

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Labour Government, as part of its commitment to modernise Local Government introduced a Bill “The Local Government Act 1999” more commonly known as “Best Value” which came into effect on 1 April 2000 in England and Wales.

One of the key principles of the Act, which primarily centres around a culture of continuous improvement with a focus on customers and quality, requires organisations to be committed to and effect a programme of “Fundamental Reviews”.

Similar legislation was introduced for District Councils in Northern Ireland in April 2000. While the principles of the legislation apply across the public sector, no formal arrangements are in place for education, but proposals to introduce a duty of best value requiring Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland (hereinafter referred to as ELBs) to make continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, are to be included in the next Education Bill for Northern Ireland.

However, ELBs entered voluntarily into arrangements in 1999, to develop a comprehensive approach to manage best value in the education sector.

A Best Value Project Board (*Appendix 1*) comprised of senior officers from ELBs and the Department of Education (hereinafter referred to as DE) was established which agreed the broad terms of reference for a Central Management Support Unit (CMSU). The CMSU is an inter-board unit and its roles are to co-ordinate the process of Best Value and conduct a programme of fundamental service reviews across ELBs.

An agreed programme of reviews on services was established on the basis of those services which constituted significant spend, were the subject of an independent or external enquiry (eg the Northern Ireland Audit Office, hereinafter referred to as NIAO) and also had a significant focus on schools.

Reviews of ELBs’ Home to School Transport Service and Building Maintenance Service have both been completed following their selection on the above basis. ELBs are currently implementing the recommendations arising from the two reviews, and the DE is monitoring progress in this regard.

The Special Education Service was also selected on the same basis. Previous external studies included:

- a report by the NIAO (1998);
- a survey commissioned by DE and undertaken by the Special Needs Research Centre of the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne (1998);
- a report by the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue (1998); and
- a report by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (1999).

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of a fundamental review is to improve the quality of services delivered. This is achieved by firstly identifying areas for improvement and, secondly, by identifying examples of good practice that can be disseminated and adopted.

Given the wide range of services within special education and the significant number of existing reports or work currently being progressed, agreeing terms of reference for the review was a difficult task. Following input from the Senior Education Officers' Group it was agreed that the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (hereinafter referred to as the Code of Practice) was a useful entry point to all aspects of special education and the Best Value Project Board subsequently agreed the following terms of reference:

The Fundamental Performance Review of Special Education will examine the area in accordance with statutory arrangements approved by the Department of Education under Article 4 of the Education (NI) Order 1996, as supported by the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

The review will examine the delivery of services in pursuit of Boards' statutory duties in the above area but will in the first instance focus on Stages 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice, statutory assessments and statementing, notwithstanding the relationship between the earlier Stages 1-3.

In recognition of the complex and wide-ranging nature of the service, this review is considered as an entry point to Special Education and may result in the identification of further steps for review or action in association with the Regional Strategy Group on Special Education.

The review will clearly define the scope and standards of the service; challenging and questioning the existing arrangements for making provision for children with special educational needs including special schools, special units and mainstream provision and producing meaningful comparisons and benchmarks both internally and with other providers.

This review will involve extensive consultation with stakeholders in this service area, taking into account the requirements under Section 75 (Statutory Duty) of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) and will make recommendations for the future management and delivery of the Special Education Service.

The focus of this report is therefore on Stages 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice and the immediate implications from those Stages. It is therefore not exhaustive in its scope.

3.0 METHODOLOGY FOR REVIEW

In drafting a methodology for the review, reference was made to a range of published materials from the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions (DETR), guidance from local councils and general information from the Local Government Association.

The Best Value Project Board approved the methodology and the management of the project was controlled in line with the Government recommended methodology, i.e. Projects in a Controlled Environment (PRINCE).

The review follows the classical four 'C's approach of Challenge, Compare, Consult and Compete.

A Special Education Central Steering Team was established, the membership of which included senior officers from Special Education Branches of ELBs, two school principals and a representative from DE (*Appendix 2*). A member of the Regional Strategy Group on Special Educational Needs (hereinafter referred to as the Regional Strategy Group) chaired the Central Steering Team (see point 4.7.2).

The Special Education Central Steering Team established a Consultation Group and Finance Group to address these aspects of the review. Membership of the Consultation Group included a representative from the Eastern Health and Social Services Board and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (hereinafter referred to as CCMS), Officers from Special Education, Best Value Officers and five principals from different types of schools (*Appendix 3*).

Membership of the Finance Group included staff from Special Education and Finance and a representative from DE (*Appendix 4*).

The role of the three teams, in liaison with the CMSU, was to critically challenge and evaluate all information and be updated at each step of the review.

3.1 CHALLENGE

3.1.1 The process of challenge, completely underpins the approach to carrying out a review and is arguably one of the most important of the four 'C's' in any best value review. It marks the beginning of the review and sets the scene for what follows by way of recommendations whilst putting discipline into the thought process.

3.1.2 In England local authorities are rejecting many best value reviews because they are insufficiently challenging. The challenge process should be rigorous enough to penetrate the organisation.

3.1.3 The challenge process should question the status quo in terms of role, purpose and existence, identify all the alternatives and explore the feasibility of the alternatives including 'thinking the unthinkable'.

3.1.4 The stages of challenge should examine:

- i. Why is the service provided?
 - ii. How is the service configured?
 - iii. Can the service be provided differently?
 - iv. What are the constraints?
 - v. Are there different means of resourcing the service?
 - vi. How does this service relate to others?
- 3.1.5 To address the challenge aspect of the Special Education Service, members of the various teams focused on questions relating to the provision of the service.
- 3.1.6 The challenge process formally commenced in October 2001 when members considered the Special Education Service under the following headings:
- i. the service itself; ie statutory framework, nature of service, structure, location, frequency, cost and benefit;
 - ii. scope for thinking laterally, ie information communication technology opportunities, innovation/enterprise, joint ventures/partnership, outsourcing, mixed economy and consortia;
 - iii. use of resources, buildings, information technology, finance, human resources.
- 3.1.7 As the challenge meetings developed consideration of various questions resulted in the compilation of a comprehensive list of issues for the service. The issues identified by members were subsequently categorised into broad headings as follows:
- i. context (including legislation);
 - ii. application of the Code of Practice;
 - iii. Special Educational Needs Tribunal;
 - iv. provision/structures;
 - v. finance;
 - vi. workforce;
 - vii. management information;
 - viii. equality; and
 - ix. inclusion.

3.2 COMPARE

- 3.2.1 The comparison stage entailed gathering data both internally from Boards and externally from LEAs, DfEE etc in terms of costs and processes. The report also referenced previous studies carried out on special education (reference 4.6.2). LEAs currently in position to supply data/statistics in relation to special education that ELBs are largely unable to do so due to the absence of a management information system with the result, that the comparisons internally to Northern Ireland and externally to LEAs, are limited. The review has reported on comparators in the Audit Commission Report, *Statutory Assessment and Statements of SEN: in Need of Review?* and has also referenced publications from the DfEE and LEAs.
- 3.2.2 In acknowledging the differences and the difficulties of collecting and comparing information across ELBs, templates were agreed for the presentation of both statistical and financial data. Special education officers had agreed the statistical template used as a format, prior to the commencement of the review. Similarly, the format used for the financial information had been agreed previously by the Association of Chief Finance Officers for use in the Assessment of Relative Needs Exercise (ARNE).

3.3 CONSULT

- 3.3.1 The concept of consultation and customer involvement underpins the current drive for “best value”. Listening to and involving users of services in making improvements, setting standards and reviewing services is fundamental to the process and is one of the most important of the four ‘C’s’.
- 3.3.2 The Consultation Group identified a list of stakeholders as well as appropriate methodologies for consulting the various groups.

STAKEHOLDERS

<i>CORE</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and SENCOs • Classroom Assistants • Educational Psychology Service • Property Owners eg ELBs/Trustees • Boards of Governors • Education Welfare Service • CASS, Children Order, Behaviour Teams • ELB Staff eg Transport, Special Administration, Human Resources • Statementing, Health and Safety, Awards • Support Services eg Guidance Units, Education other than at School, home tuition • Peripatetic, hospital tuition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach support (learning, behaviour, physical) • Family Support Consultation Unit • NE • Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment • Schools provision outside Northern Ireland • Private sector provision eg Glencraig • All school staff • Taxi drivers and escorts • CCMS • Education Training Inspectorate • Special Educational Needs Tribunal
<i>SUPPORT</i>	<i>VOLUNTARY</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical personnel – Senior Clinical Medical Officers, Therapists, Child Psychiatry • Department of Education (Administration and ETI Building Branch) • Social Services • Teachers’ Unions • Regional Training Unit • Juvenile Justice • Suppliers eg equipment • Training and Employment Agency • Governing Bodies Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Agencies – Carers (umbrella associations) National Association of Special Educational Needs Regional Group • Minority groups (equality)
<i>RECEIVERS OF THE SERVICE</i>	<i>OTHERS</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians/those with parental responsibility • Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges of Further Education

- 3.3.3 The key themes to be addressed, in the consultation exercise were identified as follows:
- i. policy and provision;
 - ii. school based stages (Stages 1-3 pre-statement support);
 - iii. statutory assessment process (Stages 4 and 5);
 - iv. post statement arrangements (Annual Reviews and Transition Plans);
 - v. children transferring from other schools in Northern Ireland;
 - vi. inclusion;
 - vii. quality and responsiveness of those involved in the delivery of the Special Education Service;
 - viii. quality and responsiveness of those involved in the delivery of property services in relation to special education;
 - ix. training and development;
 - x. involvement of parents and children at Stages 4 and 5;
 - xi. resources; and
 - xii. use of information technology.

The above themes reflect the format of the school based consultation and were used as the basis for discussions with other stakeholders at meetings, focus groups and interviews.

- 3.3.4 The Special Education Central Steering Team subsequently approved the consultation strategy with the emphasis on questionnaires, focus groups and meetings.
- 3.3.5 The sample of schools selected to participate in the questionnaire survey (*Appendix 5*) was representative of schools within ELBs, ie by school sector (nursery, primary, secondary, grammar and special), by type (controlled, maintained and controlled integrated), by enrolment and gender of children and by setting (urban, semi-rural, rural). A selection of voluntary grammar and grant-maintained schools were also included in the survey. This proportionately representative sample was selected to ensure reliability and validity of data collected.
- 3.3.6 The questionnaire was issued to 372 schools in November 2001. This comprised all special schools, all schools with a special unit(s) and 20% of the remaining mainstream schools. The breakdown of schools surveyed and the returns for each ELB area is shown in table 1.

SCHOOLS SURVEYED						
ELB	No of Special Schools (Note A)	Number of Schools with Special Units	Number of Mainstream Schools	Total Number of Schools Surveyed	Total Number of Surveys Returned	% of Surveys Returned
Belfast	12	7	32	52	32	62
North Eastern	11	20	54	86	56	65
South Eastern	10	25	39	73	55	75
Southern	6	34	56	95	65	68
Western	9	7	50	66	43	65
Total	48	93	231	372	251	67

Table 1
(Note A: excludes hospital schools)

- 3.3.7 All questionnaires were returned to the CMSU and the North Eastern and Western ELBs provided assistance with the keying of results. The survey results were analysed using a software package known as *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)*.
- 3.3.8 A summary of the results of the questionnaires has been produced on a Northern Ireland Aggregate basis, highlighting the position for ELBs in total. An individual summary has been issued for examination and action by each ELB. Access to the Northern Ireland Aggregate will enable each ELB to make comparisons against the average. Percentage results within the report refer to the valid responses from those schools to which the various questions apply.
- 3.3.9 Throughout the body of the report Northern Ireland Aggregate responses have been reported. Percentage results refer to 'Always True'. To include the 'sometimes' score would indicate a more positive result, but in striving for excellence ELBs should be aiming for 'Always True'. Responses to questions based on a four point scale, report on the positive statements in those scales, ie percentage results refer to 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' and 'Very Satisfied' and 'Satisfied'.
- 3.3.10 In addition to the questionnaires, a number of qualitative sessions were held with groups of school principals across the province and visits were also made to a range of types of schools (*Appendix 6*).
- 3.3.11 The views of the various groups within ELB structures, eg Special Education staff, Transport Officers, Education Welfare Officers, Educational Psychologists and School Principals, were mainly gathered via meetings attended by CMSU staff or each ELB's Best Value Officer.
- 3.3.12 A questionnaire was issued to a random sample of Boards of Governors (*Appendix 7*) which was also analysed by the CMSU. Summaries of the

results of the questionnaires have been produced on a Northern Ireland Aggregate basis, highlighting the position for ELBs in totality.

- 3.3.13 A range of other organisations and authorities was approached by the CMSU on behalf of ELBs. These included organisations such as the Training and Employment Agency, (hereinafter referred to as T&EA), Health and Social Services and the Special Educational Needs Tribunal (*Appendix 8*).
- 3.3.14 In acknowledging the importance of children and parents, a number of focus groups were held to gather views. Sessions were facilitated mainly by the voluntary sector and further meetings with parents were organised through schools. Views were gathered from approximately 70 parents. Consultation with parents was conducted in this manner because DE had commissioned the University of Ulster to undertake research and issue a questionnaire to ascertain parents' experiences of the statutory assessment process. Consequently, in order to prevent duplication and confusion amongst parents about the two pieces of work, the Consultation Group agreed that questionnaires should not be issued to parents as part of this review. It was hoped that the results of the DE parental questionnaire would be available to inform the review, however, an extension to the timescale for completion has been granted and results are not yet available. The CMSU and ELBs will nevertheless continue to work with DE and the University of Ulster on this project.
- 3.3.15 Approximately 50 voluntary organisations (*Appendix 9*) were asked for their views, however, only a small number responded and participated.
- 3.3.16 Voluntary organisations participated in consultation in a variety of ways, including:
- i. facilitating focus groups with children and parents;
 - ii. meetings; and
 - iii. written submissions.
- 3.3.17 A template of questions was used for focus groups with children (*Appendix 10*).
- 3.3.18 Comments and views made by voluntary sector organisations, parents, children and other participants in the consultation process have been included in relevant sections of the report.

3.4 COMPETE

- 3.4.1 In terms of general good practice, this section should normally cover options such as market testing, private finance, strategic partnerships and even strategic contracting out.
- 3.4.2 The Special Education Central Steering Team has acknowledged that a wide range of players provide the service and has used this part of the process to identify and examine alternative models of service delivery.

3.4.3 Given the number of stakeholders from both the statutory and voluntary sectors, there is a need for effective partnerships, which significantly impact on the service delivered to children, parents and schools.

4.0 CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 Legislation to protect the rights of individuals is extensive, not least in the area of education and special educational needs.
- 4.1.2 Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK Government in 1991, states that the child's rights to education requires that services are conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development.
- 4.1.3 Like most countries in the world, the UK supports the Salamanca Statement drawn up by the UNESCO world conference in 1994. This statement called upon all governments to '*adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise*'.

