

Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council

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Chair
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4th September 2008

Peter Broster
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Dear Peter,

Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council (LPCC) Proposal for Additional Needs in Lincolnshire

Following the proposal issued on the 8th February with regard to reducing reliance on issuing statements of educational needs, and the discussion of that proposal at the two consultations on 23rd and 24th April, the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council has taken to deciding to inform you formally of our members' views on supporting children with additional needs in Lincolnshire.

The aim of this document is to communicate our members' views in order to support you in developing your way forward with children with additional needs. We are happy to work with you in this development.

As a group we have consolidated our experiences and the outputs from the consultation process. In addition we have carried out research of other Local Authorities' benchmarking best practice.

We would like to meet you and discuss how to take this forward in September once you have had time to review our proposal. Our Annual General Meeting is on the 25th September, and perhaps we can arrange to discuss this then. If this is inconvenient please let me know and we will arrange a different date.

Yours sincerely,

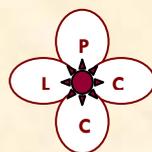
Thérèse Lord

Chair
Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council

Encs

cc
Education Scrutiny Review
LPCC Members
Attendees of the April Consultations
Councillor Patricia Bradwell
Councillor Christine Talbot
Peter Duxbury
Christine Banim
Hilary Barrett

Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council (LPCC)
Proposal for Additional Needs in Lincolnshire



Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council

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LPCC proposal for Additional Needs for Lincolnshire

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Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council (LPCC) Proposal for Additional Needs in Lincolnshire

August 2008

Background

This proposal has resulted from feedback and investigation on improving the support of children with additional needs in Lincolnshire. In addition, Lincolnshire County Council has proposed alterations to additional needs in particular the reduction in reliance on 'statements' in a bid to reduce inefficiency in obtaining support for children with additional needs.

This report details a proposed way forward for managing additional needs in Lincolnshire using evidence collected during two LPCC consultations of parents/carers with children with additional needs in April 2008, benchmarking of other local authorities and feedback from organisations that support children with additional needs. Just under 150 parents/carers attended the LPCC consultations and 65 of them also forwarded written feedback, which is shown in Appendix 1 attached. The consultations were conducted by providing parents/carers with the original proposal written by the Lincolnshire County Council consultant Terry Earland on 8th February to the Policy Development Group. This was to ensure that there was no ambiguity or bias in obtaining parents/carers' feedback. The notes taken during the consultations are detailed in Appendices 5 and 6 of this report.

In addition detailed benchmarking has been undertaken with 15 local authorities investigating information provided to all parties. This investigation corroborates the findings of the consultation process concerning how local authorities communicate with parents, carers, educational establishments, professionals and outside agencies. A list of local authorities investigated, highlighting best practice and detailing the benchmark authorities are detailed in Appendix 2 of this report.

The aim of this report is to influence the approach Lincolnshire County Council needs to take in managing additional needs.

Recommendations

Communication with parents/carers, education establishments, professionals and outside agencies:

- To be transparent and have a clear approach to how children with additional needs are to be supported in Lincolnshire
- Adopt clear criteria and boundaries identifying support provision, such as School Action and School Action Plus and statements of educational need.
- Establish and adhere to a simple code of practice for parents/carers, children, education staff, professionals and the local authority
- Establish a defined process of measurement assessing how children respond to support

- Provide feedback on an annual basis on the effectiveness of additional needs provision with regular action plans implemented within a stated time limit.
- Conference calling facilities to ensure all parties are able to input to meetings e.g. annual reviews
- Adopt a single multi-agency form with a clear structure of the process to obtain support for a child with additional needs, that is easy to use, and is transparent to all parties involved
- In schools, ensure there is a clear handover when a child is in transition from one professional to another.

Training

- Regular training of all personnel that have any kind of contact with children with additional needs. This needs to be at least twice a year to ensure a consistent approach and increase expertise. This is to include awareness of different disabilities, the process of obtaining appropriate support, Common Assessment Framework and how to assess children
- All members of panel and other professionals involved in assessing children with additional needs are trained on a regular basis in how to undertake such assessment
- All health and social staff, in particular GPs provided with awareness training to help with referring children effectively and efficiently
- Training to be specifically related to the needs of individual children including social and life skills

Identification of disability

- Faster process of referral from point of concern
- Support provided quickly when diagnosis provided
- Professional respect to diagnosis which should be acted upon by all individuals providing support for children
- Set a standard and turnaround time for all assessments to be completed
- Schools are acknowledged for the speed of early identification of additional needs. This could be monetary.
- Educational Psychologists should spend more time supporting schools.
- The Emotional and Behavioural Service should be more accessible and responsive to children's needs.
- Children demonstrating challenging behaviour should be comprehensively identified and resources made available to meet their needs.

Assessment and review of educational needs

- Speed up involvement of outside agencies, such as Educational Psychologist/Emotional Behaviour service, and Outreach services
- Set a standard and turnaround time for all assessments to be completed
- Assessment should be used to link child's additional needs with the most appropriate level of support e.g. straight to School Action Plus bypassing School Action if most appropriate and most efficient route
- Fast tracking from one level of support to another where required e.g. child fast tracked to obtain a statement bypassing School Action and School Action Plus. This would be most efficient for children who require special school attendance or who are at risk of exclusion

- Professionals obliged to attend meetings i.e. annual reviews etc.
- Clear definitions of severe and complex needs in order to provide appropriate clear assessment
- Speedy progression to a higher level of support if child fails to progress within a set timescale. Schools and parents/carers to be aware of the flexibility of timescales and to utilise this option freely as they should professionally deem fit
- To help streamline the statementing, school action and school action plus processes it is recommended that copies of relevant professional reports already available and that are still current, should be used

Funding

- Increase awareness and use of emergency short term funding
- Ring fence additional need funds provided for children with additional needs
- School Action and School Action Plus funds should not be given upfront to schools. This money should only be given after the schools have undertaken relevant additional needs courses by all their staff. The training should include all the disabilities that they could possibly encounter as professionals. This will ensure that children with additional needs are identified early and given immediate appropriate support.

'Statementing' process

- The rule is that once a statement has been given a child cannot lose it unless agreed by the parent
- The role of the parent to be highlighted as a key part of the process
- Appeal process in place for all levels of support to include School Action and School Action Plus
- Improve speed of 'statementing' process by adopting a fast track approach i.e. where clear evidence that child needs a statement is evident, bypass School Action and School Action Plus and provide a statement
- The statement given should be at the correct and appropriate level requested by the parents/carers, school staff and professionals involved. Valuable time is currently lost when the majority of statements are either turned down or lesser banding is awarded. Parents/carers should be spared from going to appeal and/or tribunal to ensure their child's needs are appropriately addressed

Monitoring of the process

- An audit and regular independent feedback should be undertaken regularly for parents/carers to ensure additional needs procedures work correctly and provision of support is appropriate to children

Parents

- Ensure there is the recourse for the parent if a school does not act properly with a child
- Ensure parents/carers are actively involved with all aspects of the child's life in school

School Action and School Action Plus

- Independent feedback to review child's progress periodically
- To ensure parental consent and involvement required as part of the process
- Appeals procedure in place
- Ring fencing of additional need funds
- Feedback process from schools to parents for early identification of problems before and after diagnosis
- Prevention strategy to be put in place at first instance of registering the child on School Action with the parents/carers' involvement
- More time allocated to SENCO
- SENCO to be a dedicated post and definitely not to be in addition to another post that can have a conflict of interest such as being head teacher

Further investigation

Through developing this proposal and investigating the need for change a number of areas were identified that needed review, recommendations identified and implemented. The following areas are:

