



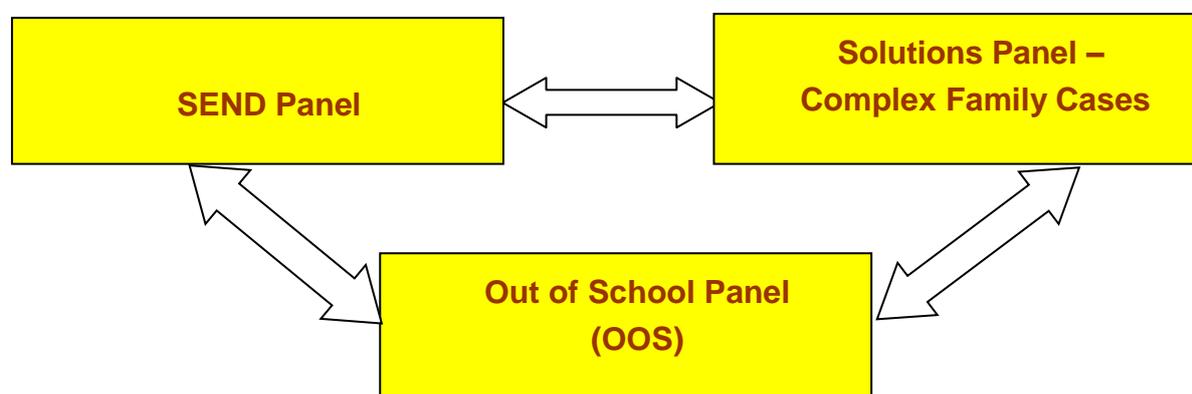
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY PANEL GUIDANCE NOTES



INTRODUCTION

In North Somerset the needs of vulnerable students are considered in three parallel panels:

PANELS IN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE



The key objective of these panels is to achieve better outcomes for children and young people

Function	SEND Panel
Statutory	Advises the Local Authority on all statutory decisions set out in the SEN Codes of Practice 2001 and 2014.
Placements within Schools	Identifies the school to be named in the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of SEN. Placement decisions made within the agreed Fair Access Protocol, including equitable share arrangements. Placements within Alternative Provision for students with a Statement or EHCP.
OR	Panel may decide to allocate funding through Top Up Funding dependent on identified need, and will also set end dates, and dates for next application for funding.
Transport	Panel will consider transport implications of placements against current SEN Transport policy, agreeing transport as necessary.
Quality Assurance	VLS Lead quality assures panel process through weekly scrutiny of decisions and six monthly monitoring of attendance
Legislative Background	1996 Education Act SEN Codes of Practice 2001, 2014 Equality Act 2010 Fair Access Protocol Transport Policy

PRINCIPLES OF SEND PANEL

- The child/young person is at the centre of all decision making and their views should be considered in any decision
- Any provision/placement should be in the best interests of the child or young person and meet their assessed needs
- Decisions will be made on the basis of the written evidence provided to the panel and by discussion at that panel
- All decisions must be made against a background of national guidance, relevant legislation and local policy
- All discussion is confidential
- Each member is an equal participant, whose *evidence based views* are equally valued and considered
- The rationale for any decision and agreed action points will be recorded
- Any service manager referring a case to the panel must have actively sought consent and have obtained the parent/carer and child/young person's views
- In circumstances where a panel member has a personal interest in a case no part should be taken in the decision making process
- All referral papers should be left with the panel administrator at the end of the panel unless action is required by the panel member or their service
- Commitment by members of the panel to attendance or named representation to ensure consistency of decision making
- All decisions will be evidence based, transparent and made within set timescales

REMIT OF THE PANEL

1. Requests for Assessment.
2. Decision whether to issue an EHCP.
3. Placement Decisions
4. In Year Fair Access
5. Resource Decisions.
6. Transfers into LA
7. SEN Tribunals expected and those logged
8. Joint Funding with Social Care and/or Health.
9. Referrals to Solutions Panel/OOS Panel
10. Permanent Exclusions for students with EHCP/Statement
11. Students with EHCP/Statement missing education
12. Non-Statutory Recommendations/Decisions

The SEND Panel is a central decision making panel for the People & Communities Directorate that deals with all decisions in relation to integrated support for children and young people with special educational needs. The panel will:

- Look at flexible, creative and best value use of resources around a child or young person's needs.
- Make statutory decisions for children and young people with special educational needs including placement.
- Consider children and young people with SEND without an educational placement either as a result of permanent exclusion, moving in to the authority or change of care placement.
- Consider joint funding issues.
- Consider multi agency support for potential tribunals.
- Track children and young people moving in/out of the Authority.
- Review all out of area placements on a rolling programme.
- Challenge agencies and services to improve responses to a child or young person's assessed need.
- Children and young people identified as requiring support from more than one service division.