4.2 HISTORY OF SPECIAL NEEDS LEGISLATION

- 4.2.1 In a Northern Ireland context the Education (NI) Order 1986 required ELBs to make provision for children with special educational needs. This legislation contained a presumption in favour of integration.
- 4.2.2 The following year the Education (NI) Order 1987 similarly required ELBs to make provision for children previously determined as unsuitable for education at school. Until April 1987 these children were the responsibility of Health and Social Services Boards.
- 4.2.3 The Education (NI) Order 1996 places on ELBs a qualified duty to secure education in an ordinary school for a child on whom an ELB maintains a statement of special educational needs as long as it is compatible with the three caveats in legislation:
 - i. *His receiving the special educational provision which his learning difficulty calls for*
 - ii. *The provision of efficient education for the children with whom he will be educated*
 - iii. *The efficient use of resources.*

4.3 OTHER IMPACTING LEGISLATION

- 4.3.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory duty on public authorities, such as DE and ELBs, to carry out their functions, having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.
- 4.3.2 As a first step, ELBs examined all their policies and a range of issues were identified which led to a decision to carry out an equality impact assessment.

- 4.3.3 Together DE and ELBs will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of the policies promoting inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools and classes and maximising learning opportunities for children with learning difficulties/special educational needs.
- 4.3.4 These assessments will consider available data and research (including findings from this review), whether any adverse impact exists, and if so, any measures necessary to redress the situation.
- 4.3.5 The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporated most of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law. It promotes the education of children with special educational needs in integrated settings. As part of the process to raise human rights awareness, DE is funding the appointment of an advisory teacher for a period of two years. This post will be based in the Children's Law Centre and will focus on developing human rights information and learning materials.
- 4.3.6 At a conference on human rights issues hosted by DE (September 2001) participants in a workshop on special educational needs provision were asked to consider the following two questions:
- i. *What are the key human rights concerns regarding the provision of education for those with special educational needs?*
 - ii. *How can the "Voice of the Child" principle be enhanced in the education sector for those with special educational needs?*
- 4.3.7 Points highlighted included:
- i. agreement that there are insufficient resources available and the needs of children are not being met adequately;
 - ii. the need for a more effective and enforceable statutory assessment process;
 - iii. more accessible training for parents, teachers, children and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (hereinafter referred to as SENCOs); and
 - iv. the importance of a proper mechanism to enable the voice of children with special educational needs to be heard.
- 4.3.8 Participants debated the issue of mainstream provision versus special schools. It was generally agreed that provision must fit the needs of the child and that, whatever the system, it must be able to genuinely address those needs.

4.4 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.4.1 The Warnock Report (1978) has influenced much of the practice in special education in the UK. Warnock estimated that about 20% of children would have special educational needs at some stage in their school careers that would require additional help. Within this figure it was estimated that only 2% of children would have needs that could not reasonably be provided for within the resources normally available to mainstream schools; and would be of such proportion as to require special educational provision to be made for them. The needs of the remaining 18% fall within the remit of the school. When the Warnock Report was produced there was a significantly smaller number of identified special educational needs than is the case today. The main categories at that time would have been severe learning difficulties (hereinafter referred to as SLD) and moderate learning difficulties (hereinafter referred to as MLD). Today, a greater number of needs are identified, e.g autism, emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and speech and language difficulties, all of which range from mild to severe.
- 4.4.2 Northern Ireland legislation followed a similar pattern to England, with the introduction of the Education (Northern Ireland) 1996 Order. The Code of Practice was issued under Article 4 of the 1996 Order and addresses the identification, assessment and provision made for all children who may have special educational needs. The Code of Practice provides guidance for ELBs, schools and other bodies such as Health and Social Services, on the discharge of statutory functions in respect of children with special educational needs. The five-staged approach of the Code of Practice is largely based on the English context and is written on the premise that the special educational needs of most children are identified and addressed in a mainstream setting.
- 4.4.3 Of particular significance in the legislation is the eighteen-week limit to the statutory assessment process.
- 4.4.4 Generally the Code of Practice promotes a whole school approach to special educational needs, with an emphasis on early identification and individualised programmes. It also prescribes an extended and developmental role for the member of staff within mainstream schools who has responsibility for children with special educational needs (SENCO).
- 4.4.5 According to legislation, and as restated in the Code of Practice, a child has special educational needs if he/she has a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision to be made for him/her. A child of compulsory school age is regarded as having a learning difficulty when:
- i. he/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age; or
 - ii. he/she has a disability that either prevents or hinders him/her from making use of the educational facilities of a kind generally provided at mainstream schools for children of his/her age.

- 4.4.6 In the case of a child below compulsory school age, the definition is whether, if special educational provision was not made for the child, he/she would be likely to fall within the above categories when that child reaches that age.
- 4.4.7 The Code of Practice reflects the estimates in the Warnock Report. In practice, this average percentage across ELBs is 2.7%, ranging from approximately 2% to just over 4% in ELBs, whereas the figure is just over 3% in England and Wales. The current consultation document on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill (hereinafter referred to as SENDB) states that *'around 3% of severe or complex needs will require the ELB to determine and arrange the special educational provision for the child by means of a statement of SEN'*.

STATUTORY ASSESSMENT PROCESS				
ELB	Total ELB Population	No of Children Receiving Stage 3 Provision	Number of Statemented Children (Stage 5 Provision)	Number of Statements as Percentage of ELB Population (at Oct 2000 Census)
Belfast	64,008	1,571	1,525	2.38%
North Eastern	74,696	1,042	1,493	2.00%
South Eastern	66,695	662	2,793	4.19%
Southern	76,284	826	1,871	2.45%
Western	64,071	1,215	1,610	2.51%
TOTAL	345,754	5,316	9,292	2.69%

Table 2 (Source ELBS)

- 4.4.8 Despite an overall reduction in the school population of 2.11% from 1990/91 to 2000/2001, there has been a significant growth in recent years in the number of children with a statement of special educational needs. The number has risen from a total of 5,480 in 1990/91 (Source NIAO) to 9,292 in 2000/2001 (school year), an increase of 70%. Reasons for this include:
- i. earlier identification of special needs;
 - ii. inappropriate curriculum;
 - iii. improvements in life expectancy for children with severe and complex medical conditions;
 - iv. better diagnosis of syndromes such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (hereinafter referred to as ASD) and emergence of new disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);
 - v. growth in the number of children with EBD; and

- vi. under LMS budget decreases as a consequence of declining enrolments have resulted in a reduction in the number of special educational needs teachers;
 - vii. greater pressures generally on schools;
 - viii. greater expectations from parents whose children have special needs.
- 4.4.9 Expenditure on the Special Education Service has increased from approximately £41 m in 1995/96 to £59m, in 2000/01, ie an increase of 44%. These figures exclude expenditure in mainstream provision to support children with special educational needs.
- 4.4.10 The Report from the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee recognised the impact of issues such as Local Management of Schools (LMS), the School Improvement Programme, the Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995) and the curriculum on schools, much of which emphasised the need for a holistic approach in dealing with special educational needs.

4.5 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : CURRENT POSITION

- 4.5.1 During consultation with a wide range of representatives, it was acknowledged that compliance with the Code of Practice brought rigour to the whole area of special needs. The Code of Practice clearly defines a route map for schools, parents and ELB officers in terms of processes, timescales and standards.
- 4.5.2 It also includes a section on children under compulsory school age which states that *'nursery schools and classes are expected to follow broadly the same procedures for identifying and meeting young children's special educational needs as are recommended for children of compulsory school age'*. However, best value consultation highlighted the view of the nursery sector that the statutory assessment process takes too long.

There is an inconsistent approach across ELBs to the provision of support to nurseries.

The proportionately large number of children with special educational needs, at times, adversely affects provision for all children in a nursery school.

An issue raised in the course of the review by ELB and Health staff concerned the equality of access to specialist services for children attending voluntary and private pre-school provision.

- 4.5.3 From a parent's perspective, while the Code of Practice clearly identifies the steps, it brings in their words *'an administrative nightmare'*. Parents have stated in focus groups that the statement tells them exactly what they already knew about the ability of their own child and does not necessarily clearly state what provision will be made to address their special educational needs. While the core principles behind the process have been well intentioned, the current associated procedure has served only to increase the stress and pressure at a time when many are struggling to come to terms with the reality of their child being classified as having special educational needs.

- 4.5.4 Equally, from a professional and administrative aspect, the introduction of the framework has also brought significant levels of administration, which have proved to be time-consuming, and also resource intensive for all stakeholders. This has resulted in the investment of valuable professional time on administrative tasks rather than addressing more strategic issues. Consequently, the situation has contributed to the view that bureaucracy has increased at a cost to the child who should be at the centre of the process. Views of Health and Social Services would concur.
- 4.5.5 ELB officers expressed concern in relation to the definitions of special educational needs and learning difficulty contained in the legislation. It is their view that the definitions are vague and open to interpretation, which can be a contributing factor to the adversarial climate that sometimes exists between parents of children with special educational needs and those statutory sectors involved. In addition, the application and interpretation of the Code of Practice across ELBs has resulted in varying practices.
- 4.5.6 Each ELB and every individual school is required to have a special needs policy. These policies broadly outline the statutory duties relating to children with special educational needs and the type of provision that parents can expect to be made. The ELB and school policies are complimentary and take account of any guidance issued from other relevant bodies such as DE or the CCMS.
- 4.5.7 In the best value consultation, responses to the survey of Boards of Governors indicated that 84% of schools had established a school policy in relation to the provision of education for children with special educational needs and 64% replied that this policy is reviewed regularly. With regard to reporting annually to parents on various aspects of special educational needs, scores were somewhat lower, with a maximum score of 47% recorded in relation to reporting on steps taken to implement the school's policy on special educational needs.
- 4.5.8 Both schools and Boards of Governors were asked a number of questions relating to their awareness of and input to policy and provision, the results of which are shown overleaf.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS AND BOARDS OF GOVERNORS		
Policy and Provision	School %	Boards of Governors %
Awareness of the legislation that defines the ELB's statutory duties in relation to special educational needs	95	75
Awareness of the Code of Practice	100	78
Awareness of the ELB's policy on SEN	94	72
Feel that its Board of Governors is aware of its responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice	73	69
Feel that the Code of Practice facilitates the identification of children with special educational needs in their schools	86	72
Awareness of the range of ELB provision available for children with SEN	84	72
Feel that they have insufficient input to strategic planning and policy development for SEN	61	34
Would like more involvement in strategic planning and policy development for SEN	71	62

Table 3

4.5.9 Just over 40% of the responses from Boards of Governors indicated that they are satisfied that the development needs of Governors are being met in relation to school policy setting.

4.5.10 In contrast, 70% of schools feel very satisfied or satisfied on the same issue. Responses from Boards of Governors identified the need for more training for Governors to cover areas such as responsibilities and policy development, while responses from schools indicated that there should be closer links between the SENCO and Governors, in addition to more training for Governors.

4.6 DEVELOPMENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

4.6.1 Early discussions in the review centred on how special education should be defined in the context of social inequality, the measures of success used, and the anticipated contribution of individuals to society and economic prosperity.

4.6.2 In recent years interest in special education has increased and there has been a number of studies conducted in this area. These have included:

i. Special Education in Northern Ireland - NIAO Report (1998)

Against the background of increasing expenditure, identification of new needs and the introduction of LMS, this report provided an assessment of performance across the ELBs on managing special educational needs resources. The NIAO examined the following issues:

- the effectiveness of the process of assessing special educational needs and issuing statements;
- an evaluation of placement trends and policies;
- the appropriateness of the means by which resources are allocated to meet special educational needs; and
- the systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of resource utilisation.

ii. Practice in Mainstream Schools For Children With Special Educational Needs – University of Newcastle Upon Tyne (1998)

This research which became known as the Dyson Report, examined current practice in mainstream schools in Northern Ireland with regard to children with special educational needs.

The survey was to:

- establish a base-line of current practice against which the Code of Practice might be assessed;
- identify likely problems in the implementation of the Code of Practice; and
- identify ‘good practice’ on which that implementation might be based.

iii. Special Educational Provision For School-age Children in Northern Ireland - Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue (1998)

The Standing Committee established under the Northern Ireland Forum to examine issues relating to education provision decided to examine special educational provision in Northern Ireland.

The study was again undertaken for reasons similar to the others detailed above i.e the backdrop of evolving new policy and legislation on special educational needs, the accompanying Code of Practice and the Labour Government’s Green Paper “Excellence for all Children – Meeting Special Educational Needs” (October 1997).

iv. Special Needs Education - Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Report on Public Expenditure in Northern Ireland (1999)

This enquiry examined, from a public expenditure perspective, the adequacy of provision for special educational needs in Northern Ireland and the efficiency of arrangements for providing special needs education in the province.

In doing so, the Committee considered the different levels of special educational needs, the assessment procedures used, the types of provision and funding arrangements.

- 4.6.3 In recent years much work has been undertaken in the area of special educational needs, some of which has been in response to the findings of the above studies. One of the most significant developments has been the establishment of the Regional Strategy Group by the Association of Chief Executives of the ELBs. The remit of the group is to oversee developments in special education across ELBs and to promote consistency and commonality of approach. Various parties including the Regional Strategy Group, DE and the voluntary sector have instigated projects.
- 4.6.4 Since the introduction of the Code of Practice, there have been numerous developments in the Special Education Service. These have included:
- i. training and conferences for school staff and Governors;
 - ii. appointment of additional educational psychologists and administrative staff to support the statutory assessment process;
 - iii. development of new services such as Behaviour Management Teams, Educational Guidance Centres, Education Other Than At School (hereinafter referred to as EOTAS) and support services for particular needs such as autism; and
 - iv. liaison with Health and Social Services in areas such as Children Services Planning.
- 4.6.5 DE Inspection Reports indicate that provision for special educational needs remain variable, but it is notable that a majority of schools are focussing on special educational needs in the context of the Code of Practice and establishing appropriate procedures and practices.
- 4.6.6 ELBs have worked with DE on a number of projects such as autism and dyslexia which have culminated in the production of reports in these specific areas.
- 4.6.7 The major areas currently being addressed include:
- i. common criteria for Stage 3 provision;
 - ii. common criteria for statutory assessment;
 - iii. inclusion;
 - iv. research on the effectiveness of different placements for children with moderate learning difficulties;
 - v. effective transition planning

- vi. research on parental experiences of the statutory assessment process; and
- vii. Equality Impact Assessments.

4.6.8 All of the above issues continue to generate interest amongst various stakeholders, including the Northern Ireland Assembly. In the two years, September 2000 to August 2002, ELBs have responded, through DE, to an average of one Assembly question per week on special educational needs (*Source DE*).

4.6.9 Forthcoming developments e.g. Freedom of Information Act and the appointment of a Children's Commissioner for Northern Ireland, are likely to affect special education, but the impact will not be clear for some time.

4.6.10 Proposals in relation to a Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill were issued by the Department of Education for consultation in autumn 2002. The objective of the proposed legislation is to give school children and students in Northern Ireland the same rights with regard to access to schools and further and higher education institutions as exist in other parts of the United Kingdom.

The proposed new legislation will be in three parts and will amend existing legislation for children with special educational needs as well as amending the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The consultation document summarises the proposed legislation as follows:

i. Part 1

- *strengthen the rights of children with SEN to be educated in mainstream schools where parents want this and the interests of other children can be protected;*
- *require education and library boards to make arrangements for services to provide parents of children with SEN with advice and information and the means of resolving disputes with schools and boards;*
- *require boards to comply within prescribed periods, with orders of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal (SENT) and make other changes in support of the SENT appeals process and the statutory assessment process.*

ii. Part 2

This part would deal with disability discrimination in schools. It would place new duties on education and library boards and schools (including independent schools); these would include;

- *a duty not to treat disabled students less favourably, without justification, for a reason which relates to their disability;*

- *a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to pupils who are not disabled (but there would be no duty to remove or alter physical features or provide auxiliary aids and services);*
- *a duty to plan strategically and make progress in increasing accessibility to schools' premises and to the curriculum and in improving the way in which written information provided to pupils who are not disabled is provided to disabled pupils.*

iii. Part 3

Part 3 relates to further and higher education institutions.