- Investigate ways to reduce cost of administering the process
- Investigate the effectiveness of outreach
- Investigate secondary school effectiveness with managing children with SEN, identify and implement findings
- Investigate the use of screening at key stages of a child's school life to ensure all children are picked up
- Investigate how to reduce waiting times with Educational Psychologists and other outside agencies
- Investigate making available new specialist education establishments appropriately resourced to cater for additional needs and disabilities that mainstream schools and other special schools in the county cannot manage
- Investigate employing a Disability Liaison Officer to represent the child on a professional level and ensure effective communication with all parties
- Investigate the practicalities of using the Common Assessment Framework

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APPENDIX 1

Parents/Carers' Consultation - April 2008

Re: Proposal to Reduce Reliance on Statements

1. *"It is proposed [that] Lincolnshire County Council adopt the position of issuing statements only in respect of pupils whose assessed needs require 25 hours, currently band 7, or more, additional in school support; have significant health or disability needs; or need to attend a special school. "* Page 3

- Children need legal protection to obtain support regardless of banding
- Monitoring and auditing of funds/ring fencing is required
- Cannot trust schools or LEA to decide on appropriate support/resources required
- How will you assess whether a child needs less than 25 hours? Still need an assessment process - how is new process quicker than existing process?
- All children should be treated equally from bands 1 to 7
- A lot of disabilities in lower bands will be missed/ Children on lower bands will be unlikely to get appropriate attention if on lower bands
- Definition of *significant* health or disability is required/ who identifies the boundary which permits or disallows statements according to banding?
- What is stopping this being extended beyond band 4?
- Do not remove statements
- Not workable/sustainable
- Already proven unworkable in other counties
- School lack expertise to provide support for children in lower bands
- Band 3 will become the glass ceiling - it will be difficult to get in excess of it
- If a parent went to tribunal would a statement still be issued? In particular, if the tribunal granted a statement within bands 1 to 3, what would LCC do about it? The implication is that the proposal is illegal.
- This is a blanket policy and excludes a huge group of children. It is not in line with the code of practice and DFES has made a ruling that it is not legal. The decisions on whether to statement should be based on a consideration of individual circumstances
- By deleting any of the bands, this is discriminatory against those children that need that particular level of support
- Statements need to address the correct level of support
- Passive and invisible disabilities are likely to be missed
- Lack of automatic right to a named school per statement
- Chances of entering special school without a statement - nil
- There is already teacher apathy regarding special needs, proposal will make it worse
- Band 4 children who improve may risk losing their statement at annual review
- By allocating statement just to complex disabilities, this causes isolation rather than inclusion
- If every child matters, this should safeguard children that fall into bands 1 to 3
- If no statement, will pupil still get support or will funds be rationed?
- SA may work for some but what happens to those it doesn't work for?
- This would fail children under band 7
- Need to get resources and basics right first before moving on
- Transferring statement to other counties is a problem

2. “The assessment of need should be made using the current Common Assessment Framework (CAF) criteria plus educational factors taken from the Area Review Meeting.” **Page 3**

- What is CAF, even some teachers don't know - can this be put in English that people can understand?
- CAF produces more paperwork, more stress, adds to bureaucracy, makes it inefficient
- Too much red tape and bureaucracy - need to remove the majority of the paperwork. Concentrate on getting information absolutely necessary to speed up the process instead of using CAF.
- CAF criteria is open to individual interpretation and children can be missed accordingly
- Not suitable for this statementing process
- CAF/Forms need modifying
- Shortage of outside agencies to submit the relevant paperwork
- Is the CAF effective?
- Teachers/schools need training
- Existing CAF experience has been negative and has not resulted in help for child
- Negative vibes about CAF in the consultation
- Is current CAF process robust enough to incorporate assessment of SEN
- Lack of expertise/external agencies to provide support
- Had to wait a long time for appointments with educational psychologist etc and also some agencies put stumbling blocks in the way - they do not listen to parents
- What needs will be missed if no MDA
- MDA is more comprehensive - don't have confidence in CAF
- The CAF form is inappropriate - it is designed for children at risk
- Need to work in consultation with teachers and EP's
- Make sure all officers are properly trained
- How can we give an opinion on things that have not been shown to us
- Assessment needs to be easily accessible and available - CAF not suitable for educational needs
- Following assessment, will a report be written identifying areas of difficulties as in a statement and how often will it be reviewed?
- All professionals should be obliged to attend CAF meetings
- CAF is geared towards risk and if children are functioning in a loving environment, they are not going to get support. Need a holistic approach.
- The CAF process requires two agencies to be involved. For a lot of children with additional needs, this will not make them eligible for the CAF process.

3. “These CAF style assessments could be undertaken within the child's school led by the SEN Teacher and assisted by Health and Children's Services colleagues and fully contributed to and agreed by parents and where appropriate the child.” **Page 3**

- SENCOs need more training and more time to do their work and more funding
- It is difficult for all professionals to attend a CAF meeting. They already fail to turn up, how is new proposal going to change this?
- Sen overload
- SENCOs should not be the head teachers/this has proven damaging
- Autism outreach totally overstretched already

- Assessment is too important to rely on one teacher's perspective
- Only benefits children with pushy parents
- SENCOs don't have the knowledge or expertise, empathy or experience
- How will the process be monitored and there are issues of training and benchmarking
- What happens about preschool children
- Huge influx in problems when they reach secondary school
- Who will pay for the SENCO time to do this?
- Are the council trying to save money and dump responsibility on the schools?
- What is the difference between this and the assessment before a statement? We can't get help for assessments now.
- Social workers/respite - What happens when the problems are not the same at home as they are outside?
- Insufficient people on board to make CAF process work
- Develop centres of excellence

4. "Local Special Schools should also be a key partner in the decision making process to ensure a high level of professional input and ongoing support to mainstream schools." Page 4

- Special schools are already overstretched and under funded
- Why are special schools for MLD etc - so why none for high functioning autism? If ECM there should be
- Do local special schools have the ability to provide this sort of support? Could LA provide this?
- Have local special schools got the resources or funding or knowledge?
- Don't want the knowledge of special schools to be diluted
- Special schools are good but do not understand the needs of high functioning children
- Excellent idea - teachers and TA's need more access to training and support
- Small local schools will find it difficult to maintain a relationship with special schools
- Mainstream schools do not even read the statements - teachers become confused so been informed
- Will mainstream teachers act on the input - who will monitor this? Otherwise more waste of resources and staff will be inevitable
- Need staff to cover if TA on long term sick - will there be qualified outreach teacher to take over
- SENCO and teaching staff don't listen to outreach advice and do their own thing
- Special schools are having to do their own fund raising to be able to support other local schools
- Mainstream schools do not want to be associated with special schools as they are concerned about league tables and parental opinions
- Totally disagree to special schools being involved with mainstream
- Even in Special schools, statement money should be provided for more therapists to work with 1:1
- More places should be available for children who require a special school
- Autism outreach already overstretched
- Take advantage of parent led training
- What happens to children that change schools or districts?
- If a child requires specialist support from professionals in a special school, who's going to identify the criteria who taps into this?

5. “To ensure speedy access to additional resources to support the pupil, an additional sum of approximately £8.2m would eventually be delegated to school led forums on a District area basis.” Page 4

- What does eventually mean?
- On what basis?
- Allocation of funding to specific child
- Need to audit and monitor funds and be transparent
- Monies are spent correctly and equally
- Speedy access to resources - extra money won't be any good unless extra resources in place e.g. more Educational Psychologists
- Consistency across district
- Ring fence money
- How will the money support children?
- No backup for parents if schools fail to honour
- How will school led forums lead?
- Schools with good SENCOs and heads will be OK but not all schools have these
- How will deadlines be met?
- If this proposal has been revised, can we have more information please?
- Will there be additional funds for training in addition to the funds delegated to school led forums?
- Cut out meetings, assessments and paperwork. School and parents should be able to ask for what is needed and the LEA to grant it.
- Get extra staff in the classroom.

