

# Changes to the SEN System in Northern Ireland

## Moving from a 5 Stage to 3 Stage System

The SEN Code-of-practice and the Supplement to the code outlines how help can be provided in school. This staged process is used to help identify and assess your child's needs and provide support.

The Code of Practice for the new 3 Stage System is yet to be released. However, some aspects of the new 3 Stage Special Educational Needs (SEN) Framework have been introduced by the Dept of Education and the Education Authority (EA)

### Summary of the new 3 Stage SEN Framework

#### Stage 1

Your child will be placed on the SEN register. The SENCo/Learning Support Coordinator will monitor your child's needs and school provision. A Personal Learning Plan (PLP) will be written and reviewed twice a year.

#### Stage 2

Your child can get school provision plus EA Pupil Support Service or HSCT Services. A child will only be recorded at this stage once provision is in place. When a child is undergoing a statutory assessment they will be recorded on this stage.

#### Stage 3

Statement of SEN is issued. The EA have a legal duty to arrange the provision as it is written in the statement.

**Note:** Each stage brings with it a different level of support. Your child should be on the stage that provides the level of support to meet their individual needs.

#### New Stage 1

If your child is identified as needing special educational provision, they may be recorded on the new Stage 1.

A Personal Learning Plan (PLP) will be started. This is a detailed plan of targets for your child, how the targets will be achieved and how they will be monitored. The plan will be reviewed twice a year. The new PLP is a standardised document which will be the same in all schools. In the old system this was known as an Individual Learning Plan (IEP).

In the new system the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) will be called the **Learning Support Coordinator (LSC)**. The LSC will decide if your child will be recorded on the school's SEN register.

The school will collect and record information and monitor your child's progress. If your child requires additional support from the EA Pupil support service, the Educational Psychology service or from the HSCT, they will be recorded at Stage 1 until the resources are available.

## New Stage 2

A child will only be recorded at Stage 2 when they are receiving support and the resources are available.

If, after school support plus any external support, there is not enough progress, then a statutory assessment may be needed. An assessment will allow the EA to decide what further external educational provision is needed for your child.

### **Statutory Assessment at Stage 2**

A statutory assessment may be started by the EA or requested by the school or a parent.

As a parent you have the right to ask the EA to make a statutory assessment of your child's special educational needs. To safeguard your right to appeal, should the request be turned down, SENAC strongly advise that a parent makes the request. In the instance where the request has already been made by someone other than you as the parent you may wish to put in your own request as well.

You can make a request for a statutory assessment on the EA's website <https://statutoryassessment.eani.org.uk/>

Link to Walkthrough Video to guide you through the process <https://send.eani.org.uk/statutory-assessment/statutory-assessment-and-review-service/request-statutory-assessment#request-for-statutory-assessment-walkthrough-video>

### **Criteria for carrying out an assessment**

While considering whether to carry out a statutory assessment the EA will look at evidence of the action the school have already taken to meet your child's difficulties. They will look at the learning plans and review notes and reports from outside specialists if involved. They should also take account of the views of the parents and seek the views of the child where possible.

The EA must comply with a request from a parent to conduct a statutory assessment, unless:

- an assessment has already been done within the previous 6 months.
- or, having examined the available evidence they have decided that a statutory assessment is not necessary.

If the EA decides not to carry out your request for a statutory assessment, they must inform you in writing, giving reasons for the decision and they must also inform you of your right to and how you can appeal.

## New Stage 3

The EA may decide to issue a statement when the statutory assessment is completed.

A statement of special educational needs (SEN) is a legal document that sets out your child's needs and the SEN provision that will be put in place to meet those needs.

**The EA will issue a Statement if they decide that the help your child needs cannot be provided for from the resources normally available to mainstream schools in your area.**