The consultation period was extended until 31 January 2003 and the Bill is likely to have a significant impact on the provision of services for special educational needs.

- 4.6.11 In England, the Code of Practice has been revised, with the Stages being condensed to reflect a two stage approach – School Action and School Action Plus. It is not yet clear if Northern Ireland will follow this direction.
- 4.6.12 The outcomes of the work listed above, and the Programme for Government, including North/South ventures such as the Middletown Centre for Autism, will influence the delivery of special education in the future. However, the one recurring theme in developments is the strong emphasis on the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream provision.

5.0 THE APPLICATION OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The Code of Practice sets out a graduated response to meeting the special educational needs of children.

5.1 KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE

The fundamental principles of the Code of Practice are that:

- *All children should have their special needs met*
- *Children should have access to a broad and balanced education*
- *The needs of the majority of children should be met in mainstream schools without a statutory assessment or a statement*
- *Pre-school children may have special educational needs requiring the intervention of the Boards as well as the Health Services*
- *The knowledge, views and experience of parents are vital as is partnership between parents and schools, Boards and other agencies*

The Code of Practice embodies the following essential practices and procedures:

- *Children with special educational needs should be identified as early as possible and assessed as quickly as is consistent with thoroughness*
- *Provision should be made by the most appropriate agency*
- *Boards should complete assessments and statements as quickly as thorough consideration of the issues allows; Boards must produce clear and thorough statements, setting out the child's educational and non-educational needs, the objectives to be secured, the provision to be made and the arrangements for monitoring and review; they must ensure the annual review of the special educational provision made for the child and the monitoring and revision of educational targets*
- *The wishes of the child should be considered, in the light of his or her age and understanding*
- *There must be close co-operation between all the agencies concerned*

5.2 THE FIVE STAGE APPROACH

5.2.1 The first three Stages of the approach set out in the Code of Practice are school based calling on support from the ELB and/or Health and Social Services as necessary. Responsibilities are shared between ELBs and schools in Stages 4 and 5.

- i. *Stage 1: teachers identify and register a child's special educational needs and consulting the school's SEN co-ordinator, take initial action;*
- ii. *Stage 2: the SEN co-ordinator takes lead responsibility for collecting and recording information and for co-ordinating the child's special educational provision;*
- iii. *Stage 3: teachers and the SEN co-ordinator are supported by specialists from outside the school;*
- iv. *Stage 4: the Board considers the need for a statutory assessment and, if appropriate, makes a multi-disciplinary assessment; and*
- v. *Stage 5: the Board considers the need for a statement of special educational needs; if appropriate, it makes a statement and arranges, monitors and reviews provision.*

5.3 SCHOOL BASED STAGES

5.3.1 Stage 1

- i. The Code of Practice states that '*Stage 1 begins with the concern that a child may have special educational needs, normally expressed either to or by the class teacher*'. Information about the child is collected and recorded from a number of parties, s e.g. the school, the parent, the child and other sources e.g. Health and Social Services. Special provision at this stage will be made through school resources. This may take the form of 'differentiation of class work, alternative teaching and learning strategies or different classroom organisation'; these strategies will be put in place with a note of targets, monitoring arrangements, together with a date for review of progress.
- ii. Following a review with parents, the child may continue at Stage 1 for a further period. If progress remains satisfactory for at least two review periods the class teacher may decide that the child no longer needs special help. If progress is not satisfactory the class teacher and the SENCO may decide to move the child to Stage 2.

5.3.2 Stage 2

- i. A plan, known as an Education Plan, (EP) is drawn up based on what is already known about the child's difficulty. This plan focuses on the

provision and support required both in school and at home. Targets are set, together with a date for review of progress.

- ii. Similarly to Stage 1, the outcome of the review may be that the child continues at Stage 2, reverts to Stage 1 or no longer needs special help or, alternatively, moves to Stage 3.

5.3.3 Stage 3

- i. Stage 3 focuses on the drawing up of a new EP with the help of an external specialist(s). The specialist(s) e.g peripatetic teacher(s) or educational psychologist(s) may either work directly with the child or act in an advisory capacity to the class or subject teachers. Depending on the nature of the need, medical advice may also be sought from the School Health Service, the child's General Practitioner or from therapists.
- ii. Similarly to the two previous Stages, a review date should be put in place which is normally within a term and arrangements for monitoring progress established. The outcome of the review may conclude that the child reverts to Stage 1 or 2, continues at Stage 3 with a new EP, or is considered for referral to the ELB for statutory assessment. In cases where there is any question of the child being referred for a statutory assessment, parents should always be consulted in person.

5.4 CONDUCT OF STATUTORY ASSESSMENT - STAGE 4

5.4.1 For the small proportion of children whose special needs cannot be met at the school-based stages, the next stage is referral to the ELB for statutory assessment. Assessment should be undertaken if the ELB believes that it needs or probably needs to determine the child's special educational provision by making a statement. Statutory assessment will not always lead to a statement, however, the information gathered during an assessment may indicate ways in which the child's needs can be met by his/her school, without the need for a statement. Requests for assessment can be made by a referral from the school, another agency or by the parent.

5.4.2 When making a referral for statutory assessment the Code of Practice requires that the school should state clearly the reasons for the referral and submit the following:

- i. *the recorded views of parents and where appropriate, the child on the earlier stages of assessment and any action and support to date;*
- ii. *evidence of any health checks, for example relevant information on medical advice to the school;*
- iii. *where appropriate, evidence relating to Social Services involvement;*
- iv. *written individualised education plans at Stages 2 and 3 indicating the approaches adopted, the monitoring arrangements followed and the educational outcomes;*

- v. *reviews of each education plan indicating decisions made.*
- vi. *evidence of the involvement of specialists.*

STATUTORY ASSESSMENT 18 WEEK TIMESCALE

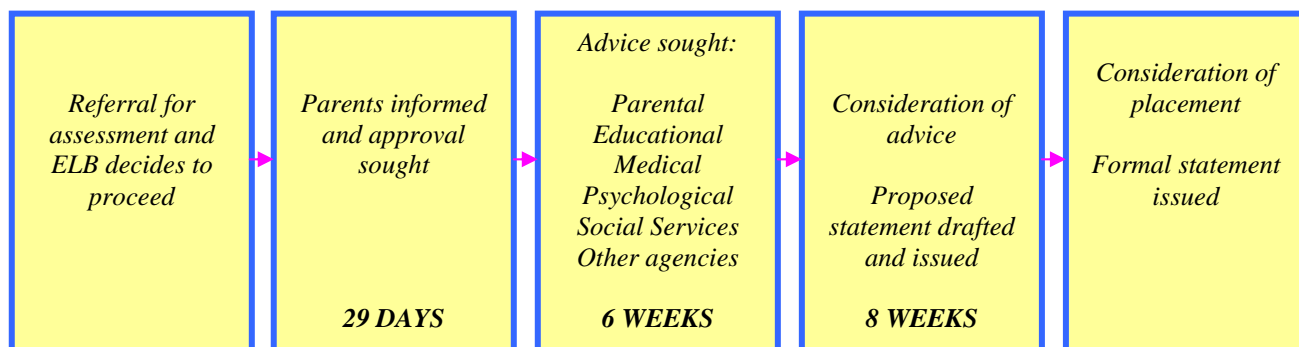


Figure 1

5.4.3 Specific ELB Practices in Dealing with Requests for Statutory Assessment

ELBs differ in their approaches in ascertaining whether or not a child should proceed from Stage 3 to Stage 4 and, in some cases, to determine the level of provision for a child. The evidence submitted is considered against the ELB criteria for assessment. At present the criteria for assessment differs across ELBs.

5.4.4 Overview on Assessment Criteria

The NIAO Report expressed concern about the variations in the levels of statementing, which might possibly reflect a lack of consistent criteria for identifying children with special educational needs, or different interpretations of the definition of special educational needs.

5.4.5 The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee referenced the fact that with the exception of the South Eastern ELB, the statementing rates are significantly lower than for local authorities in Great Britain with broadly comparable populations. The report points out that this is despite the relatively higher reported incidences of certain medical conditions in Northern Ireland compared to other UK regions. ELB officers suggested that the lower rate of statements might possibly be due to the extent of provision available to schools and individual children at Stage 3. During consultation the Independent Panel for Special Education Advice (hereinafter referred to as IPSEA) expressed a similar view. The representatives of IPSEA stated that *‘the availability of peripatetic help is often cited as a reason for not assessing or statementing a child’*.

5.4.6 The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee also stated that there was a need *‘to establish as far as possible, common criteria on the purpose and aims of statementing’*.

- 5.4.7 A sub-group of the Regional Strategy Group has been established to develop criteria to be applied by ELBs when processing requests for statutory assessments for children with special educational needs.
- 5.4.8 The sub-group considered criteria for the following areas which are in line with the Code of Practice:
- i. learning difficulties – moderate and severe;
 - ii. specific learning difficulties;
 - iii. emotional and behavioural difficulties;
 - iv. physical disability/medical difficulties;
 - v. sensory impairment- hearing/visual difficulties;
 - vi. speech and language difficulties; and
 - vii. pre-school children with developmental difficulties.
- 5.4.9 The sub-group produced a draft report for the Regional Strategy Group, which includes a set of criteria agreed by ELBs for the areas listed above with the exception of speech and language.
- 5.4.10 The report highlights that implementation of common criteria may result in the following:
- i. *an increase in the number of children eligible for statutory assessment/provision in some boards*
 - ii. *increased budgetary implications in most boards*
 - iii. *the opportunity to reduce statutory assessments in some instances by the allocation of new Stage 3 provision*
 - iv. *the need for common training of staff to ensure consistency in interpretation and application of quite complex criteria*

The report has been forwarded to DE for impact assessment and the sub-group has recommended that the common criteria are piloted for a one year period prior to implementation.

5.4.11 Panels

The NIAO Report recommended that ELBs ‘*should take steps to encourage the active participation of professional staff in resource allocation, perhaps by establishing panels on which they would participate on an ad hoc basis, with their respective ELB officers to assess the financial implications of referrals and statements*’. The NIAO also recommended that ELBs should consider using the same panel structure recommended above ‘*as a way of reinforcing common standards with regard to assessment requests and, also, as a way of*

disseminating good practice'. It was suggested that it would be helpful if representatives of Health and Social Services who engaged in the assessment process became panel members. Current use of panels in each ELB is detailed below.

i. Belfast ELB

Five established panels as follows:

- Statement Operations Panel : Comprised of officers from Statutory Operations Section, the Panel considers referral for statutory assessment, advice required and whether or not to produce a statement when the assessment process is completed, including the possibility of a note in lieu and type of provision required.
- Moderating Panel of Psychologists : Provides advice to educational psychologists from senior colleagues. The panel ensures consistency in relation to recommendations for provision based on established guidelines and is also used in a consultancy role by the Statement Operations Panel.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Panel : Comprised of educational psychologists, outreach personnel and statement operations officers, this panel monitors referrals of children with autism, recommends appropriate provision and gives advice to the Statement Operations Panel. The Panel advises managers on a wide range of provisions, eg mainstream, a range of special schools, including MLD and SLD, physical and medical difficulties and speech and language facilities.
- SLAP Panel : Monitors referrals for children with communication difficulties and recommends appropriate provision, eg mainstream, assessment centre, speech and language unit, special school.
- EBD Panel : Provides advice to educational psychologists from senior colleagues. The Panel ensures consistency in recommending provision for children with EBD, ie mainstream with outreach +support, Links Centre (short-term withdrawal to specialist unit), special school or EOTAS.

ii. North Eastern ELB

In cases where a child clearly requires a statement, an officer makes a decision; cases which have a query, are referred to a Statutory Assessment Panel. This panel, which meets weekly, comprises officers from different sections within the ELB, (it is not possible to secure this level of commitment from external parties). The panel deals with requests that do not clearly meet criteria, e.g. a child with mild learning difficulties who also has emotional and behavioural difficulties. In these cases the panel considers the degree of associated factors before a decision is made on the need for a statement and the level of provision required.

iii. South Eastern ELB

In cases where the evidence available clearly shows that the child fulfils agreed criteria for statutory assessment, the process is initiated by a Designated Officer. Where there is a query, or the case appears particularly complex, the matter is discussed at senior level within the section (ie Education Officer, Principal Educational Psychologist, Assistant Senior Education Officer) with reference, where appropriate, to a Senior Clinical Medical Officer.

Consideration has been given to the use of panels involving Health and Social Services professionals and Principals, however, it has been impossible to secure the level of commitment required from external parties.

Panels are used at Stage 3 to determine the appropriateness of referrals for assessment and/or outreach services (e.g. behaviour, autism).

iv. Southern ELB

A Statutory Assessment and Statement Panel meets on a monthly basis. The Panel which comprises ELB officers, considers and give provides advice to an Assistant Advisory Officer with regard to the following:

- Whether or not, on the basis of the evidence submitted, it appears to be appropriate to make a statutory assessment
- Whether or not advice and/or training would appear to be required by a school on the Code of Practice and the Southern Board SEN Policy and Guidelines
- Whether or not, following a statutory assessment, it appears to be appropriate to make a proposed statement or note in lieu of special educational needs; the content of such a proposed statement
- Issues about content, resourcing and/or placement between Proposed and Final Statements.

v. Western ELB

A Statutory Assessment Panel which comprises ELB officers, principals from a special, primary and post-primary school, the principal educational psychologist, and a community paediatrician meet monthly to consider requests for statutory assessment.

5.4.12 Following consideration of a request for statutory assessment, the ELB then decides whether to issue a notice to parents of its intention to proceed with a statutory assessment. The Code of Practice states that ELBs should bear in mind that assessment can be stressful for parents and should seek to present information in a manner that encourages participation and open discussion.

The ELB should inform parents within six weeks as to whether or not it will carry out a statutory assessment.

5.4.13 Proceeding with Statutory Assessment

Where the ELB decides to assess the educational needs of a child, it is required by legislation to seek parental, educational, medical, psychological, and social services advice, together with any other advice the ELB considers appropriate. This advice should be returned within six weeks of the date of the advice giver receiving the request.

5.4.14 During the period that assessment is being carried out, the school and/or external support services such as outreach, will continue to support the child. In exceptional circumstances, ELBs may make emergency provision in line with what might expect to be specified in a statement.

5.4.15 Legislation specifies that *'in normal circumstances the length of time taken for a Board to reach the stage of issuing a proposed statement must be no more than eighteen weeks from date of either the receipt of the parent's request or the issue of notice under Article 15 (1), whichever is appropriate'*.

5.4.16 Following receipt of all the advice the ELB must decide whether or not to make and maintain a statement. In a small number of cases the decision is taken not to do so.

5.4.17 The format of the statement (*Appendix 11*) is as follows:

- i. Part 1: Introduction;
- ii. Part 2: Special Educational Needs (Learning Difficulties);
- iii. Part 3: Special Educational Provision other than Placement;
- iv. Part 4: Special Educational Provision – Placement;
- v. Part 5: Non-educational Needs; and
- vi. Part 6: Non-educational Provision.