6. “Such a move would immediately remove the current culture within Lincolnshire that statementing equals resources and give allocation of much needed support to SEN professionals and head teachers at a local level.” Page 4

- What kind of support is LCC going to give to SEN professionals and head teachers?
- They have access to spend money now on whatever they want. What would stop it continuing?
- It will lead to discrimination against each diagnosis and its effect on the individuals.
- Wouldn't remove current culture - would cause more stress
- If committed to specialised schools why are you reducing their funding?
- Why is the nearest autistic school in Rotherham?
- Head teachers should not be SENCO - one person with one job at a time
- Dyslexic trained tutor to be in school to support children
- More educational psychologists
- More autism awareness and not SEN to administer
- Head teachers are not happy and unskilled to assess child and spend money
- Nobody believes that statementing = resources but that statementing = rights
- The right of the child to have a statement
- Is it cultural or is it evidence based many parents will tell you that SA do not provide support and young person needs that statement and support
- Concern about SEN professionals and Heads having the ability to make such decisions - how will they ensure this happens considering SENCO spends time teaching as well
- Dedicated staff required

- SENCO should have dedicated job - not two jobs
- Teachers inexperienced and cannot assess children who require 1 to 2 hours support of SALT
- More responsibility for SENCO and teachers
- May not pick up on high functioning autism
- The culture currently is a fear to identify SEN - loss of brownie points for schools
- Need to remove bottlenecks to get help - eg EP's etc
- Give SEN and head teachers more power
- Give children early support by giving extra staff and their needs will become clear
- Educate SENCOs before sending support
- SENCOs and teachers need to liaise more with parents - we cannot rely on children to give feedback
- SENCOs and teachers haven't got the time to listen to parents
- It's not a culture it's a necessity
- Don't feel teacher and professionals give my child their utmost care
- How does this effect children currently being assessed? My child is awaiting a statement this September.
- Supports SEN, head teachers professionals. Not sure if this supports families.

7. *What do you think should be done to obtain support more quickly for children with additional needs?*

- **Listen to parents**
- Listen to parents, GP's, health and education professionals
- SEN training for all professionals
- More resources more training more professionals eg EPs, TAs,
- Early identification/assessment for hidden disabilities
- Screening for all children in preschool - this should be done automatically
- Information needs to be more readily available to parents
- Don't force all applicants to appeal - offer statement recommended by health professionals - don't ignore them and send parents into stress
- Speak to parents and give them the money and let them choose where to attend
- Schools need efficient input and also be accountable once needs have become aware.
- Including transport also care for siblings
- Respite for parents
- Immediate support for the child is needed
- Forget the red tape
- Proper case study and assessment should be completed within a school term
- Faster access to EPs
- Easier access to SALT and EP
- Dedicated full time qualified SENCOs
- More preschool support
- Remove barriers to obtain statement, children would get resources more quickly
- From diagnosis statements should follow quickly and more resources and funding should be put in early years
- Accept automatically that children with ASD have complex and unquestionable needs. Statementing should be automatic only need to decide on number of hours allocated

- Special schools to provide input to decision making process then these teams could be used in schools to fast track those identified
- Reduce number of hoops for schools to get through before they are eligible to ask for help
- Give SENCo more power - have statements in place prior to children starting school
- Keep the smaller schools open

8. *Any other comments regarding the remainder of the report?*

- Next steps only mentions about consultations with head teachers. Where's the parents' consultations? All of these need to be in place before implementation
- Where's the pre-school involvement?
- Requirement for SALT
- Disappointing - lack of depth and detail
- Proposal to reduce reliance taken in principle ages ago so this document should have provided the detail of how it will work. Where's the research?
- There should have been consultations with parents earlier that would have informed the report.
- Listen to parents for the sake of the children
- Why aren't parents mentioned anywhere on the document?
- Are school action and resources delegated to schools to be audited in future?
- Is the admin saved to be used in increasing the support or is it a gestalt?
- The focus is in the wrong area - stop fighting the parents
- First thing parents are told, choose which fight you need to sort first
- Have we been listened to? Would like feedback.
- Please help us, our children are special and we wish them to lead happy independent lives
- Treat parents as the experts
- Treat children as equals
- Respect parental knowledge and experience
- More training professionals over entire system to get a more speedy efficient support network
- Will SEN be better off into special schools? - I thought it was better to be in mainstream

Other comments?

- The statement process is not a problem it is the process before that is an issue
- Statements were introduced to give legal protection to vulnerable children and to ensure their needs were being met. This was as a result of evidence borne to prove otherwise. Hence, why take away the safety net that was put in place to protect these children? The system itself may not be working efficiently but it doesn't mean to eradicate the current system in favour of another one which will give children less protection and less likely to have their needs met
- Would have been nice if the council had thought of consulting parents themselves
- Information should have been circulated beforehand.
- More work should be put into proposals before consultation, that doesn't mean decision should be made before consultation
- If we're going to have written assessment agreed and reviewed how will make this process quicker?
- The assessments will be done by the current people who do MDA? How will process be different?
- Key to all this is identification of need - this should be started from the day child enters school and resources should be supplied throughout school.

- This proposal has been changed to bands 1-3. What influenced the change?
- Concern about quality of 1:1 support and qualifications for TA
- Glad that representatives of LCC were finally willing to consult with parents but have they listened?
- Why didn't Councillor Bradwell attend the consultation?
- More practical advice to whole process
- Schools need to be made to communicate and consult with parents. Please do not put all your trust in schools - they are not skilled or willing to take on this role. Parents do not trust schools particularly for children with invisible disabilities.
- Need a special school with high functioning ASD. These children are special care because you can't physically adapt the school environment to meet their needs as you can for a physically disabled child.
- Bureaucratic
- Have a body that supports and advises teachers and parents make this accessible
- Have a dedicated worker that has a drop in time at school but is an independent liaison - to help parents fight with school
- Why get rid of the one thing that actually works
- Require a Special school for high functioning autism and dyslexia
- What about all the older students who have missed out and already been neglected, how are they going to get the help they need?
- Is this a sign of failure?
- We have fought for many years and not listened to.
- What's happening to bands 4 to 6?
- A child should have a statement immediately needs are identified irregardless of banding 1 - 3. Every Child Matters.

APPENDIX 2

Benchmarking Communication of Information From Local Authorities

This report summarises the investigation into best practice across a number of Local Authorities in the United Kingdom.

The Local Authorities with the best practice included clear, simple guidelines on how a child would be assessed, who would be involved and the expectations of all parties concerned. The documentation was designed to be used by professionals, parents and carers. One other important observation was that School Action, School Action Plus and Statutory Assessments were described in one document reducing the risk of any confusion.

The bullet points below highlight the areas that have been identified as best practice using the internet as an approach to obtaining information to inform parents and carers. Two Local Authorities, Cheshire County Council and Gloucestershire County Council were identified with a significant amount of easy to use information and also tackled areas of weakness such as ensuring schools were provided with the correct amount of resources.

A list of all the Local authorities investigated is detailed on the next page.