At all points children and young people looked after will be discussed as a priority.

POWERS OF THE PANEL

The panel will:

- Request specialist support/advice.
- Request that further information is provided.
- Suggest improved ways of co-ordinating services.
- Recommend that further work is carried out by a single agency or locality.
- Make placement decisions taking into account local guidance.
- In making decisions take into account all previous decision making.
- Recommend a lead professional in complex cases.

REPRESENTATION

The panel will comprise representatives from or individuals named below:

- Head of Vulnerable Learners' Service (Chair)
- VLS Managers
- Head teacher Representatives
- SENCO representative
- Admissions and Transport Manager

USER INVOLVEMENT

The SEND panel has piloted inviting parents to participate in discussion regarding decisions made about their child. The results of this pilot are currently being reviewed. In addition, it is the responsibility of the referrer to collate their views and include them in the referral form. Service users will be informed in writing of the outcome.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for the SEND Panel to provide objective and evidence based advice to the Local Authority, each member of the Panel should be aware of respective roles and responsibilities and ground rules. It is presumed that each member of the Panel will contribute to the analysis of the evidence against criteria and policy and participate in problem-solving (solution finding) around pupil needs and provision. All participants bring unique professional perspective and have an equal role in giving evidence based objective views.

CHAIR

- Makes the formal decision for each and every case based on the discussion during the panel.
- Has knowledge of the area and national guidance and local policy.
- Maintains pace and clarity.
- Encourages reference to evidence and discourages anecdotal discussion.
- Plans the meeting to fairly incorporate the balance of cases on the agenda and priorities of panel members.
- Checks that minutes are recorded accurately and ensures that sufficient information is available for others to action.
- Feeds back any blocks, gaps in provision, policy issues to SLT.
- Refers panel members to statutory/legal issues as appropriate.
- Ensures that data is collated to provide an emerging picture to the SEND board and the Strategic Schools' Forum.
- Signs off notes of every meeting before circulation.

OTHER PANEL MEMBERS

- Contribute to decision making.
- Read any information in advance of the panel and have sought information from others where appropriate.
- Participate in discussions and bring experience and knowledge from own area.
- Remind the panel of issues of policy/practice and resourcing from own sector if relevant.
- Are in a position to action interventions agreed at panel or to ensure that others do.
- Provide a link between own service and panel so that there is a greater understanding of the scope and nature of the process.
- Feedback any issues pertinent to service delivery/policy in own area.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Prepares the agenda and collates and circulates relevant paperwork.
- Takes minutes of panel meetings and distributes as appropriate.
- Records statistical and quality assurance information on a monthly basis and collates into an annual report.
- Is consistent in style and method of recording decisions.
- Checks understanding of agreed action with Chair as necessary.
- Ensures that letters are prepared to inform service users of the outcomes.

VISITORS

Panel members may on occasion wish to request the attendance of a colleague for that colleague's professional development. If agreed, then:

- The Panel member is responsible for briefing the attendee on the role of the Panel beforehand and debriefing them afterwards
- Visitors are encouraged to contribute to discussion from their professional perspective.

PROCESS

In order to meet the criteria for the panel the child or young person must be:

- Aged between 0-25
- The responsibility of North Somerset Council or partner agency
- Subject of an early help plan, core assessment, a request for an EHC needs assessment or have an EHC Plan or Statement
- Have received substantial multi-agency support
- Have an up to date assessment or care plan and a detailed action plan
- All appropriate locality resources have been utilised

All meetings will be held at Castlewood on a Wednesday (9.30 am – 11.30 am) except for part of school holiday periods when local arrangement applies. There will be four meetings over the Summer break, one at Easter and all half term breaks.

- Notes of decisions are circulated via email to attendees, two days after the panel and are formally actioned by the SEN Team or nominated practitioner.
- There should be no public disclosure of a decision made at the panel other than through the SEN Officer or nominated practitioner unless agreed otherwise at the Panel.
- All paperwork to be retained by the SEN Team.
- Whenever a case is discussed linked to the school of an attending Head teacher, and then the Head teacher may wish to withdraw from the panel for that case or remain in the meeting but take no part in discussion.

No late or verbal cases can be raised at the panel without prior agreement of the Chair