All of the advice obtained and considered during the assessment process must be attached as appendices to the statement and must include the following:

- a. parental representations, evidence and advice;
- b. educational advice;
- c. medical advice;
- d. psychological advice;
- e. Social Services advice; and

- f. any other advice, such as the child's views, which the ELB or any other body from whom advice is sought consider desirable. In particular, where the child's parent is a serving member of the armed forces, advice from Service Children's Education.

5.4.18 When sending the proposed statement and advices to parents ELBs must send the parents a notice in the prescribed form (*Appendix 12*). The regulations specify that ELBs:

- i. must explain the statutory arrangements which it has made under paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 of the 1996 Order for expressing a preference for a particular grant-aided school;
- ii. should inform parents that all grant-aided schools must publish information on their policies on special educational needs;
- iii. should encourage parents to visit schools and see the policies;
- iv. must advise parents of their right to make representations in favour of a placement other than a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland within 15 days of receiving the proposed statement; and
- v. must inform parents of their right to make representations and request meetings.

5.4.19 In some ELBs all proposed statements are delivered by Education Welfare Officers, Psychologists or other staff, whilst in other ELBs this practice is only adopted in individual cases where a professional has indicated that this would be beneficial to parents. In cases where parents themselves may have difficulties such as illiteracy, various ELB officers such as Education Welfare Officers and Psychologists liase with them and explain the process.

5.4.20 The South Eastern ELB issues the proposed statement to the school which the child is likely to attend. It feels that this process is useful to schools in planning as it provides an indication of the potential number of children that may be enrolled and the associated needs in terms of adult assistance. Other ELBs manage this stage of the process via alternative means, e.g. through telephone contact with the schools or liaison with Boards of Governors. All ELBs encourage parents to visit appropriate schools.

5.5 STATEMENTS - STAGE 5

5.5.1 The period from proposed statement to final statement is not prescribed by law, but the Code of Practice advocates that ELBs should aim to complete this process within a further eight weeks.

5.5.2 The final statement is comprised of the same six parts as the proposed statement. At this stage the school to be attended is named in the statement.

5.5.3 The statement is approximately 5-6 pages long and the attached advice to the statement is, on average, 20 pages long.

- 5.5.4 In 2000/01 the number of statements issued was 1,516.
- 5.5.5 In all ELBs approval is sought from the Special Education Committee or its equivalent, to statements being made, ceased or amended.

5.6 DECISION NOT TO ISSUE A STATEMENT : NOTE IN LIEU

- 5.6.1 The Code of Practice states that *'the statutory process "may lead the ELB to conclude that the child's special needs can be met from within the school's own resources, with or without the intervention of a professional service from outside the school'*. Normally in these cases, the ELB issues a note in lieu, together with all the advice collected which explain the reasons for the ELB decision. This should be sent to the parents, the child's school and to any professionals who have given advice. The information from the assessment will therefore be available to those working with the child in school to augment their strategies for meeting the child's special educational needs.
- 5.6.2 In 2000/2001 only 33 Notes in Lieu were issued.

5.7 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : SCHOOL BASED STAGES

- 5.7.1 In the context of the school based stages, the Dyson Report highlighted a wide variation in the extent and quality of mainstream schools special educational needs provision. While some schools were found to be highly organised and to have provision and practice corresponding to the recommendations of the Code of Practice, others were considered to have much developmental work to undertake in order to implement those recommendations. In addition, the Dyson report stated that the quality and extent of support available to schools from external services was highly variable, which cast some doubt on the ability of schools to construct a meaningful response to Stage 3 of the Code of Practice.
- 5.7.2 A report published by the Education and Training Inspectorate on Children with SEN in Primary Schools (1998/99) stated that the provision for SEN was judged to be satisfactory or better in some 73% of the schools inspected, which appears to be an improvement on the situation reported by Dyson.
- 5.7.3 Challenge sessions identified that dealing with special needs of children whilst trying to teach a large class of children with a range of abilities is extremely difficult. The consultation with schools highlighted that this impacts on the ability of all children to reach their full potential, as the focus of attention in the classroom tends to deal with the upper and lower ranges. The growing incidence of behavioural problems increases such difficulties.
- 5.7.4 In the best value consultation exercise schools were asked if they were satisfied that they were able to meet the special educational needs of children at Stages 1-3 of the Code of Practice. 51% of schools were satisfied that they could, which left a significant proportion of schools indicating that they were unable to or unsure that they could meet the needs of the children concerned. When asked what additional support was required, comments generally focused on the need for:

- i. more outreach and peripatetic services;
- ii. teacher/classroom assistant training;
- iii. additional teaching resources (including SENCO support);
- iv. additional classroom support;
- v. enhanced provision from psychology service; and
- vi. additional funding.

5.7.5 Consultation with SENCOs highlighted the need for training and support, particularly in the areas of diagnosis and target setting in individualised education plans.

5.7.6 The survey showed that only 9% of schools feel that children with special educational needs transferring to their school always have had their needs identified at Stages 1-3 of the Code of Practice. In addition, only 13% of schools feel that the arrangements for children with special educational needs transferring to their school, are always satisfactory at Stages 1-3 of the Code of Practice.

5.7.7 From the perspective of schools, parents and voluntary organisations, issues exist with accessibility and timeliness of both peripatetic and outreach services.

5.7.8 When schools try to access such services there are often lengthy waiting lists before children receive appropriate help. The results of the survey of schools show the *Always True* scores for accessibility of outreach and peripatetic as 31% and 35% respectively. Scores for *Always True* in terms of a timely service were 28% and 36% respectively. The scores potentially reflect an increasing demand in schools for these support services, which are already under pressure.

5.7.9 Parents specifically commented on the good work of peripatetic/outreach services with children, but stated that the value of this work is impacted by the fact that it is for a restricted period. Ideally, parents would like to see such support being available to children with special needs throughout the course of their school career, rather than being for one or two terms or one or two years, depending on circumstances.

5.7.10 Visits to schools, discussions with the teachers' unions and focus groups with parents, emphasised the need for schools to have timely access to a body of expertise.

5.8 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES: REFERRAL FOR STATUTORY ASSESSMENT

5.8.1 Voluntary agencies reported that parents are often concerned by the perceived delays encountered as their children work through the three school based stages. Whilst the Code of Practice stipulates that a school must work through

each of these stages before requesting a statutory assessment, in some cases parents feel that valuable time is lost before their children access appropriate help. The Code of Practice requires that these stages are followed, but the child can move immediately to Stage 4 if there is sufficient evidence. The view of ELBs is that this time is not wasteful and contributes to both assessment and outcome for the child.

- 5.8.2 However, both schools and ELB officers have suggested that a variation of the Code of Practice should be considered for children with specific types of needs e.g physical or medical needs without any associated learning difficulty.
- 5.8.3 When parents agree to statutory assessment they feel that they have lost control. Just as they may be coming to terms with the fact that their child has a learning difficulty, they suddenly find their child being subjected to a range of appointments and ‘tests’ with a variety of professionals, many of who seem to be requesting the same information on the history of their child’s development etc. Parents reported that there is a lack of information to explain the process and all that is involved.
- 5.8.4 The teachers’ unions felt that there is a distinct lack of interest on the part of parents. On the contrary, the Code of Practice as it stands, is open to interpretation by parents. ELB officers state that some parents find it difficult to accept that their child has special educational needs and that there is a dichotomy between parents who know their rights and those who do not.
- 5.8.5 At the stage of gathering evidence the challenge sessions identified that it is often difficult for a school to obtain the views of parents. While it is possible for ELBs to proceed without parental approval, it is difficult to proceed without parental co-operation.
- 5.8.6 Of the remaining pieces of evidence to be submitted by the school, the evidence of health checks and Health and Social Services’ involvement are also considered difficult to obtain; in some cases this has been attributed to issues of ‘confidentiality’.
- 5.8.7 Consultation with schools showed that 87% of schools are either familiar or very familiar with the criteria used by ELBs for determining the need for a statutory assessment and 89% either agree or strongly agree that the criteria used for statutory assessment are appropriate.
- 5.8.8 ELB officers and voluntary organisations have both highlighted the difficulties posed by the inequalities of neighbouring ELBs operating different criteria for assessment (and subsequent admission to specialist provision).

5.9 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES: PANELS AND ADVICE

- 5.9.1 A range of views was expressed on the use of panels. Some ELBs held the view that the inter-agency nature of panels provided a framework for early resolution and decision-making, In contrast, other ELBs held the view that panels merely endorse the views of special education staff and delay the process.

- 5.9.2 Parents involved in the consultation process were unaware of the existence of panels or indeed their value to the process.
- 5.9.3 The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Report, on the issue of the eighteen-week timescale, stated that in the period 1994-95 to 1995-96 no ELB came remotely near this target on average. This was, in most cases, attributable to delays in receiving professional advice and to the time taken within the ELB to process that advice. There was no stipulation at this time that statements should be produced within an eighteen-week timescale; this situation changed in 1998 when the Special Educational Needs (Amendment) Regulations 1998 were introduced, which specified an eighteen-week time limit, referred to in paragraph 5.4.15.
- 5.9.4 The Code of Practice recognises that circumstances may arise where it is impractical for ELBs to meet this time limit, and certain detailed exceptions apply where:
- i. further advice needs to be sought by the ELB to complete the assessment;*
 - ii. parents wish to provide advice to the ELB more than six weeks after they were invited to do so;*
 - iii. advice from a school principal is delayed because of school closure;*
 - iv. advice sought from a Health and Social Services Trust has not been provided within six weeks;*
 - v. exceptional circumstances affect the child or parent;*
 - vi. the child or parent is away for at least four weeks during the eighteen-week period; and*
 - vii. an appointment for examination or test is not kept.*
- 5.9.5 ELB officers stated that such circumstances frequently arise with the result that it is not always possible to meet the eighteen-week timescale. Due to the absence of a comprehensive management information system, ELBs still cannot provide detailed performance information on the number of statements produced within the timescale taking account of exceptions. It is difficult to remedy the situation, as special education branches do not have responsibility for most of those providing advice e.g. schools, Health and Social Services. However, considerable effort is expended issuing reminders and following up advices that have not been submitted on time and, in some cases, advices are not returned at all, which means that the statutory assessment cannot be completed. ELBs have refined procedures to ensure that there are no delays due to turn-around time when all advices have been received.
- 5.9.6 Some ELBs have pointed out that the return of advice from educational psychologists within the six-week period is severely hampered by the shortage of these professionals in ELBs. In addition, the effects of this shortfall are

exacerbated if any staff are on extended leave as it is even more difficult to recruit psychologists on a short-term basis.

- 5.9.7 Educational psychologists have reported that at present, they are the only group of advice givers who are not given an easement from the six-week requirement. They have also stated that they receive requests for advice on children (most often pre-school children) of whom they have no previous knowledge, that these pre-school children are particularly difficult to assess and a number of sessions, in different settings, are usually required to obtain a meaningful assessment. This makes it virtually impossible to return advice on these children within the six-week period.
- 5.9.8 Consultation with Health and Social Services professionals revealed that these officers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the children with special educational needs. However, the provision of advice for the statutory assessment process is one of many competing issues in the context of limited resources, and one that is exacerbated by staffing issues and parents failing to attend appointments.
- 5.9.9 In an effort to improve response times from Health and Social Services, the Southern and Western ELBs write directly to Health and Social Services rather than the Designated Medical Officer. ELBs have identified that attempts to co-ordinate information on a child from the various health professionals, through use of the Designated Medical Officer as set out in the Code of Practice do not always work. In some Trusts, however, the use of the Designated Officer as the channel for information does not cause undue delays.
- 5.9.10 Of the schools surveyed 91% indicated that six weeks is a reasonable period of time to submit educational advice. The six week period stipulated for the return of advice by schools is extended by the duration of any intervening school holidays.
- 5.9.11 The technology that supports this part of the process varies across ELBs and comprehensive information on the number of advices returned within the specified timescale for 2000/2001 is not readily available.
- 5.9.12 The NIAO Report on Indicators of Educational Performance and Provision (2002) highlighted the lack of performance management information in this regard and this review deals with this issue in Section 9 (Management Information).
- 5.9.13 Following receipt of the initial advice, further requests for additional advice may be required, eg a specialist report on vision or hearing. Consequently, this delays the process.
- 5.9.14 Consultation showed that only 37% of those schools surveyed indicated that the statutory assessment process is completed within a reasonable period of time.
- 5.9.15 Critical examination of the appendices that support a statement, revealed a significant overlap of information with both educational and medical advice

givers commenting on areas such as motor skills, speech and language, play skills and self-help/social skills. Viewed positively, this duplication of information serves to confirm identification of a child's special needs; on the negative side, it adds to the volume of information to be interpreted by the person writing the statement and the parent.

5.9.16 In addition, schools expressed the view that the advice written for the statutory assessment is repetition of the evidence submitted with the request for statutory assessment.

5.9.17 ELB officers expressed additional concerns about advice provided. These included the limited control that the ELB has to deliver what has been specified in the advice. An example widely quoted relates to the provision of speech and language therapy, which falls within the jurisdiction of Health and Social Services. If an insufficient number of speech therapists are available, children either do not receive any therapy or the level of service required, and ELBs default on the provision outlined in the statement through no fault of their own. In one instance an ELB had engaged a speech therapist privately for a short time to ensure compliance with a child's statement. The shortage of speech therapists in Northern Ireland generally means that the provision specified in statements cannot be delivered. High Court action has been taken against one ELB and a Health Trust in this regard, the outcome of which is not yet known.

5.10 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES: PROPOSED STATEMENT

5.10.1 A number of issues surrounds the expression of a preference for a particular school. These include:

- i. three conditions in legislation (reference 4.2.3);
- ii. education with family or peers;
- iii. parental preference for a specific type of school depending on the child's disability or religion;
- iv. availability of places;
- v. disabled access depending on child's difficulty;
- vi. level of resourcing;
- vii. provision of therapies which are usually available in special schools;
- viii. exceeding the approved admission and enrolment numbers
- ix. direction of schools to take children;
- x. placement outside NI;
- xi. distance;
- xii. transport; and

- xiii. the parent's perception of quality.
- 5.10.2 Parents have expressed a number of views on the selection of a suitable school for their child. These views have included the fact that the statement is frequently 'vague' in specifying the type of school most suitable to their child's needs and the availability of suitable provision locally. ELBs' view is that less specific statements result in greater flexibility in responding to changes which affect the child accessing the curriculum.
- 5.10.3 Those drafting statements experience problems with being specific about the level of resourcing in an individual's statement as ELBs perceive the resource in the school/class context rather than a resource for an individual. It is a facility being made available to a school because of the presence of the child with special educational needs rather than for the individual child.
- 5.10.4 Parents perceive that the decision of the school to be attended is influenced by local practice and the practical issues identified above. The attitude of a school to children with special educational needs is also an important factor. Parents have stated that information on suitable schools is not provided and local knowledge and contacts influence decisions more. ELBS have regard to the procedures outlined in the Code of Practice, but the prescriptive nature of the contents of the notice mitigates against its user friendliness. In an attempt to address this, ELBS have taken various actions such as issuing a letter which seeks to clarify the notice.
- 5.10.5 Transport Officers identified a number of issues in relation to transport for children with special educational needs as follows:
- i. concern at perceived inequalities in transport provision for children with and without special educational needs in that some children with special educational needs are being provided with transport to further away schools. In essence, the school of the parent's choice becomes the 'nearest suitable school'.
 - ii. transport sections frequently have very little notification from special education sections that transport is required for a particular child/children.
- 5.10.6 Transport officers suggested that the school to be attended should be named at the proposed statement stage to allow adequate time for the arrangement of transport provision but this is not permitted under current legislation.
- 5.10.7 A report published by the Audit Commission in March 2001 entitled 'Special School Run – Reviewing Special Educational Needs Transport in London', states:

'The transport requirement of an individual child with special educational needs should be considered as part of the initial decision about which school the child should attend. It should also be re-examined regularly, at the annual review meeting about the statement. In making a placement decision, the SEN manager should consider the full costs of each potential placement, including

the transport costs, which, in some individual instances, can be higher than the costs of the child's education'.