- Cheshire County Council
 - Clear guidance on when to use School Action, School Action Plus and Request for a Statutory Assessment
 - Highlights key clauses of the COP for SEN
 - Used by professionals, parents and carers and highlights their responsibilities
 - Includes forms that need to be complete for School Action, School Action Plus and Statutory Assessments including checklists
- Gloucestershire County Council
 - Clear policy
 - Clear guidance
 - Carried out research into areas that needed improvement with detailed questionnaires and statistical analysis backed up by literature researches
 - Use of provision maps to ensure that there is appropriate provision across schools

Table of Local Authorities Investigated

	Clear guidance on how to use the graduated process	Highlights key clauses of the COP for SEN	Used jointly by professionals, parents and carers	Includes forms that need to be completed	Includes Checklists	Transition guidance between primary & secondary schools	All documents in one place	Comments
Bath and North East Somerset Council	X							Two sets of documents detail requirements for SEN
Birmingham City Council	X							Website details guidance for SEN for parents, carers and schools
Cambridgeshire County Council	X		X			X		
Cheshire County Council	X	X	X	X	X			Clear guidance on when to use School Action, School Action Plus and Request for a Statutory Assessment Highlights key clauses of the COP for SEN Used by professionals, parents and carers and highlights their responsibilities
Bournemouth Borough Council								Website details SEN requirements and guidance
Gloucestershire County Council	X							Carried out research into areas that needed improvement with detailed questionnaires and statistical analysis backed up by literature researches Use of provision maps to ensure that there is appropriate provision across schools
Lincolnshire county Council								Clear strategy on SEN, but little guidance to how this is how professionals and carers should use the graduated system could be found
North Yorkshire County Council							X	Up to date SEN strategy No documents linking graduated approach
Nottingham County Council								No documents linking graduated approach Provides outline for parents and carers
North East Lincolnshire County Council							X	Information on same website for professionals, parents and carers, however, in different documents
North Lincolnshire Council						X		
Northamptonshire County council	X		X	X				'Moving On' guidance for children, parents and carers Good practice guidance for specific disabilities
Northumberland County Council								Found it difficult to use website Information limited
Oxfordshire County Council	X		X	X				Introduction for parents and carers with a detailed handbook collating all the documentation for professionals etc.. Very comprehensive.
Reading Borough Council	X		X	X				Uses common Assessment Framework Details criteria for assessing SEN with School Action, School Action Plus and Statutory Assessments There is even a fast track process

Point 2

“The assessment of need should be made using the current Common Assessment Framework (CAF) criteria plus educational factors taken from the Area Review Meeting.”

Page 3

CAF being removed – now Team Around the Child

Need to ensure that everyone involved with the child attends/has opportunity to attend T.A.C. meeting

Need sufficiently trained Ed. Psychs.

Simplify process for parents to access support

Point 3

“These CAF style assessments could be undertaken within the child’s school led by the SEN Teacher and assisted by Health and Children’s Services colleagues and fully contributed to and agreed by parents and where appropriate the child.”

Page 3

Problem is with SEN Teacher and lack of training

Statement is a legal document that says: “my child has and his/her needs must be met

SA/SA+ is a grey area – child’s needs are not clearly set out

Conflict of time management where SENCO has teaching post or is headteacher

Terry and the majority of delegates agreed SENCO should never be a headteacher

Gloucestershire model: every school has to provide a map of how resources are used

CAF meetings are having serious problems which have not been resolved

Clarify; “Are you trying to save money and dump responsibility onto schools?”

All children with needs should have the legal right to support, regardless of level of disability

Statement – relief stage. System before statement is a problem

Point 4

“Local Special Schools should also be a key partner in the decision making process to ensure a high level of professional input and ongoing support to mainstream schools.”

Page 4

Will more funds be put into outreach support, which is currently under-resourced?

How will special schools be aligned to deliver local support?

Peter: we need to build up schools and divide the county so that a special needs school is in each area

Point 5

“To ensure speedy access to additional resources to support the pupil, an additional sum of approximately £8.2m would eventually be delegated to school led forums on a District area basis.” Page 4

(Team Around the Child would be led by schools. County splitting into 7 distinct areas in the future).

If a school has to bid for funding, how will this be fair? Training will be needed for the person (Head/SENCO) making the bid.

How will we ensure that the money is ring fenced?

What are the plans for children who are educated out of county?

How will the process be made faster? How much quicker will it be?

Legality issue – meeting deadlines should be enforced

Point 6

“Such a move would immediately remove the current culture within Lincolnshire that statementing equals resources and give allocation of much needed support to SEN professionals and headteachers at a local level.” Page 4

How will the cultural shift be made by teachers and parents?

Terry: Resources should be with the child within 5-6 weeks. Children with complex (obvious) needs will automatically be put forward for statement.

The level of support needed can not be identified by the disability

We need to jump over SA to a statement

Parents need to be seen as “experts by default”.

How can a teacher access the support if they don’t understand SEN?

These children need a keyworker/support provided by an outside agency

LCC should be looking at SA/SA+ rather than the statementing process

There needs to be accountability

There are concerns that if a school is particularly successful at bidding for funds, they will become victims of their own success

Will fewer statements affect provision of transport?

Why were parents missed off the consultation document? Parents had to approach LCC through the Parent Carer Council in order to be consulted

Terry: The final document will be produced for consultation. LCC will be writing to 1:5 parents of children currently with Band 1-3 statements to invite them to further consultations. The proposals do not affect children who currently have statements.

Set up a parent-led feedback forum for parents to feed comments into, which can then be passed to LCC

We need open communication

School governors

Are parents going to be able to go to tribunal under the new system? Peter: Yes

Points 7 and 8

What do you think should be done to obtain support more quickly for children with additional needs?

Any other comments regarding the remainder of the report?

We are looking to bring this in during the Autumn

When will the cut off be?

When will the money be available?

When can we have a public feedback consultation? Answer: it will be several months yet

Councillor Bradwell has stated that it is a “done deal”

Terry: there has been no done and dusted deal at all

LCC needs to recognise the effect SEN children have on their siblings

FLIP CHARTS FROM 24th April

SLIDE 1

- With statement could transfer to special school easily
- Schools do not know what budgets are to deal with this
- Parent's don't know how to fight for extra support
- SENCo's can only put forward certain number of children
- Parent waste of time starting statementing process (if not getting Band 1 - 3)
- Children not getting help when needed
- Everyone had to fight for support
- Not easy to get help for the invisible disability
- No help for equipment for additional needs
- Empower parents with right information
- Statement rejected due to school admin not done
- Statement process too long children missing education
- Inefficiency in getting outside agencies

SLIDE 2

- Nobody been through the CAF process
- CAF Form inappropriately used
- Not enough educational psychologist
- Lack of expertise in schools
- Lengthy assessments; assess everything but leave education until last
- Nowhere for parents to go who do not know the system

SLIDE 3

- Inconsistency between schools
- Don't rely on teachers to assess
- Has to be disruptive to get support
- SENCo's overworked, need them full time. Already no time for assessments

SLIDE 4

- School ignoring specialist advice
- 3 EBD Schools only 2% have EBD where ADHD, Higher Functioning Autism
- School Action and School Action + monies could not be monitored
- Parents don't even have power with statement
- Parents not involved in decisions within support
- Waiting for resources children could fall behind
- No experience needed to work with a child for 32 hours per week (GCSE English)

SLIDE 6

- Some teachers have not seen the proposal

SLIDE 7

- Identify problems earlier, proper training
- No one listening to parents
- need full time SENCo's
- lack identification pre school
- no efficiency in carrying forward family knowledge
- lack of communication within school and teachers

Most SENCOs are also the Headteacher – conflict of interest and workload issues

Teachers/TAs lack training

Invisible disabilities need to be recognised

Children at SA/SA+ are just left there

Schools ignore diagnosis

Attitudes within school and communication are a problem

Lack of resources

Inefficient support at exclusions

If a child has a statement, they get transport. No statement = no funding for transport

Lack of training for SEN and IEPs. Need SMART targets.

