responses to applications from own-admission authority (secondary) academies fail to be made within statutory time frames; other reports where parents have experienced diversion (being advised not to apply as schools are “full”) and delay in their initial enquiries and attempts to submit preferences to academy admission offices – this often compounded by lack of clarity and consistency in the application forms and (online) processes employed on school websites.

The extent to which some academies pursue background information (over and above that required to make a preference decision based upon their published admission criteria) and inappropriate use of “challenging behaviour” in response to some applications adds to difficulties in parents securing in-year places in secondary year groups. In addition, the sub-PAN restrictions (“operational PANs”) on year group numbers in KS4 further compounds issues in timely access to school places, increasing CME periods and reliance upon Fair Access process.

- v. If you wish, please provide any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised (you may wish to include here any comments about cases where it has not proved possible to find places for children):

Section 3 - Other matters

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

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2027.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2026