The report states that doing so can help explain the options and decisions to parents and, if necessary, to a special educational needs tribunal. The SEN manager should therefore act as the budget holder for SEN transport. Both OFSTED and the Audit Commission have favoured this approach during their inspection of LEAS.

5.10.8 A Best Value review of the Home to School Transport Service carried out in 1999, highlighted the spiralling cost of transport for children with special educational needs and made a number of recommendations which concur with the Audit Commission Report referenced above. Two particular recommendations contained in the review of Home to School Transport were:

- *A policy should be drawn up for provision of transport assistance for special needs. This should include transport to special schools, units and mainstream provision. It should also cover transport in relation to respite care; and*
- *Consideration should be given to allocating the budget for transport for special pupils and special units to special education.*

Both of these recommendations are still being actively pursued and the consultation for this current review emphasises the need for these to be progressed as swiftly as possible.

5.10.9 Schools reported that provision of transport can hinder the development of independence in children.

5.10.10 The results of the best value survey showed that 24% of schools strongly agreed and 41% of schools agreed that statemented pupils should be in addition to the school's admission number.

5.10.11 Further issues relating to placement are detailed in Section 7 (Provision and Resources).

5.11 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES: THE STATUTORY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

5.11.1 The survey asked schools for their views on a number of aspects of the statutory assessment process. The results showed that:

- 76% of schools strongly agree or agree that the process is easy to follow
- 79% of schools strongly agree or agree that they are sufficiently involved
- 90% of schools strongly agree or agree that parents are sufficiently involved

- 77% of schools strongly agree or agree that they are generally happy with the decision making process
- 42% of schools strongly agree or agree that they are happy with the level of paperwork involved

5.11.2 A significant proportion of consultation with schools focussed on establishing how satisfied schools are with the quality and responsiveness of those involved in the delivery of the Special Education Service and how important those services are to them.

Schools were asked to record their views on the following four areas:

- provision of good quality advice and support in relation to special education;
- provision of a timely service in relation to special education;
- accessibility of services when required for matters relating to special education; and
- awareness of staff within certain services of the needs of schools in relation to special education.

5.11.3 Responses were recorded against statements on a four-point scale, *Always True, Sometimes True, Rarely True and Never True*, in terms of their perception of the service. Schools' views were also recorded on a four-point scale of how important the statement was, ranging from *Very Important, Important, Fairly Important* and *Not Important*.

5.11.4 Results showed combined scores of 74% or more for all of the services in terms of being *Very Important* or *Important*. The scores recorded for the *Always True* component for each of the areas are shown in Table 5 overleaf. The dimension of *Always True* was selected as an indicator of pursuit of excellence.

<i>ALWAYS TRUE RESPONSES</i>				
<i>INTERNAL ELB SERVICES</i>	<i>Good Quality Advice and Support (%)</i>	<i>Timely Service (%)</i>	<i>Accessibility (%)</i>	<i>Awareness (%)</i>
Special Education Administration	30	30	38	37
Curriculum Advisory and Support Service	28	24	36	32
Education Welfare Service	31	24	43	40
Health and Safety	28	25	35	30
Human Resources (Personnel)	33	29	42	31
Outreach Services	32	28	31	41
Peripatetic Service	42	36	35	49
Educational Psychology	45	38	46	56
Transfer and Open Enrolment	39	39	48	38
Transport Service	41	41	42	41

Table 5

- 5.11.5 It should be noted that, while some of these internal services have considerably less interaction than others with schools regarding children with statements of special educational needs, overall results of the survey illustrate considerable scope for improvement. In terms of demonstrating high quality services, only one score was in excess of 50%. In general, the services provided by Educational Psychology scored best with schools. Within the regional analysis, the scores for accessibility and awareness provide two areas that merit additional comment. In the Belfast ELB, both the Educational Psychology and Outreach Services had scores of 70% and 60% respectively for accessibility. In the South Eastern ELB, Special Education Administration scored 63% in terms of accessibility. Similarly, Outreach Services in the Belfast ELB scored highly at 72% under awareness of the needs of schools. These services may merit closer examination in terms of the dissemination of good practice.
- 5.11.6 The above scores were broadly similar across the range of school sectors, with the exception of the score relating to the provision of good quality and advice by the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service, which was particularly low from special schools.
- 5.11.7 Educational Psychologists also stated that the role of CASS should be examined in relation to special educational needs.

5.11.8 Results for external services illustrate considerable scope for improvement with only one score over 50% and, overall, lower scores recorded for satisfaction with quality and responsiveness. In particular, schools have held the view that services from Clinical Psychologists, Consultant Psychiatrists and Social Services, were particularly poor.

<i>ALWAYS TRUE RESPONSES</i>				
EXTERNAL	<i>Good Quality Advice and Support (%)</i>	<i>Timely Service (%)</i>	<i>Accessibility (%)</i>	<i>Awareness (%)</i>
Clinical Medical Officers/Community Paediatricians	38	33	24	27
Clinical Psychologists	16	11	9	17
Community Nurses for Learning Disabilities	25	20	18	19
Health Visitors	20	16	9	13
School Nurses	53	41	41	38
Consultant Psychiatrists	10	11	6	11
Physiotherapists	30	25	21	27
Social Services	14	16	20	19
Speech and Language Therapists	27	30	32	34

Table 6

5.11.9 A worrying concern emerging from the consultation would be the particularly low scores in these areas as the above health professionals are mainly involved with EBD and Autism, both of which are significant growth areas.

5.11.10 Scores by sector are generally better in special schools. This is likely to reflect the fact that many special schools have allied health professions based on site.

5.11.11 Consultation with parents uncovered a range of views.

5.11.12 For many of those who knew from birth that their child would have special educational needs, the difficulty was obviously not one of accepting that fact, but rather one of 'fear' of the 'daunting, legal' process of assessment and making a statement.

5.11.13 Parents maintain that the system works on the assumption that parents do not know their child has difficulties, and that these difficulties are over-emphasised by professionals.

- 5.11.14 In addition, parents highlighted that some of the information being requested in some boards is inappropriate for children who are being assessed at an early age, eg questions range from issues regarding toilet training to smoking and glue sniffing.
- 5.11.15 With regard to the provision of their own advice parents feel divided between positively stating what their child can do and portraying a poorer image to try and acquire the maximum amount of resources possible through the statement.
- 5.11.16 Parents tended to be unhappy with three aspects of the Educational Psychologist's input to the assessment process:
- i. it is undertaken by professionals who do not know their children;
 - ii. it is based on only one or two brief sessions with the child; and
 - iii. parents are generally not informed that the assessment is taking place, despite many months of waiting.
- 5.11.17 Parents described the statutory assessment process and resulting statement as a very negative experience that does not tell them anything they do not already know about their child, and in doing so emphasises what their child **cannot do** rather than what they **can** do.
- 5.11.18 The views of parents on the actual statement and supporting documentation is that it tends to be quite vague with commonly used phrases such as '*as appropriate*' and '*favourable*'. Some parents questioned the purpose of the whole assessment process for children with severe learning difficulties, but acknowledged that for many, it is regarded as the key to the extra support needed by their child.
- 5.11.19 From a parental perspective, while the legislation is the same for all ELBs, they feel that there is a sense of lottery depending on geographical location.
- 5.11.20 Parents expressed frustration at focus groups with the anomalies surrounding health and education responsibilities. In particular, these relate to speech and language therapy and, consequently, parents have asked the following questions:
- i. *Why do Boards not directly employ speech therapists?*
 - ii. *What action is being taken to ensure that adequate numbers of therapists are being trained?*
 - iii. *What steps are being taken to try and retain those therapists already qualified?*
 - iv. *Can teachers or classroom assistants be trained or skilled to support speech and language therapy in the classroom?*

- 5.11.21 This latter point received support from Health and Social Services professionals and ELBs. A number of joint initiatives between Health and Social Services and ELBs are being piloted which seek to skill teachers and classroom assistants in supporting children with speech and language difficulties.
- 5.11.22 ELB officers raised the issue of accountability of Health and Social Services within the statutory assessment process. Views were expressed that Health and Social Services should pay for those services and equipment, which they recommend rather than ELBs, particularly if the recommendations are to meet specific medical needs. There are a number of areas where the boundaries between Education and Health and Social Services become obscured, e.g. a recommendation by an Occupational Therapist that a child requires classroom assistance.
- 5.11.23 The survey showed that only 17% of schools feel that individual ELB services provide a coherent service in relation to special education.
- 5.11.24 This review challenged stakeholders to consider the statutory assessment process. The view emerged that in theory there is value in the statutory assessment process, but there is a significant need to refine current practices. This may require changes in legislation.

5.12 ANNUAL REVIEWS

- 5.12.1 The Code of Practice requires ELBs to review **all** statements at least annually. According to the Code of Practice the annual review should:
- i. assess progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the statement;
 - ii. collate information for use in planning future support for the child;
 - iii. assess progress towards meeting targets;
 - iv. review the special provision made for the child;
 - v. consider the appropriateness of ceasing to maintain or amending the statement; and
 - vi. where appropriate, set targets for the coming year.
- 5.12.2 ELBs initiate reviews by writing to schools to request that the school convenes a review meeting and specify return dates for different groups of children in order to spread the volume of reviews. The Code of Practice states that those people who must be invited to the review include a representative of the ELB, the child's parents (or his/her carer if the child is being looked after by Health and Social Services) and a relevant teacher. Health and Social Services representatives may also be invited. The principal must also request written advice from the child's parents, all those specified by the ELB and others that the school feels appropriate. This advice is to be circulated at least two weeks in advance of the review,

inviting comments. Whilst the attendance at the review meeting of representatives from Health and Social Services is not compulsory, they have a statutory duty under Article 14 of The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 to respond to requests for written advice. The evidence and comments received form the basis of the review. Both children and parents should be encouraged to attend and to participate in the process.

- 5.12.3 Following the annual review the principal must prepare and circulate to all concerned a report summarising the outcomes of the review and setting targets for the coming year.

5.13 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : ANNUAL REVIEWS

- 5.13.1 The process outlined above appears straightforward and consultation with schools has shown that the process is valuable, but the practicalities of its delivery are less straightforward. The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Report stated that a review process rarely results in a statement being amended or ceased. Figures for 2001/2002 show that only 13% of the 8625 annual reviews carried out required an amendment to the statement. Whilst recognising that the annual review provides reassurance for some parents, the challenge sessions emphasised the amount of effort that is required for annual reviews when the process results in so few changes in either special or mainstream schools. The value of the annual review in special schools, in particular, was questioned. Consultation with schools focussed on the six aims of the annual review listed above (5.12.1). In general, the responses from schools across ELBs either agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives were met with an average score of 94% being recorded. The only area of concern centred on the amount of paperwork involved. Schools, when asked, how happy they were with the amount of paperwork involved in the process, recorded scores of disagreement or strong disagreement at 32.2% and 16.7% respectively. However, it is worth noting that the Southern and Western ELBs were happy with the paperwork involved with scores of agreement or strong agreement recorded at 66% and 70% respectively.
- 5.13.2 Similarly, the Standing Conference on Special Education has expressed its concern at the amount of paperwork generated by the annual review of a statement of special educational needs. The Standing Conference also share the view that implementation of the full review process is futile in the case of those children where there is mutual agreement between parents and schools with existing provision.
- 5.13.3 In January 2001, the Standing Conference on Special Education raised the issue of each ELB using different forms. This results in those schools which enrol children from across the province operating five different systems as reviews are the responsibility of the ELB which has statemented the child. The teachers' representatives have also pointed out that blank forms are issued each year, even though the majority of the information completed by the school the previous year, remained the same.
- 5.13.4 The Standing Conference suggested that it might be possible to have two forms on the CLASS system - one for use when there was mutual agreement and one for use when there were matters to be addressed. ELBs

have indicated that they would have no objection to the use of standardised forms.

- 5.13.5 A Working Group of Principals, Designated Special Education Officers and a representative of DE was established to examine the issues and problems in this area, including the implications for legislative change, the possibility of standardising paperwork and the general dissemination of best practice, and work is ongoing in this regard.
- 5.13.6 The view of the Standing Conference on Special Education on annual reviews was that the process was questionable in that schools had to wait for months for a psychologist to write up what the teacher was stating about the children. In reality, this applies to a small number of children, as the review can proceed without the report. ELBs only require the report if a change of school is anticipated or there is a change in circumstances which impact on the child's special educational needs.
- 5.13.7 It was reported, by both schools and ELB officers, that reviews are poorly attended, particularly by parents and professionals from Health and Social Services. Health and Social Services stated that it is not possible for officers to attend all annual reviews nor to respond to all the requests for reports in adequate time. The view of officers and principals was that parental interest in annual reviews was higher when their child was first statemented, but that the interest lessened in succeeding years; this could be a reflection on the lack of change arising from reviews. It was also stated that many parents find the prospect of meeting simultaneously with so many officers and professionals intimidating.
- 5.13.8 In one ELB area Health Trust professionals suggested to special education branch that in light of the difficulty in attending review meetings, Looked After Children Reviews and education reviews be combined. This was examined by one ELB and one Trust. Meetings were held and procedures established. However, when the target group of children was being identified it was discovered that a small number fell into both categories.
- 5.13.9 One school reported that the meetings for 180 annual reviews took five weeks, excluding the time required for preparation and the writing up of the associated reports. The input of teachers and other professionals e.g Health and Social Services officers, is substantial and costly. Additional costs may also be incurred in employing substitute teachers to release the classroom teachers for the reviews.
- 5.13.10 The NIAO reported that '*Board representation at the annual review was the exception rather than the rule*'. The reasons given to the NIAO for this was that ELBs do not have adequate officers or professional capacity to support each and every review. In essence, ELBs regard the principal as their representative at the review. The NIAO perceived this as a weakness in the review process and suggested that ELB involvement in reviews could be strengthened through application of '*a rolling basis: for example, special schools one year, mainstream the next; all statements every other year, review at key stages*'.

- 5.13.11 Schools have also said that the requirement to review all statements does not allow sufficient concentration on those children whose circumstances require more consideration.
- 5.13.12 Additional bureaucracy results when a statement requires to be amended each time a change is made to the provision.
- 5.13.13 Parents reported a range of experiences on the annual review process. In the main, these related to annual reviews:
- i. using a generalist approach rather than an individual child plan;
 - ii. not tackling core issues such as social skills and communication, the focus being academic. A contrary view put forward was that in special schools the emphasis on these life skills was at the expense of an academic focus;
 - iii. incorporating only short term targets;
 - iv. in cases of children with severe learning difficulties, the setting of annual targets is somewhat pointless as some of these children suffer a loss of learning over the summer period; and
 - v. being daunting and similar to their child being on trial with comments such as 'you know she can only stay here so long'.
- 5.13.14 The views of children on annual reviews were mixed. Some children felt that they are a useful exercise, while others did not see the purpose of what they described as a *'three minute thing'*. Children also stated that they felt *'others were mapping things out for them'* and that the atmosphere was sometimes intimidating.