Efficient working with CACHE

FLIP CHART FROM 24th APRIL

SLIDE 1

- Legality?
- Blanket policy?
- If proposal no longer relevant, what will it be replaced with?
- What provisions will be put in place to ensure a child receives what is required to meet needs?
- How do you know the assessment won't take as long a statement?
- Cheshire now help as a model (need to check figures)
- School placement - statement still protection
- Is school action and school action + monitored?
- How many children cross from mainstream to special school because they can't cope?
- Training for SENCo's
- Concern about teachers assessing children who were previously under Bands 1 - 3
- Setting for 1 - 3 when needs are complex
- 1996 proposal - how will process be started?
- Schools need training on where to give support
- Auditing where funds go
- Parents need more information to be able to make informed choices
- Lack of trust between parents and LCC - need to work in partnership
- Parents don't want sympathy they want action
- How transferable is it? (Servicemen - not nationwide)

SLIDE 2

- Is CAF form appropriate?
- What happens if only one agency involved?
- Need more EP's, Speech Therapists, OT's and Physio's
- Identification of needs
- CAF form not used in Cheshire
- Monitoring group
- Concerns about league tables and SEN
- Support for vulnerable parents

SLIDE 3

- Training for SENCo's
- Band levels to be reviewed - Ed to go to special school
- Assessments should be by dedicated professional not Teacher
- Need for special school for high functioning autism
- If SENCo's being given extra responsibility - need to be quality assured
- Independent support for SENCo's

SLIDE 4

- Why asking special schools?
- Puts burdens on special schools
- Should be a central point
- Where is the expertise?

SLIDE 5

- Revised - school led forums no longer being considered
- Ring fencing
- Auditing/monitoring
- Legality
- Does the money include reduction for Admin?
- Greater support for parents when providing support
- If not school action/plus what is it?
- Does not have the same legal status as statement
- Job description for TA needs to be appropriate for role - including training

SLIDE 6

- Parent is specialist on the child
- Forget SA/+ and go straight to assessment and support
- Eliminate jumping through hoops
- New proposals requires SENCo's to have more expertise and skills
- More work for overworked SENCo's
- Need more resources/training for SENCo's
- Concerns about the quality of the assessment

SLIDE 7

- Introduce pre-screening from primary school
- Listen to parents
- Outside agencies involved straight away
- Specialised, dedicated SENCo's
- Training for pre-school teachers
- Identification pre-school
- Support in place for primary school entry
- Change culture for schools - not to be scared to ask for resources and put forward children with SEN
- Screening at birth
- If child has a diagnosis - proved by professional, should be automatic statement
- Should be collaboration between parent and consultant/professionals
- No one said that the statement is the problem
- Teachers recognising statement is difficult enough - how will it be when parent presents an assessment
- Support for parents who are less vocal/articulate or are vulnerable
- TE - Parent groups WILL be involved in development of new document and next steps
- If proposals change again it will go for further consultation
- Should be passed to all schools for dissemination
- Pre-school missed out on consultation - parents received information from support groups
- How will they be assessed in the future?
- Are SENCo's welcoming the extra work?

Schools report that they are panicking that they won't be able to access money

APPENDIX 5

Minutes of the consultation re. the LCC proposal to change the current system of support for children with special educational needs.

**Held at Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln on Tuesday 23rd April 2008
10.30-12.30**

Organised by the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Council

The meeting was opened by the chair of the Parent Carer Council (hereafter PCC), Therese Lord. Therese welcomed Peter Broster, Head of Additional Needs for Lincolnshire County Council (hereafter LCC), and Terry Earland, SEN interim advisor.

Therese briefly explained the role of the Parent Carer Council ie. It facilitates 2-way communication between parents/carers and LCC Children's Services.

Therese explained that the powerpoint presentation would cover the main crux of the proposal and that Terry would provide updates as necessary during the discussions. She stressed the need for parents to use this opportunity to change the system by using past experiences in a positive way.

The Proposal

Part 1

“It is proposed that Lincolnshire County Council adopt the position of issuing statements only in respect of pupils who: have assessed needs requiring 25 hours, (currently Band 7) or more, additional in-school support; have significant health or disability needs; or need to attend a special school”.

Delegate

Why has the proposal been made?

Answer

Terry: current system is longwinded and bureaucratic, with a long wait during which the child's situation often deteriorates

Other LEAs have done this ie. Given funds direct to schools so that the money reaches its target quicker.

Reminded parents that LEA has a statutory to meet the educational needs of all children, and that existing statements will not be removed.

Delegate

We waited 1.5 years for an assessment.

Staff need more awareness in order to identify issues in pre-school

You have to be in crisis in order to prove the need for help – it takes too long

Answer

Peter: This issue is at the heart of the proposal: it is designed to facilitate early action/funding. LCC is looking at the ways in which this can best be done.

Delegate

Wouldn't it be better to put an alternative route in place before changing the statementing system?

Delegate

My son has SEN. He has been on SA/SA+ and pastoral care for 2 years, but we've been told he won't get any further help until after the transition stage, so this causes delay.

Delegate

My 13 year old was diagnosed at 10 and has only just been given an MDA. Primary schools didn't recognise his needs and didn't seem to want to manage the statement process well. There were issues around early identification and lack of parental involvement.

Delegate

My child has complex needs and a 15 hour statement – how do you plan to meet the needs of such children?

Answer

Terry: the parameters of the proposal have changed – we are currently looking at those in Bands 1-3, so your child will not be affected. Parents will still have the right to appeal.

Delegate

How do we know that the proposed system will reduce frustration? There is currently no confidence that the additional hours provided by the school and not via a statement will be consistent and directed where needed. How will this be monitored/controlled?

Comment

Therese: you are currently forced into a statement in order to protect your allocated hours

Delegate

We would like to see a holistic approach. There needs to be collaboration between all members of the team around the child.

Answer

Terry: advised parents to read the document "Removing Barriers to Achievement", which tries to address years of parents' exasperation.

The PCC is an indication of how LCC wants to make changes and allocate appropriate resources earlier.

Delegate

Son, age 13, missed help in early years. Now not coping, and health and whole family are affected. Can't wait any longer for help. How will such cases be dealt with?

Delegate

Parents need information re. how current problems will be addressed by the new system

Delegate

We need a dedicated worker to help parents through difficulties

Delegate

The real problem is the road which leads to the statement

Delegate

Dedicated workers should be employed by the LEA, but based in schools

Delegate

The outcome of this needs to be a guarantee that every child who needs help will get it. Funds need to be ring-fenced.

Delegate

We would like an independent parental panel to help us get through the process quicker.

If children are not disruptive, they can't access help. Staff need training in order to recognise these children

Delegate

Panel needs to include Early Years people

Delegate

There is a government initiative re. early support for 0-3 age group. A keyworker is an important part of the process. Has LCC embraced this initiative? Is there a Team Around The Child?

Therese

In Lincolnshire, "Team around the child" only happens for children age 0 - 5 with complex difficulties

Delegate

A lot of time is wasted in waiting for Ed. Psychs. and other professionals. The new process needs to trust the judgements of outside agencies and not rely on Ed. Psychs.

Delegate

What about adult transition? Pupils have to leave MLD schools at 16.

Peter

We need to simplify the process. The problem with Ed. Psychs. is that they're busy writing reports for statements. If the number of statements was reduced, the Ed. Psychs. would have more time to work with individual children.

Delegate

Nottingham is bottom of the LEA league table, so why are you looking at their model?

Answer

We're not copying Nottinghamshire.

Peter

Lincs. is good at keeping to timescales on the statementing process when reports are in on time. It is a high statementing authority. The policy is about looking to see what we can do to meet the needs of some children faster. We will not be importing anybody else's system – the new system will be specifically designed for Lincolnshire.

Part 2 of the Proposal

“The assessment of need should be made using the current Common Assessment Framework (CAF) criteria plus educational factors taken from the Area Review Meeting”.

Terry

CAF is being replaced by Team Around The Child – this means that in order to be effective, Team Around The Child needs to combine education and community care.

Delegate

Professionals haven't even got time to attend CAF meetings. There needs to be investment in professionals so that they can provide a better service. They need to communicate with each other.

Terry

LCC is investing £1m a year over the next few years to do this.