5.14 TRANSITION PLANS

- 5.14.1 The Code of Practice states that the first annual review after the 14th birthday of a child with special educational needs should include a Transition Plan.
- 5.14.2 The purpose of a Transition Plan is to draw together information from a range of people within and beyond the school in order to make a comprehensive plan for the young person's final years at school and his or her subsequent transition to adult life. The Options for Progression in Transition (OPT) Report (an EU funded project which brought together representatives from a range of statutory and voluntary sectors) stated that the transition plan *'is significant because research has indicated that there is a strong link between a young person's subsequent quality of life and the support and preparation they have received up to leaving school'*.
- 5.14.3 The Transition Plan seeks to identify some of the issues for the young person while at school and also aspects for care, training and/or employment beyond school. If appropriate services and support are to be provided, it needs to be as thorough as possible and to involve maximum interagency co-operation and collaboration.

- 5.14.4 The responsibility for the first and subsequent Annual Review meeting following the child's fourteenth birthday rests with ELBs, but in practical terms is delegated to schools. The parents/carers, relevant staff and anyone else considered appropriate are invited. Outside agencies to be invited must include a representative of the Health and Social Services Trust who can report on the welfare of the young person and a member of the T&EA to enable all options for further education and training opportunities to be examined.

5.15 ROLES : TRANSITION PLANNING

5.15.1 School

The school should consider how the curriculum can help the young person:

- i. play his or her role in the community;
- ii. make use of leisure and recreational facilities;
- iii. assume new roles in the family;
- iv. develop new educational and vocational skills; and
- v. what approaches should be made to other institutions or agencies to ensure smooth transition.

5.15.2 ELBS

The role of the ELB is to:

- i. convene review meetings; and
- ii. prepare and circulate review reports and Transition Plans after the meeting.

5.15.3 Health and Social Services Trusts

There is a duty to seek an opinion from the Health and Social Services Trust under Section 5 of the Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1989 as to whether a young person with a statement is a disabled person and may require services from the Trust after leaving school.

- 5.15.4 Health and Social Services Trusts have statutory duties to make arrangements for young people over 18 who are regarded as being in need and who have been looked after by them, or received services from them, prior to that date. ELBs should ensure that the young person is aware of this.

5.15.5 Training and Employment Agency

The T&EA should provide continuing oversight of, and information on, the young person's choice of provision and assist the school in securing such provision and providing advice and support as appropriate.

5.15.6 The Young Person

The views of the young person should be sought and their active participation and consideration of options encouraged (with appropriate guidance). It is recognised that the arrangements for planning coherently for young persons with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties will differ significantly in emphasis.

5.15.7 It is of paramount importance, however, that there is careful planning and that an interdisciplinary approach is adopted to make thorough preparation for life after school.

5.16 DEVELOPMENTS IN TRANSITION PLANNING

5.16.1 There are a number of projects currently examining the transition planning Process. These include the '*From Fourteen Forward*' initiative in the west of the province and the three year pilot on transition plans undertaken by the Cedar Foundation, in conjunction with Fleming Fulton School, Mitchell House School, Belfast ELB and relevant departments.

These projects focus on a number of themes including:

- i. a person centred approach;
- ii. networking of all relevant organisations;
- iii. liaison with local employers, colleges;
- iv. timetabling of transition planning;
- v. funding/resources;
- vi. parental involvement;
- vii. promotion of choice and opportunities;
- viii. issues of personal care;
- ix. potential living options (including recreation); and
- x. culture change, including information and awareness.

5.16.2 At one of the '*From Fourteen Forward*' conferences on transition planning young people made the following comments:

*'Transition planning is about **me** and my future'*

'I need to be heard and listened to'

'I need support to make decisions, to achieve changes, with better information about what I can do and my rights on how to go about getting them'

- 5.16.3 The Vocational Opportunities in Training for Employment (VOTE 1998-2000) Project was a two-year pilot initiative designed to address difficulties encountered by young adults with a range of disabilities and complex needs as they attempt to make the transition from school to work. The pilot was undertaken by a partnership of statutory and voluntary organisations from June 1998 to June 2000, and was managed centrally by Action Mental Health. The four pilot projects comprising the initiative were funded by the European Union 'Youthstart' Employment Programme, Craigavon and Banbridge Community Health and Social Services Trust and the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust and covered a range of different organisations with client groups with varying disabilities and needs.
- 5.16.4 The VOTE initiative piloted a range of support and services designed to enable young adults with disabilities and complex needs to participate in training and employment opportunities. Overall, the findings from the evaluation appear to concur with other research that suggests that there are two main areas that need to be addressed simultaneously: the needs, attitudes and competence of the potential employees and the needs, routines and culture of the world of work. Projects that have been characterised by a good balance and integration, eg have shown attentiveness to addressing the concerns of potential employers and providing support in the workplace, seem to achieve better outcomes.
- 5.16.5 The evaluation report on the initiatives highlighted that future projects aimed at improving employment prospects of young adults with a wide range of disabilities and complex needs are likely to benefit from considering issues such as:
- i. identification of suitable types of training, placement and employment;
 - ii. selection of appropriate candidates for different types of schemes, paths or settings;
 - iii. ways of supporting employers to adapt working practices and 'culture'; and
 - iv. support mechanisms that enable young adults with disabilities and complex needs to cross that important step from improved qualifications and useful work placements to paid employment.
- 5.16.6 The Big 'D' wee 'd' Research Report (2001) commissioned by the Northern Ireland Deaf Youth Association was based on gathering the views of a sample of young deaf people in relation to their experiences of living in Northern Ireland. One of the areas of focus was education and within that on preparation for the outside world. The report highlighted issues of children

wanting to achieve good qualifications balanced against the need for communication, support and appropriate information and advice. It would appear that some teachers in the secondary sector do not have high expectations of young deaf people and participants felt that the information, advice and preparation for the outside world were neither adequate, nor appropriate. For those participants who experienced life at further education colleges or universities, communication support was integral to their personal growth and capacity to achieve a third level education.

5.16.7 Quotes from young people who participated in the research include:

- i. *'about a couple of months ago I was talking (to a teacher) and I said I wanted to become a vet and the teacher said "Would you not like to become a vet's nurse?" I felt very frustrated'; and*
- ii. *'I did maths and computer studies. I studied in BIFHE and did night classes and I passed them all. There were interpreters with the tutors'.*

5.16.8 The 'No Choice, No Chance' Report commissioned by Save the Children on young people with disabilities highlighted the need for greater emphasis on more practical skills such as independent travel and living and more informal educational opportunities in the areas of personal development, confidence building, self esteem and assertiveness.

5.16.9 In England, children with statements benefit from the funding allocated to the Connexions Service, but at present there are no plans in Northern Ireland to introduce a similar scheme.

5.17 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES: TRANSITION PLANS

5.17.1 Schools were asked whether the transition plan allows adequate preparation for the young person's transition to adult life and 78% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed that it does. Similarly, 88% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed that transition planning involves all the relevant parties.

5.17.2 Schools were asked how appropriate transition planning was for MLD and SLD children. In the main, responses were favourable in terms of the principles of transition planning. In terms of age, the majority favoured year 10 (age 14). However, a number of responses expressed the view that the child is not necessarily ready to make decisions about his or her future career at this age or any earlier.

5.17.3 Some additional comments from special schools for children with severe learning difficulties suggested that transition planning may be taken more seriously at sixteen, however, concerns were expressed about its relevance, bearing in mind the lack of provision after leaving school.

5.17.4 In the survey 86% of schools feel that it is important that there is positive partnership between schools and T&EA, however, only 49% of schools feel that a positive partnership always exists.

5.17.5 Consultation with the T&EA also highlighted a number of concerns. The T&EA state that its ability to fulfil its critical role in transition planning is being hampered by the lack of information on the number of children who are approaching transition stage, together with details of individuals. The T&EA holds the view that, whilst young people may have reached their full academic potential at transition planning stage, some are not equipped with the necessary social skills or competencies to progress in life. Other issues include:

- i. courses e.g. Job Skills which pay on success;
- ii. movement from one scheme to another without securing long term employment;
- iii. short-term funding for specific schemes;
- iv. lack of resources especially Adult Training Centres or Social Education Centres; and
- v. benefits disincentive.

5.17.6 A view expressed by the T&EA and others was that transition planning could be more effective if information sharing was improved. Provided that the key people were in attendance, fewer professionals would make transition planning less intimidating for both the young person and his/her parents.

5.17.7 In line with the views of schools, parents in focus groups felt that the transition planning system is a good system, but that it fails young people because of the lack of choice and provision after leaving school. Parents of children with more severe learning difficulties expressed concern that a lot of children progress from school into day centres operated by Health Trusts. They felt that good alternative schemes are small in number and sometimes short-term if they are funded as a special initiative or from earmarked funds. The view was also expressed that while children are in the education system, support is statutory, but after leaving school, there is no such obligation on Health and Social Services or any other body to provide for the needs of young people.

5.17.8 Parents also highlighted that links with institutes of further and higher education need strengthened. The survey showed that 85% of schools feel that it is important that there is a positive partnership between schools and institutes of further and higher education, however, only 32% of schools feel that a positive partnership always exists.

5.17.9 A general view expressed is that when one considers the significant spend of £83m in education, together with the significant spend in health, the importance of transition planning has been overlooked. From the age of two to nineteen years there is a huge level of resources devoted to diagnosis, support and provision for children with special educational needs. However, at transition stage, the reality is that opportunities for these children are severely limited.

6.0 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRIBUNAL

6.1 BACKGROUND

- 6.1.1 The Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Northern Ireland was set up by the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. The Tribunal, consists of approximately thirty members is independent and was established to consider parents' appeals in cases where parents disagree with the decisions of ELBs. A panel of three members considers each appeal. Parents should first try to resolve any disagreements with the ELB, but if they are still dissatisfied, they can appeal to the Tribunal.
- 6.1.2 Following receipt of the ELB's letter, which advises of the right to appeal parents, have two months in which to do so if they so wish. (The timescale of two months is extended over the summer).
- 6.1.3 The Special Educational Needs Tribunal cost £81,000 to run in 2000/2001.
- 6.1.4 The number of appeals registered since 1997 has grown steadily, but are a small proportion of the total number of children with special educational needs and, still a considerably smaller number of appeals per head of population than is received by tribunals in England and Wales. The maximum number of appeals registered in any one year since 1997 was 28 (*Source SENT*).
- 6.1.5 The Tribunal's report for 2000 states that '*no clear pattern has emerged as to whether certain Boards are more likely to be appealed against than others*', and the President of the Tribunal stated that '*it is doubtful whether any firm conclusions can be drawn from what is a small sample*'.
- 6.1.6 Of the 22 appeals registered in 2000, 11 were withdrawn and 9 of the 28 appeals registered in 2001 were withdrawn.
- 6.1.7 Tribunal decisions are legally binding, but either party can challenge them by applying for the Tribunal to review its decision or by asking the Tribunal to state a case for the opinion of the High Court. Judicial reviews are only applicable to the operation of the Tribunal not to the decisions made.

6.2 WHAT CAN PARENTS APPEAL?

- 6.2.1 Parents can appeal to the Tribunal if the ELB:
- i. *decides not to carry out a formal assessment of their child's special educational needs but only if the parent, rather than the school, has asked the Board to carry out an assessment; or*
 - ii. *decides not to issue a statement of their child's educational needs, after making a formal assessment.*

If the ELB has made a statement or amended a previous statement, parents can also appeal against:

- a. *the description in part 2 of the statement of their child's special educational needs;*
- b. *the description in part 3 of the statement of the special educational help that the board thinks their child should get;*
- c. *the school named in part 4 of the statement; or*
- d. *a decision not to name a school in part 4 of the statement.*

(Source: SENT booklet)

6.2.2 The points listed from a-c have been the main reasons why parents have taken appeals against ELBs. Other grounds for appeal exist and are listed in the Code of Practice. Areas which cannot be appealed, e.g. the level of funding provided by the ELB, are also listed.

6.2.3 The procedures are detailed in the Tribunal Booklet on How to Appeal.

6.2.4 A legally qualified chairperson and two lay members hear the appeal. ELBs and parents are allowed a representative and two witnesses.

6.3 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRIBUNAL

6.3.1 Consultation, as part of the review, established a number of views on the Tribunal process. These are listed below.

<i>CHALLENGE SESSIONS</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel that tribunals will achieve the best for their child. • Possible break-down of trust between parents, the ELB and the school. • Parents sometimes feel forced towards tribunal. • Parents get “something”. • No recognition for the hard work invested by ELB officers in a tribunal case. • Time-consuming exercise – officer needs one week to prepare for case even if case does not proceed. • ELB officer needs to block out two weeks in diary for each case. • Additional administrative burden on staff. • Effects of stress on staff.

CHALLENGE SESSIONS CONT'D

- Education sector is held responsible if Health sector cannot provide.
- Members of the Tribunal Panel are appointed because of their interest in or experience of special needs and consequently there are concerns about their objectiveness.
- IPSEA – involved in most Tribunals.
- Concerns about operation of IPSEA – eg although Speech and Language Therapist would be unable to state provision for up to one year for child, IPSEA, nevertheless expect it.
- IPSEA usually quote English case law at tribunals
- Form does not lend itself to be completed fully on behalf of the ELB
- ELB officer dealing with case is key to securing a successful outcome in terms of provision for the child with special educational needs
- The cost of tribunals is significant when account is taken of the input of all parties. These resources could be better deployed in contributing to the school provision required.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRIBUNAL

- Most appeals were ultimately resolved by parties reaching an acceptable way forward between themselves.
- Ongoing discussions between the parties, obviates the necessity of a contested hearing, sparing the child, the parents and ELBs unnecessary stress and anxiety.
- Disappointment that ELBs felt that they could not co-operate with the tribunal's proposal to have a small leaflet giving basic details of the Tribunal's jurisdiction, power and procedures issued directly to parents when they are notified of their right to appeal. Would like ELBs to be more pro-active in advising all parents of their rights of appeal.
- The tribunal must be open to all classes, creeds and nationalities in society.
- Tribunal is anxious to develop links with professional or voluntary groups interested in special educational needs.
- Tribunal would be perceived as more independent if it was completely separated from DE.
- There will always be a need for an independent adjudicating body.
- Settlements are generally reached before cases are actually heard due to the philosophy of building and developing relationships between the parties concerned.
- Teachers need to be encouraged to recognise their role as professionals.
- Parents hold the view that ELBs have a 'hold' over educational psychologists.
- Tribunal believes that decisions made are not 'faddish'.
- Relevant government departments should be acting to ensure that adequate numbers of professionals such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapists which are fundamental to the education of many children with special educational needs are available.
- All statements should be specific with provision being stipulated at least for a period followed by a re-assessment.
- Would welcome a reduction in the amount of paperwork.

IPSEA

- Parental access to an independent appeal process is essential.
- Operation of the present system makes it difficult for parents to get into an appeal position.
- Parents find the process daunting.
- The number of appeals being made are affected by the fact that a right of appeal only exists when the parent, not the school has made the request for assessment.
- Tribunals have difficulty making orders requiring specific provision when the original advice is non-specific.
- Parents who cannot afford independent reports are disadvantaged in taking their case to Tribunal.
- The Tribunal as an independent review body should have enforcement powers.
- There are no lessons learnt from previous tribunal decisions.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- Raise expectations of parents.
- Concerned about parents receiving inaccurate and misleading information.
- Destroy staff confidence.
- Destroy relationships with schools.
- Destroy relationships with parents.
- Need to be more of a partnership rather than driving a wedge between parents and statutory agencies.

6.3.2 All the consultation in this area has highlighted that tribunals arise from a breakdown in communications and/or relationships between the partners concerned.

6.3.3 The proposed Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill proposes the adoption of a conciliatory process to try and resolve parent matters.

7.0 PROVISION AND RESOURCES

7.1 CONTINUUM OF PROVISION

7.1.1 Children with statements are educated in different types of educational establishments. Provision in Northern Ireland includes:

i. Special schools (total number 51)

Special schools in themselves specialise in different areas. In each ELB area there is a number of schools that have special expertise in meeting the needs of children with SLD. Four ELBs also have schools that specifically cater for children with MLD. In addition, there are a number of schools which address specific needs such as sensory impairment (e.g. Jordanstown) or physical disability (e.g. Fleming Fulton and Mitchell House). Although there were a number of boarding facilities attached to special schools in Northern Ireland, the majority of these have closed as fewer parents now express a preference for this option;

ii. Special units in mainstream schools (total number 175 units in 93 schools)

In addition to a small number of diagnostic and assessment units, there are units for children with learning difficulties attributable to hearing impairment, physical disabilities, speech and language difficulties, EBD and MLD.

The pattern of unit provision varies across ELBs, however, most ELBs have units for MLD, speech and language and hearing impaired children.

iii. Mainstream schools (total number 1247)

Not all mainstream schools have children with statements, but in light of the increasing number in mainstream, ELBs have expanded the support services available to schools. In recent years most ELBs have extended their support services for children in mainstream with special educational needs with and without statements e.g. through initiatives such as Behaviour Management, Educational Guidance Centres (or their equivalents) and increased numbers of outreach teachers (including specialist areas such as autism and EBD).

iv. Other provision

Some children with statements receive home tuition or have provision made through EOTAS. Education is available for long-term hospitalisation.

7.1.2 A few children attend the Buddy Bear Trust School in Dungannon and Glencraig Community in Holywood, Co Down. In addition, a small number of children attend special schools in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

- 7.1.3 In some ELBs special schools and special units have developed a support role for children who do not have statements of special educational needs. These children are enrolled in the special school or unit for a limited period of time, eg a reading unit for one year.
- 7.1.4 The enrolment patterns and changes for the three main types of provision are as follows:

CHANGES IN ENROLMENT 1997/98-2000/01				
	1997/98	1997/98	2000/01	2000/01
		%		%
Special Schools	4,859	54	4,845	49
Special units	1,717	19	1,745	18
Statemented Children in mainstream	2,432	27	3,194	33
Total	9,008	100	9,784	100

Table 7 (Source: DE)

- 7.1.5 In percentage terms the changes in the enrolment pattern over the period are as follows:

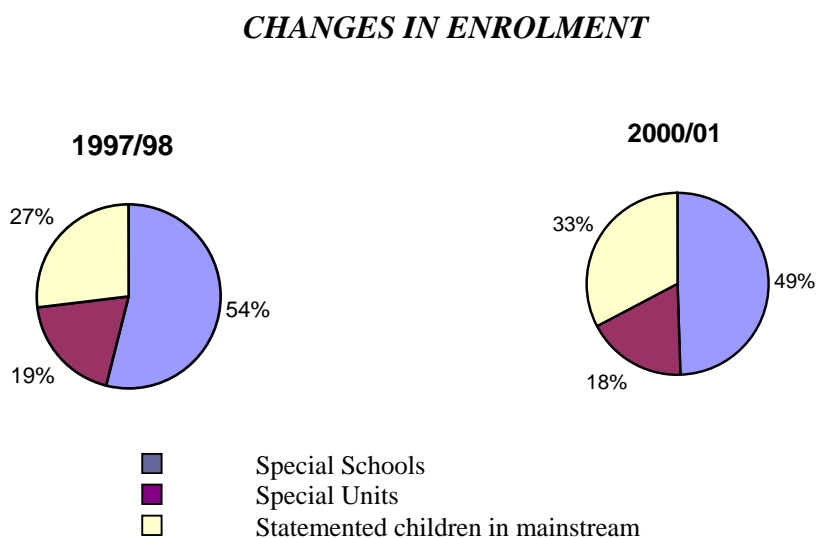


Figure 2

- i. a decrease of 5% in special schools, although approximately half of all children with statements are still enrolled in this form of provision. In comparison, just over one third of statemented children are enrolled in special schools in England and Wales (Source: Audit Commission);
- ii. a decrease of 1% in the number of children educated in special units; and

- iii. an approximate 6% increase in the numbers remaining in mainstream. The increase reflects the trend for more children with special needs such as visual or hearing impairment or those with Downs Syndrome to be educated in mainstream; eg in the Western ELB approximately sixty children with sensory needs and approximately thirty children with Down's Syndrome were enrolled and supported in mainstream schools in October 2000.

7.1.6 The enrolment of special schools has remained fairly stable (at approximately 4500 children since 1994/95), but in light of a decline of 1.27% in overall school population over the same period, this is in real terms an increase. However, within this fairly fixed total, the number of children at SLD schools has increased by more than 10% in the last few years and the number at MLD schools has fallen slightly.

7.1.7 Whilst more children are entering the special education system provision is increasingly made through mainstream.

7.2 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : PROVISION

7.2.1 In the survey schools were asked for their views on the Government's policy to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream primary/secondary schools. The results showed that:

- i. approximately 3% of schools felt that all children with special educational needs should be appropriately supported in a mainstream school;
- ii. 14% of schools felt that children with special educational needs should be appropriately supported in a mainstream school but some of them will need to be taught in special units to facilitate appropriate inclusion;
- iii. 78% of schools felt that children with special educational needs, wherever possible and practical, should attend a mainstream school/unit, although there will be some for whom a special school will be more appropriate; and
- iv. 5% of schools felt that more children with special educational needs should be taught in special schools.

7.2.2 Legally ELBS are required to have the provision outlined in the statement in place within 14 days with the result that ELBs are under pressure to make provision in a system that is already at full capacity. The statutory duty placed on ELBs to provide for children with special educational needs, requires that provision is constantly expanded to keep pace with the growing number of children with special educational needs.

7.2.3 It is difficult for ELBs and CCMS to plan strategically, whilst, at the same time, balancing Government policy, schools' attitudes and parental preferences. The consultation on the proposed SENDB indicates that *'additional provision would be made to strengthen further the right to a place*

in an ordinary school by requiring boards, when seeking to demonstrate that inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children, to show that there are no reasonable steps they could take to prevent the inclusion of a child, with a statement from having that effect’.

- 7.2.4 The number of children waiting for placements constantly changes as new children are statemented, new provision opens or as children leave the system. However, particular pressures exist in areas such as speech and language, EBD, and Autism. The waiting lists for EBD are a particular concern as not all schools are willing to manage this type of provision, given that some children with EBD have been known to assault teachers and cause physical damage to property. Both schools and Education Welfare Officers have stated that children with EBD need immediate attention and a multi-disciplinary approach.
- 7.2.5 ELBs endeavour to manage the shortfall in places as best they can and, while children are waiting for places, their needs are addressed through other means such as outreach services. This, in turn, puts greater pressure on this service, which, although highly valued by parents, does not meet the level of provision specified in the statement.
- 7.2.6 Opening new provision is a slow task that is subject to the difficulties highlighted above.
- 7.2.7 ELB staff pointed out that seeking placement for children across ELB boundaries also present specific problems. Examples include different admission criteria for special units, highlighting the need for the work on common assessment criteria for issue of a statement to filter through to provision.
- 7.2.8 In addition, competing demands exist such as geographical location for ease of access by children and parental preference for type of school. Preferences can be expressed as follows:
- i. controlled, maintained or Irish-medium;
 - ii. settings that offer specific teaching strategies; and
 - iii. single sex school within these.

While these issues have equality implications, there is potentially duplication of provision in certain areas in an effort to meet parental preferences. Segregated provision is not an issue in SLD schools, but its presence in the primary and post primary sectors makes it difficult for ELBS to maximise the use of both physical and human resources. One attempt to address this issue has been the expansion of areas such as the peripatetic service, whereby the service is brought to the children rather than the establishment of dedicated schools or units. While the approach is well founded, this method would potentially require a high level of teaching staff to deal with the number of children that would require assistance, due to the time spent travelling between different locations. It is also likely to have implications for classroom assistance.

7.2.9 In the best value survey, schools were asked whether the needs of statemented children enrolled in their schools were being met as specified in their statement of special educational needs under the following headings and responses were as follows:

- i. teaching and learning - 93% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed that the needs of statemented children are being met;
- ii. physical access to the building - 85% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed that the needs of statemented children are being met;
- iii. access to medical therapies, eg speech and language therapy – 55% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed that the needs of statemented children are being met;
- iv. access to transport – 94% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed that the needs of statemented children are being met;
- v. provision of equipment and furniture – 76% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed that the needs of statemented children are being met; and
- vi. other, eg special dietary requirements – 92% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed that the needs of statemented children are being met.

7.2.10 Transport Officers highlighted a number of concerns about transport for children with special educational needs including:

- i. journey times to and from schools are unacceptably long for some children;
- ii. concern about the complex medical conditions of some of the children being transported;
- iii. excess expenditure can be incurred for EBD children, if a school sends for a taxi earlier than the stipulated time because a child's behaviour is intolerable; and
- iv. transport section is not always notified when a statement is ceased.

7.2.11 Some schools and parents reported that the process for obtaining equipment is bureaucratic and delays the child's access to equipment.

7.2.12 Issues such as disabled access or the provision of disabled toilets etc are dealt with by a number of organisations depending on the type of school as follows:

<i>Type of School</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Controlled	Area ELBs
Catholic Maintained	Trustees/CCMS/DE

As part of the survey, schools were asked how satisfied they were with the relevant organisation's quality of service in relation to property. The results are shown in table 8.

<i>ALWAYS TRUE RESPONSES</i>				
<i>PROPERTY ISSUES</i>	<i>Good Quality Advice and Support (%)</i>	<i>Timely Service (%)</i>	<i>Accessibility (%)</i>	<i>Awareness (%)</i>
Area ELB	35	24	29	27
CCMS & DE	37	21	23	31
DE	33	32	31	19

Table 8

The above results show considerable scope for improvement, particularly when the implications of the SENDB issued for consultation are considered.

- 7.2.13 The pattern of enrolment of children with special educational needs is changing and both ELBS and Health and Social Services face difficulties in managing this change within a climate of equality and limited resources. There is potentially an imbalance in provision in that there is an increasing volume of children with special needs in mainstream, whilst the bulk of both ELB and Health and Social Services expertise have traditionally been concentrated in special schools and units.
- 7.2.14 Health professionals state they have witnessed a change in the type of child being placed in special units, in that some children who would formerly have been educated in SLD schools are now being placed in special units. Principals of special schools have also indicated that the needs of children attending special schools are becoming increasingly complex. In MLD schools more of the children are at the lower end of the MLD spectrum and most of the children have additional needs over and above MLD, eg EBD, ASD. Medical personnel in the Southern Health and Social Services Board reported a 128% increase in the cases in community clinics over the last four years. Health staff representatives of speech therapists, occupational therapists and paediatricians reported that these two factors combined, have major implications on Health and Social Services' future ability to deliver services to children with special needs as it becomes increasingly difficult to provide direct therapy for the children in mainstream schools.
- 7.2.15 Health professionals state that this situation is likely to be exacerbated by the forthcoming SENDB and will necessitate the development of new ways of delivering services to mainstream schools.

- 7.2.16 In consultation, Health and Social Services stated that ELBs continue to plan on the ground with the result that planning forums within Health and Social Services are sometimes unaware of new developments or expansions in existing education provision, or notification is too late to permit adequate arrangements being made within the timescale necessary.
- 7.2.17 Communication and finance difficulties arise because the boundaries of Health and Social Services Boards and ELBs are not coterminous, except in the case of the Western ELB and Western Health and Social Services.
- 7.2.18 During the course of the review a wide range of opinions was gathered from parents on the different types of provision available. Whilst there was a range of positive and negative experiences amongst parents, the Special Education Central Steering Team concluded that there was a lack of formal evidence to support the merits of the various types of provision. The National Foundation for Educational Research is currently conducting research on behalf of ELBs to establish the effectiveness of various types of provision for children who are deemed to have MLD. In addition to measuring outcomes in terms of educational performance, the research will also include measures on behaviour, social development and parent and child satisfaction. The research will run for three years and will play a vital role in the development of future policy on special educational provision for children with MLD. The project is an example of the type of research that could be applied to other areas. Such research would provide evidence, which would be helpful to ELB officers and parents in relation to placement.
- 7.2.19 The naming of a school in a final statement would seem a relatively straightforward procedure, however, parents pointed out in focus groups that the “*school is the child’s world*” and that this is perhaps one of the more difficult decisions to be made.
- 7.2.20 Comments of parents on this emotive area are listed below:
- i. no support is available to help parents on their choice of school;
 - ii. ELB officers do not promote mainstream schools;
 - iii. the range of provision should be available locally;
 - iv. the issues of physical access need to be addressed; and
 - v. why is there no regional approach to provision across the province (which might maximise investment)?
- 7.2.21 Parents have stated that Health and Social Services staff and ELBs officers generally need to be more positive about the abilities of children with special needs. Examples of phrases used by ELB such as ‘*due to the reluctance of his parents he will continue in primary school*’ were quoted in focus groups. ELB officers maintain that such phrases are no longer used, but this historical approach creates anxiety amongst parents. Consequently those parents with

children of primary age wonder whether or not their experience of transferring to post primary will be any different.

7.2.22 Parents had a range of views on the various types of provision and some of the views expressed based on their current experiences are highlighted below.

<i>PARENTAL VIEWS ON PROVISION</i>	
<i>ADVANTAGES</i>	<i>DISADVANTAGES</i>
<i>SPECIAL SCHOOLS</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive support – educationally and medically • No battles with ELBs for extra support such as classroom assistants or transport • Continuity of provision from primary to post primary level • Teachers better trained to deal with various special needs • Summer schools valuable in preventing ‘learning lapse’ • Medical therapies provided in school – no disruption to attend elsewhere for appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected environment • Parents say could be more emphasis on academic achievement • MLD provision finishes Year 12 – no progression academically but need more lifeskills
<i>SPECIAL UNITS</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive support with integration where feasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None highlighted by parents

PARENTAL VIEWS ON PROVISION	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
MAINSTREAM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated with other family members and peers. • Part of local community • Better equipped for life after school (physical disabilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to get sufficient level of support/resources • Implied that if their child is placed in mainstream that they are saying they are the same as children who do not have special needs and consequently do not need additional resources. • Teachers (through no fault of their own) do not have the necessary skills to identify and deal with the wide range of special educational needs. This is sometimes reflected in the work allocated to the child e.g. <i>'Johnny can paint while the others are doing maths'</i>. • Children are frequently taken out of school for medical appointments and therapies which reduces the time available for teaching and learning. • Need full access to curriculum. Teachers are sometimes too sympathetic to individual children rather than firmly adhering to curriculum. EPs are not individual

7.2.23 As indicated in the table above access to the curriculum for all children is important to parents and consequently they feel that the mindset in some schools needs to be changed.

7.2.24 Another issue raised in focus groups with parents was the fact that children who have a statement as a result of a physical disability, but who have no learning difficulty, are not allowed to sit the Transfer test.