Therese

The issue is that there is a need for more professionals to be in the right place at the right time.

Delegate

Requests for respite care are followed by a lengthy assessment. STRUT provides respite care and asks only one question: “Do you need help?” It is currently working with 70 families and listens to parents' needs.

Peter

The issue is: “How can we do what you do?”

Delegate

Aren't Children's Centres supposed to provide information and care for all families?

Peter

Yes – they're a move in the right direction.

Part 3 of the Proposal

“These CAF style assessments could be undertaken within the child’s school, led by the SEN Teacher assisted by Health and Children’s Services colleagues, and fully contributed to and agreed by parents and, where appropriate, the child”.

Delegate

SENCOs lack the necessary training

Delegate

We’re looking at a legal document (ie. A statement) which says my child has x needs and this is the help they will get.

Delegate

The multi-professional links are missing. There is much anxiety around secondary transition and the time it takes to get extra support.

Delegate

There is concern re. the conflict between the role of SENCO and teaching duties. Where the SENCO is also the Headteacher, there is a conflict of interest.

Terry

This conflict of interest situation is not considered good practice. Lincs. does not have an overall training programme for TAs/SENCOs. Special schools should be used as centres of excellence. In Gloucestershire, schools have to provide a map of how they use SA, SA+ and other SEN money. There are special advisers who go in to check annually.

Delegate

CAF meetings have major problems now, never mind adding children in Bands 1-3.

Terry

This situation will be helped by the District teams

Delegate

The District teams haven’t started yet and it’s already chaos

Terry

No current statements will be affected. We are talking about children who are currently on SA/SA+ and who would be in Bands 1-3, should they be given a statement in the future.

Delegate

Will the children now have to go right through one process, and then the other?

Peter

We are looking at children who would get Band 1-3 if statemented.

We need clear criteria to distinguish between the 2 – we don’t have the answers yet.

Delegate

All children should go through the same process and have the same legal rights.

Peter

We are looking for a middle way and asking the question: “Would it be better to provide quick support?”

Delegate

If a child is not getting the level of support they need, then they will have to go through the statementing process. This makes the whole process even longer. What we really need is more resources to speed up the current system.

Delegate

We are going through the CAF process at the moment, but there are not any professionals available to give advice.

Part 4 of the Proposal

“Local Special Schools should also be a key partner in the decision making process to ensure a high level of professional input and ongoing support to mainstream schools”.

Terry

The expertise of the special schools is not used enough

Peter

They do provide a lot of support – we need to develop it

Delegate

Special schools are very stretched and under-resourced

Terry

There is a trial going on with Fortuna and Ambergate special schools forging links with local schools

Delegate

They can't reach every family that needs support

Delegate

There are not many special schools: how are they going to reach several mainstream schools?

Peter

We have more special schools than many other authorities

Delegate

Lafford School, with 44% of pupils with special needs, is closing. We are permanently in SEN consultation . 270 children need to know what is going to happen to them.

Terry

Lincolnshire's own SEN policy can be seen on the LCC website

Part 5 of the Proposal

“To ensure speedy access to additional resources to support the pupil, an additional sum of approximately £8.2m would eventually be delegated to school-led forums on a District area basis”.

Terry

This means that schools must lead on the agreement and delivery of the services. Lincs. will eventually deliver services via 7 areas.

Delegate

Will SENCOs be able/willing to put a confident bid together?

Delegate

How will you check where the money is being spent?

Terry

LCC must not repeat the mistake of allocating money for SA and SA+ and lose control of it.

Delegate

What happens if you live in Lincs. and are educated in another county?

Peter

The child accesses the services available in the LEA where the school is situated. If the child is statemented, Lincs. provides and maintains the statement.

Delegate

A SENCO needs to be available all week, not just some of the time

Peter

Small schools can't support a full-time SENCO

Delegate

How much shorter will the new process be?

Peter

We don't know yet – it needs to be quicker and simpler than the statementing process. It will have to be approved by elected council members.

Delegate

Some SENCOs can't identify high-functioning autistic needs. SENCOs need more training in how to gather evidence.

Delegate

If there's a legal deadline, it should be enforced

Part 6 of the Proposal

Such a move would immediately remove the current culture within Lincolnshire that statementing = resources and give allocation of much needed support to SEN professionals and Headteachers at a local level.

Therese

The current view is that a statement = resources. Currently schools receive SA and SA+ funding but are not resourced. This will be a huge cultural shift.

Terry

We need to make resources quickly available

Therese

There is a difference between visible and invisible disability

Delegate

Parents have issues with schools: Heads and SENCOs do not have the training to recognise invisible disabilities

Delegate

A level of need can't be categorised by disability

Terry

An obvious disability needs a statement

Delegate

High level needs are not always obvious

Delegate

How will you address the needs of children who are struggling in school and awaiting diagnosis?

Peter

We need to establish criteria for schools re. what to look for at SA and SA+ in relation to various disabilities eg. ADHD, ASD.

Delegate

Parents need to be seen as experts by default. We need to be viewed as constructive.

Delegate

How are schools going to get support if they don't understand the disabilities?

Delegate

In a PGCE there is hardly any training relating to SEN

Delegate

Parents have lost confidence in SA and SA+. Why not look at where this money has been lost instead of trying to change the whole system?

Peter

We do need to address the issue of what is being missed at SA and SA+.

Delegate

How will you deal with schools which ignore a diagnosis? Support should be given immediately on diagnosis. Schools should be accountable.

Delegate

Schools don't have the resources to support these children. That's why so many are excluded.

Peter

A quicker system of providing help should reduce the number of exclusions

Delegate

Would you have to pay for transport to your chosen school if your child didn't have a statement?

Terry

Transport is unlikely to be an issue because we're talking about Bands 1-3 and these children are generally in local schools anyway.

Delegate

Why weren't parents on the original distribution list for this proposal?

Therese

The Parent Carer Council made the initial approach to Terry asking for details of the proposals

Terry

We need to overcome this contest culture – we want parents on board. Nothing is being hidden here – we consulted with teachers and SENCOs. The final document will be a full proposal and there will consultation about it too.

Peter

We put money into SA and SA+ to try to move away from Band 1 & 2 statements. There is still an issue over a few Band 2 statements.

Delegate

Shouldn't parents be the first to be consulted?

Therese

Parents should be a priority

Delegate

Will there be feedback on the whole process?

Terry

There will be 3 more consultations around the county with 1:5 parents of children with statements in Bands 1-3 being invited. We are not writing to parents of children who are on SA or SA+.

(A request was made for a copy of this invitation letter to be sent to the Parent Partnership Service and the Parent Carer Council).

Delegate (from “Tree House”)

This is an opportunity for an ongoing consultation – there needs to be a feedback mechanism.

Peter

That’s what the Parent Carer Council is for. Also the Parent Partnership Service and Independent Parental Supporters.

Delegate

There needs to be a consultation re. the role of the SENCO. The responsibility of governors needs to be strengthened.

Delegate

Would parents still be able to go to tribunal?
Would they still be able to ask for an MDA?

Peter

Yes, they would

Delegate

We are going through the assessment process at the moment. What is going to happen? Where will the cut-off be? When will the funding start?

Delegate

When can we have a public feedback consultation?

Terry

It could be via a meeting or through the Parent Carer Council – we haven’t decided yet. Whatever form it takes, it will be several months away.

Therese

There is an Email address for contacting the Parent Carer Council. It is: lpccconsultation@fsmail.net. There is also a telephone no. 07593-553609.

Delegate

Are you just trying to save money?

Terry

No. It’s about redistribution and getting it to where it’s needed more quickly.

Therese

Will you take the views of contributors seriously?

Terry

If we're going to change the culture, we need to listen and consider these opinions.

Delegate

Not all schools received notice of the consultations

Delegate

Councillor Bradwell stated that Lincolnshire County Council have done away with statements up to 25 hours and parents/schools are happy. I have written to her 4 times and haven't had a reply. This doesn't give parents much confidence that their views are being taken into account.

Terry

This is not a done deal.

Delegate

There must be a lack of communication within the Council

Terry

If you are not happy, talk to the Chief Executive and your local councillor

Delegate

You need to look at what will happen to families who are suffering because of their SEN child's needs

Peter

We are trying to bring the agencies together. Parent Partnership could have had a higher profile this morning. We are setting up a transition service.

Delegate

Parent Partnership are overloaded. It is not their role to access this kind of support for families.

APPENDIX 6

PARENT CARER COUNCIL MEETING PARENTS' CONSULTATION 24TH APRIL 2008 AT BISHOP GROSSETESTE, LINCOLN

The meeting started at 6.35 pm with Therese thanking everyone for coming, going through the house keeping and introducing the Parent Carer Council to the Audience. She explained all Parent Carer Council members are volunteers, parents themselves with children who have special educational needs, having links to parents support groups and showed the PCC Leaflet which all of the people in the room had been given a copy.

She introduced Terry Earland, Consultant and went to introduce Peter Broster, Head of Additional Needs but he had not yet arrived. He came in at 6.45 pm with apologies for being late.

Therese explained the format of the meeting and asked people to work through the response sheets and use them as a voice so that as many views as possible could be fed back as a result of the event.

AGENDA

- Consultation process (slides)
- Flip Charts - One for problems with Proposals
One for inefficiencies in current system
- Consultation feedback forms correspond to the slides in powerpoint

SLIDE ONE

Terry explained that this is no longer the proposal. He said that that report was at the start of the consultations with schools and that now they are consulting on how to assess needs at the current Band 1 -3 and that there will be no changes for those with statements. The process must be written, assessed and reviewed very clearly documented. Terry was asked to explain what Bands 1 - 8 were, 1 being 2.5 hours to 8 being 32.5 hours support.

He explained that this is not a savings exercise; the pure aim is to get resources to pupils in a quicker and easier system. Models being looked at were at the moment Gloucestershire and Blackburn. Terry also explained that his background is that of Social Care for Children Services.

Therese asked what the new proposal is. Terry explained that at the moment there is no revised proposal. A letter has gone to all parents with Band 1 - 3 statements asking for their views. Peter stood and said that the key issue with the replacement is not about what children get but how they get it and to make it quicker/done in a more flexible way.

Worry was expressed at putting provision into schools as some are not as good as others at SA and SA+ and that they are not showing how schools should use this funding. Peter explained that Parents like the robust way of statementing; the down side is the convoluted way of getting it. They are trying to get a balance and it is not clear how this can be done.

Terry explained that he had been looking into two models, one being Gloucestershire who have 4 monitoring officers and Cheshire as the second who have Annual Audits to ensure funding is being used correctly. He said that assessment is only legal if written down and in those areas they use mapping to help. Therese asked why change things as the statement is legal. Terry said that in Cheshire the funding is in place in three weeks which is very quick. Therese said she would ask her Scrutineer to check out that information, that the conversation today was different to yesterday and asked if the rest of the proposal was still the same now?

It was stated that a child with a statement has a legal right to schools when named on a statement and they do not need to go through the normal admission policies. Peter agreed that if the Authority agreed a school then the school must take them. Two thirds of statemented children are in main stream school - this is a strength of the system. One third are in special schools and they are placed there by the Authority. The downside is that with a statement if parents do not agree with the school named on the statement then they have to go to Tribunal whereas a non-statemented child would go through the local admission policy.

The subject of monitoring SA and SA+ was returned to and Terry showed the group the Removing Barriers Document suggesting parents should see that it was the Government looking for changes in the amount of

paperwork and not just Lincolnshire Authority. Therese highlighted that the reports are good but that parents do not have the time to be wading through these documents.

A question was asked of Peter about the percentage of pupils moving from mainstream to special. Peter said he did not know, that some Parents want special schools and some don't, that the Authority does follow parent's views both ways. He said that the third that go to Special School tend to have more severe and broad problems and this is not the group that we are focusing on in this proposal.

The comment was made that SENCo's need training and that they have no knowledge of the budget, or the system.

Another comment was how much more can Teachers have put on them and what level are they at now?

There was a question of a child's help been shared with others with a statement. Peter said this was not what should happen with a statement.

It was commented that what happens for the child with severe needs who should have a statement? Peter explained that there would be a need to get others involved.

It was explained by one parent that their SENCo's hands were tied and they can only put 10 pupils in for MDA a year as permitted by the Authority, therefore they have been told to write and ask for MDA. Peter said that they were miss-informed and that there was no quota system but a criteria to meet need. There are no limits on how many a school can put in for. Also, every Parent has a legal right to ask for MDA and if the Authority do not agree there is the Tribunal. The Tribunal can also be used when a statement is finalised. Any parent can appeal; Parent Partnership are there to help in these cases.

Another comment made was that parents are being told that with Dyslexia/Dyspraxia, teachers are saying there is no point in asking for a statement.

A Dad explained how his son had gone through the process to be told no to a statement. He then applied for his son and he now has full time support - he asked how can such mistakes happen?

Therese asked the meeting how many people did not need to battle for the statement. Only one person spoke up as someone who had a good route to a statement and her daughter has Down's syndrome. Someone asked if she felt it was easier as her child looked disabled? All agreed it is harder to recognise disability when it is "invisible". Jenny did say that she had a friend with a Down's Child who did have to fight hard for their statement.

One other Mum explained that the school had used the funding to get her son a laptop which was what he needed, but then had no funds to show him how to use it.

A Mum who is currently going through the system explained how she was very scared at the process and that it had been turned down as the school had not done the paperwork right. Would the new system make it quicker?

Another commented on the long process, that the child was not being educated and felt that if they as Parents had left it to school to sort they would still be waiting for help in the next year.

Peter reiterated that that is what the process is. They cannot make any changes but that they feel schools tend to be the ones putting in for statements. Therese asked the meeting if they found it easy to get agencies involved; a definite "no" was the response.

One parent explained it took seven years to get a statement.

One lady said she was very disturbed as she has 3 children with SEN and when she went through this 20 years ago it was the same problem. Neither the Parents with the Authority or vice a versa have trust in what is being done. How hard will it be for SENCo's to now have to manage a two tier system? Terry stood and said why trust now? That at some time a move must be taken to go forward and that to wait for 7 years is non sensical. He said that we know we have to make steps forward when a child's need's can be met without the child struggling.

A Dad spoke up as he is in the Services and explained that it helps to have a statement. His own child started the statementing process in Lincs but moved to Manchester and a totally different system. They

came back to Lincs and got a statement. Peter explained that Lincs do try to match a pupil moving in with provision already on a statement as best they can and maybe they should think about statementing forces children. The meeting said it was very unfair to do that as it should be the same for all children.

A parent commented that if he stopped paying his council tax how quickly would he be chased?

Terry said easily accessible level of support for children is what the Government wants.

SLIDE 2

Yesterday Terry had mentioned Team around the Child (TAC). He explained that a child exists in a family/school and if they are supporting a child on the social care side of things a preventative system exists that uses resources and gets agencies involved. Terry asked if anyone had any involvement with TAC or CAF (Common Assessment Framework)? A parent explained that she had undergone one for direct payments and felt that it questioned her as a parent more than anything.

Terry explained that it had been used for Children in Need and that there would be a need for a new one. Sharon asked if as in a CAF there needs to be 2 agencies or more so, if a child only needs one would it happen? Terry said yes, no form would say could not use single agency alone. Peter explained that some children just have a problem with learning so one agency is all that may be needed whereas some have more complex health needs and therefore more agencies are involved. He said that a statement can help with physical/medical needs; the problem is with those who just have learning difficulties and schools just want to know what to do to put it right and just need help to do that and this is what this is about.

A parent said that at the moment there are not enough Educational Psychologists. Peter agreed.

Another comment was what happens for those who have underlying problems if there is no assessment. Will they be missed?

A parent asked does Cheshire use CAF? Terry said no they did not, that CAF is being rolled out in Lincolnshire and at the moment it is not well embedded. They may have to kick it out of court as it may not work. Cheshire have a monitoring group.

A parent asked for a show of hands in the room to show how many people had statements?

Have statement (most of the room	37
Parental Referral	26
Pre-school	6

Comments were made about one parent who had to have 2 Tribunals. They now have 20 hours for their son; the school was very supportive but educationally they felt left down. The lady who had said that it took 7 years explained how school had said go to the GP, the GP had referred them to Moore House, they referred them to Health for eye and hearing testing. It was all a "waiting game" - 18 months for Moore House and 6 months for Specialists only to then find it had nothing to do with that side. In the end they paid for an educational assessment themselves.

A parent said that schools feel damned if they do and damned if they don't because of the pressure of league tables.

It was asked of the meeting how many parents had had to appeal their statement? (Hands counted - 25.) Peter asked for clarification at which part of the process? From Proposed Statement to Final, or Final to Tribunal?

Someone asked what about the parents who could not do the forms? Another asked about staff training and mentioned the importance of having staff aware of high functioning autism.

SLIDE 3

A Parent explained how their child had started Secondary and was put on the Register. In Primary they were not; they loved their SENCo who did everything to have it right for when he moved to Secondary.

Terry explained that schools do have individual expertise and that small schools can mask needs as they are nurturing places.

A Gran spoke up explaining that her grandson was on Band 3 and that they would like to see that increased with a Special School placement for Secondary. Mum explained that he is quiet and therefore not noticed for further help.

Therese introduced the need for a High Functioning ASD school. One Father commented that all schools should have trained staff to cater for all.

It was commented that passive children are missed and disruptive behaviour equals help.

A Foster Carer commented that they have an Aspergers child and that they are looking at Shropshire for an Autistic High Functioning school for the last year of their child's schooling.

A Father explained how in his job he is tested annually to ensure he can do his job - this should happen for teaching staff.

A Parent spoke in defence of her friend who is a SENCo in a large secondary where there are 340 children in the school and 120 on the register - she is only part time.

SLIDE 4

A Parent asked why special schools?

Terry explained that the 21 special schools seem to work in isolation. Lots of schools in Lincolnshire seem to work alone and they don't share information. They are talking about developing clusters to share information. Terry said that they will need to be resourced well and that special schools want to do this - and some schemes are being piloted. He explained that Teacher training does not allocate much time to SEN, that they need to bring SENCo's in and that TA's should be trained and have quality monitoring.

A parent asked where is the Autistic Special School in Lincolnshire?
Terry explained that Gosberton House School is accredited by National Autistic Society. Peter said that Autism Outreach goes out from both St Christopher's and Gosberton House and that there is special provision in

Ambergate. The new educational village in Gainsborough will also have some expertise.

One parent commented that help had been into school but the school did zilch. A parent newly going through system said that her school is doing what they can but it takes so long - there is no one in place. Peter explained that St Christopher's gets over and beyond for funding. One Dad said that Gosberton House had been in and the Teacher said they know better,; the SENCo even asked if he was hitting the child. He said that the wrong people are in the decision making places.

One Parent said they had just had a diagnosis but that there was no help. Therese suggested that Parent Groups are a useful place to find help and information.

Sharon asked where is the school for ADHD, Dyslexia, Tourettes and the other types of difficulties. Therese commented that there are 3 EBD schools but none for High functioning Autism and ADHD. Peter said that it is a good point but that the Authority is very committed to its special schools referring back to the Gainsborough Educational Village.

Peter said that the meeting was going off the reason for it, that being the discussion about Banding 1 -3 and how can teachers learn to teach all. Teachers are good at assessing and need a faster way to meet learning needs. Those with ASD are likely to need a statement but if it is just learning difficulties these simpler needs need to be met.

SLIDE 5

This slide needed to be revised as when it was originally done the idea was to be looking at Bands up to 6. It had been decided that that was overkill for the moment so it was changed to Bands 1 - 3.

It was asked how it would be policed? Terry said that there was a need for monitoring, with ring fencing available for individual children.

It was asked would it be a legal document. The reply was that if the assessment failed they would be able to go to Tribunal.

A question was asked that if the funding was purely for the children, who would pay for the Admin? How would this be transparent? Concern was

expressed that things will not be reported. Terry explained that this is moving away from the SA and SA+ which is currently not working. It is not ring fenced but the new system will be.

One Parent spoke up and said that even with a Statement it is hard to get the school to show how they are using the funding. Peter said he agreed with that comment. It was commented that Parents don't care about money, they just want to see their children supported.

Peter said that not having children at Band 1-3 Statemented might look hard to Parents but that it is to replace the SA+ system in place and put something in much quicker for children, something that will allow money for individual children and not money in blocks to schools and that the system needs records to show this.

Again the question of legality was put to Peter and he explained that there would be no legal right to go to Tribunal but rights would be attached.

SLIDE 6

Money would be readily available without going through the testing route and would therefore help a child's life in school.

One parent explained that the trouble is it is the system at SA and SA+ which is painful and not the statementing. They asked if the new system would change this.

Terry said that schools will need to work with Parents to explain the funding and that in recent consultations Heads were saying yes to reducing the Bands 1 - 3.

Therese questioned how the Heads had been informed. Terry explained that over a two week period 5 consultations had taken place. Therese questioned how school were informed as she knew of several who had not been notified in time. Terry said that the invites had been put onto NETLinc and in hard copies. What more could he do? It was commented that busy Heads could easily miss NETLinc notices.

A Parent commented that with the old system it still came down to the SENCo to put in paperwork. Is the new system going to make it more

complicated for the SENCo's and will they be expected to do this without further training? Peter said that the new system would be taking those forms away and putting in just one.

Parent asked will it be as good as a statement. Peter said it is for those with no specific needs.

SLIDE 7

The comment from the floor was Sack them All!

Other comments included:

What is going wrong? Listening to parents
 Dyslexia Institute
 Training
 Need full time SENCo's not Heads as SENCos
 Too much is been asked of schools

A Parent explained that Early Years provision is very good. Could something be put in place for Primary and Secondary?

There needed to be a change in culture so that schools can ask for help rather than been afraid to.

Schools have a lack of respect for Pre School professionals.

It takes 6 months to a year for support to be available.

ASD should have an automatic statement with diagnosis.

Parents are experts themselves.

Speech and Language need to go into schools rather than asking school staff to be the ones doing the therapy.

There needed to be the sharing of information through the different staff i.e. teachers don't know necessary information.

There are Parents who cannot fill out forms and have no/limited understanding of the system.

SLIDE 8

It was asked how will the parents find out that the LA have listened. Will it be the same as the past with no feedback and everything remaining the same?

Terry explained that a report will be written and rolled down to the Parent Carer Council and the Parent Partnership Service. He said that the original proposals have been changed through the consultations.

Terry admitted that he had to put his hand up to say he missed out Parents initially but that this would not happen again.

The final proposal would probably not come out to consultation again. Therese asked if the final report could be sent to schools so that they could pass it onto Parents to get feedback.

A member from a nursery was present at the meeting and explained how they had been missed completely and Christine Banham's recent letter was the first they had heard about this. Terry will take this up with the Early Years Team.

A Parent asked how are schools welcoming these proposals? Peter said everyone agreed it was a good debate; now we need to make something happen. The parent commented that their school is panicking.

The Meeting Ended