7.2.25 Parents also expressed the view that children with special educational needs should have greater access to local further education colleges (Reference Section 5.13 Transition Plans.) Teachers supported this view.

7.2.26 The views of post-primary children on provision were similar to those expressed by parents as follows:

- i. there is a greater choice of subjects in mainstream than in special schools where the emphasis is on practical skills rather than on academia;
- ii. medical therapies should take place after school in order that children do not miss either classes or breaks; and

- iv. attending a school close to home is important in retaining friendships.

7.2.27 The view of therapists is that after school is not necessarily the best time to provide therapy as children are often tired after their day at school and are not always receptive to the therapy offered. Consequently there is a need to make therapy more integral to what happens in the classroom and in the school generally.

7.3 RESOURCES

7.3.1 Spending by ELBs for special educational needs has two components:

- i. the LMS component that is managed by mainstream schools (known as delegated budgets); and
- ii. the element that is managed centrally by the ELB.

7.4 DELEGATED BUDGETS

7.4.1 Resources are allocated to mainstream schools through the seven Local Management of Schools (LMS) formulae currently in operation.

7.4.2 The amount of money allocated under the Special Needs Factor within the LMS formula totalled approximately £13m in 2000/2001 (this amount included schools in the five ELBs and grant maintained integrated schools). An additional sum of £27m was allocated to these and voluntary grammar schools under the Social Deprivation factor within the LMS formula (*Source: DE*).

7.4.3 This money relates to the needs of children at Stages 1-3 of the Code of Practice and is therefore outside the terms of reference of this report. However, it should be borne in mind that a number of issues have been raised in various forums about the resources delegated to schools. These include:

- i. ELBs and DE (for voluntary grammar and grant-maintained integrated schools) currently use different methodologies to allocate the special needs element within the formula; and
- ii. the NIAO highlighted that the absence of any requirement for Targeting Social Need (TSN) money allocated through the LMS formula to be '*ringfenced may result in such funding being used for more general purposes, particularly giving other budget pressures on schools*'.

7.4.4 Proposals on common funding formula, which are due to be implemented in April 2003, address these issues.

7.5 CENTRALLY MANAGED (NON-DELEGATED) FUNDS

7.5.1 Centrally managed funds relate to those aspects of the service where the level of resources is determined by the ELB.

7.5.2 Table 9 shows expenditure for the special service heading from 1995/96 to 2000/01. Figures for 1995/96 to 1998/99 are payments actually made (cash figures), but changes in 1999/00 as to how government departments recorded expenditure means that the figures from this date include items that ELBs were committed to paying (accruals). It is considered that the move from cash to accruals has not significantly impacted the figures.

<i>SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE – EXPENDITURE TREND 1992/93-2000/01</i>			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Associated cost £000s</i>	<i>Increase £000s</i>	<i>Increase (%)</i>
1995/96	40,633	-	-
1996/97	42,947	2,314	5.69
1997/98	44,250	1,303	3.03
1998/99	46,562	2,312	5.22
1999/00	53,097	6,535	14.04
2000/01	59,038	5,941	11.19

Table 9

7.5.3 The increase, from £41m in 1995/96 to £59m in 2000/01, of 44% means that spend on the Special Education Service has risen from 4.31% of the total recurrent expenditure of ELBs to 5.83%.

7.5.4 Historically, special education was generally viewed as special schools only, but with developments and expansion in special education support arrangements, together with the increasing numbers of children with statements in mainstream, there are now more constituent parts to the centrally managed budget. These can be classified into four main categories:

- i. special service i.e. special schools, psychology, EOTAS, and special administration;
- ii. special units in mainstream schools, eg classroom assistants and special unit teachers;
- iii. statemented children at mainstream schools; and
- iv. peripatetic services.

7.5.5 In 2000/2001 the expenditure on these four categories totalled £83.4m (see table 10).

SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTRALLY MANAGED EXPENDITURE 2000/01						
	Belfast	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Special Service	16,131	11,448	14,309	7,210	9,940	59,038
Special Units	616	1,115	2,333	3,497	469	8,030
Statemented Children at Mainstream	571	1,841	4,237	2,974	2,833	12,456
Peripatetic Service	1,163	944	0	997	853	3,957
Total	18,481	15,160	20,879	14,678	14,095	83,481

Table 10

- 7.5.6 Costs associated with special provision have increased significantly as a consequence of increasing numbers of children identified with special educational needs and the increasing complexity of the needs. Apart from inflation, this is also a result of the establishment of new provision, e.g. educational guidance centres, EOTAS and new services for areas such as autism and behaviour.
- 7.5.7 The replication of provision in various management types of mainstream school, e.g. controlled, maintained, incurs additional expenditure, which does not arise in the case of special schools. This situation is likely to expand in line with the growth in the integrated and Irish medium sectors.
- 7.5.8 The increased numbers of teaching and non-teaching staff (such as classroom assistants and educational psychologists) have also contributed to rising costs. In the three years, from 1998/99 to 2000/01, spend for classroom assistants has risen by 41% overall from £14.9m to £21.0m (table 11). The greatest increase within this is provision of classroom assistants in mainstream schools where the expenditure has increased by 67% over the three-year period. This reflects the increasing level of support being allocated to support the 6% increase in the number of children with statements of special educational needs remaining in mainstream.

CLASSROOM ASSISTANT EXPENDITURE				
1998/99 – 2000/01				
	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	
Special Schools (including Special units at special schools)				
<i>Belfast</i>	1,587	1,845	2,036	
<i>North Eastern</i>	1,774	1,957	2,048	
<i>South Eastern</i>	1,575	1,773	1,977	
<i>Southern</i>	864	994	1,092	
<i>Western</i>	1,210	1,263	1,362	
Total	7,010	7,832	8,515	
Mainstream Schools				
<i>Belfast</i>	271	333	492	
<i>North Eastern</i>	722	1,021	1,334	
<i>South Eastern</i>	2,332	3,197	3,647	
<i>Southern</i>	1,102	1,637	1,776	
<i>Western</i>	1,618	2,093	2,833	
Total	6,045	8,281	10,082	
Special Units in Mainstream Schools				
<i>Belfast</i>	140	162	143	
<i>North Eastern</i>	275	312	336	
<i>South Eastern</i>	170	200	235	
<i>Southern</i>	1,121	1,462	1,595	
<i>Western</i>	125	130	135	
Total	1,831	2,266	2,444	
Total all Sectors				
	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	%
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	Increase
<i>Belfast</i>	1,998	2,340	2,671	33.68
<i>North Eastern</i>	2,771	3,290	3,718	34.18
<i>South Eastern</i>	4,077	5,170	5,859	43.71
<i>Southern</i>	3,087	4,093	4,463	44.58
<i>Western</i>	2,953	3,486	4,330	46.63
Total	14,886	18,379	21,041	41.35

Table 11

Classroom Assistant Expenditure 1998/99 - 2000/01

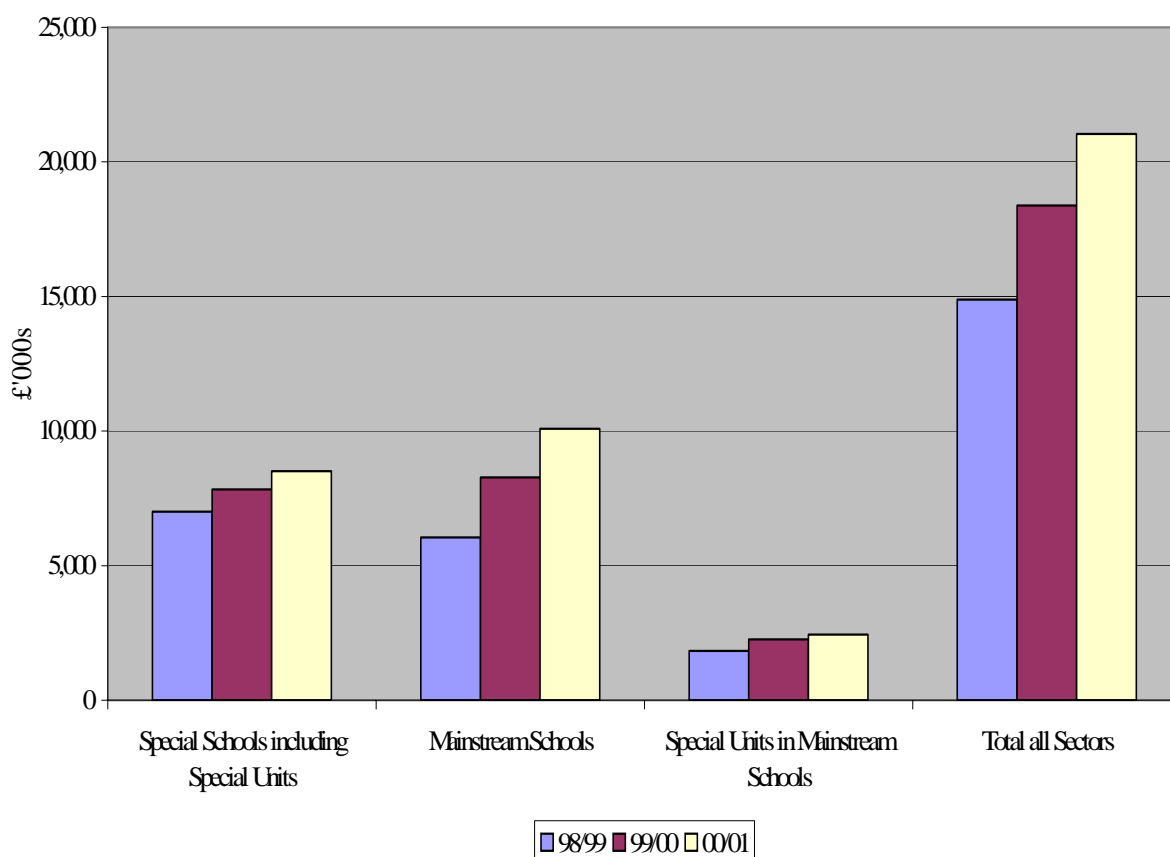


Figure 3

7.5.9 Earmarked Funds

Earmarked funds are resources made available by DE for a specific purpose and cannot be used for any other purpose. One such example is the Code of Practice.

7.5.10 The Code of Practice has significant resource implications for both schools and ELBs and its introduction was initially supported with earmarked monies. In 1998/99 the allocation for training, extra educational psychologists, administrative support and resources for schools amounted to £2.9m (including £35k for grant maintained integrated schools. In 2000/01, £4.041 m was allocated to ELBs (*Source DE*).

7.5.11 Other Expenditure on Special Needs

The following amounts were also attributable to special educational needs in 2000/01:

- £0.636m was spent on additional help for statemented children and non-statemented children with a severe, but temporary physical disability in the voluntary grammar sector (*Source DE*);
- £0.856m was spent on the same type of additional help in grant maintained schools sectors (*Source DE*); and
- £10m approximately was spent on transporting children with special educational needs.

CENTRALLY MANAGED EXPENDITURE 2000/01

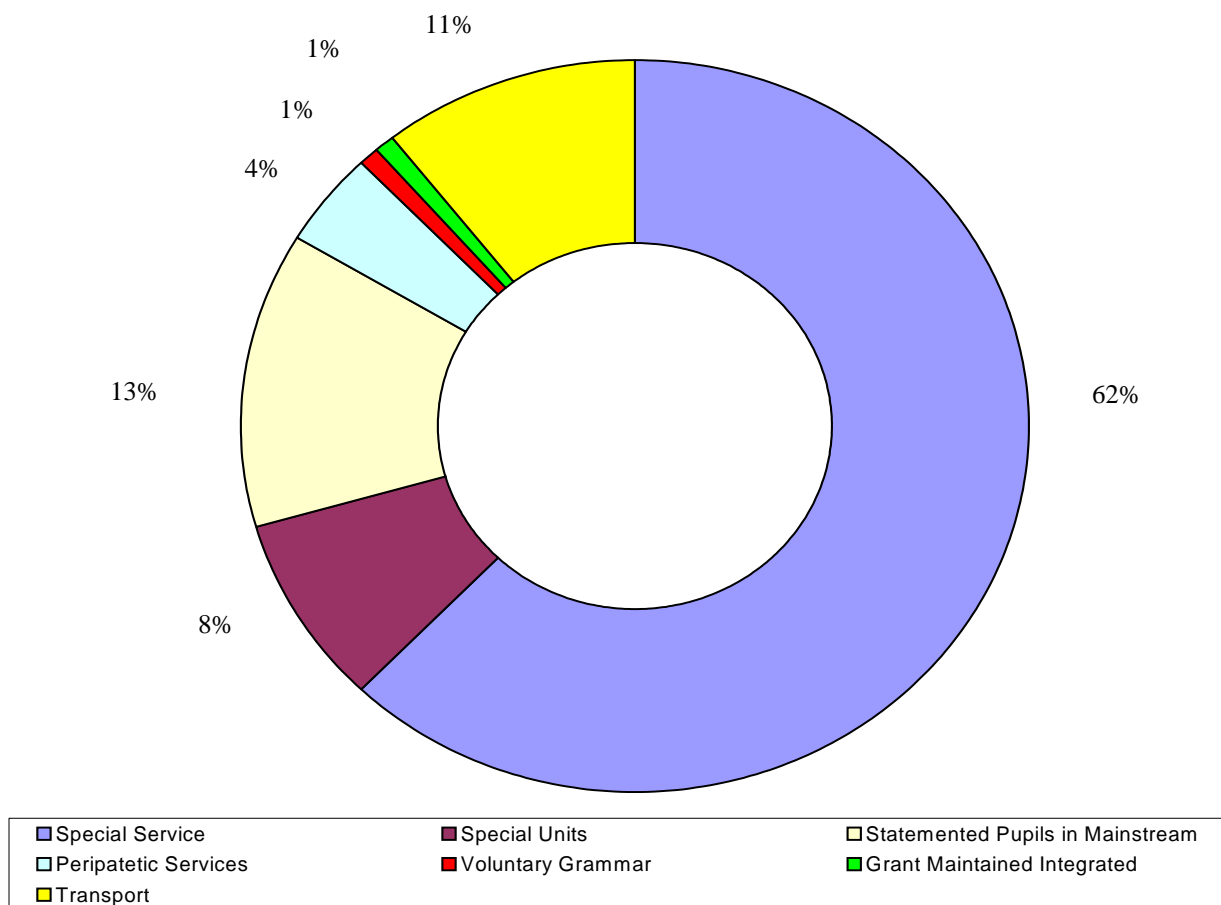


Figure 4

7.5.12 Total Expenditure

When combined, the total expenditure for the education service in Northern Ireland on children with special needs (with and without a statement) equalled approximately £108m. This excludes other administrative costs such as human resources, processing of salaries and wages, curriculum advisory services and the education welfare service. Information on the cost of the input by personnel and professionals from other organisations such as Health and Social Services and the T&EA are not available, but is likely to be significant.

7.5.13 The figures also exclude money received as gifts or raised through special events and which schools use to supplement the children's learning experiences through strategies such as music, art and drama therapy, aromatherapy or, on occasion, items such as new photocopiers.

7.5.14 These figures relate to recurrent expenditure only and do not take account of capital expenditure, eg new schools built which has also been significant.

7.6 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES: RESOURCES

7.6.1 Special education is a demand led service in that there is a statutory obligation to meet the special educational needs of children. The fact that the budget is limited means that ELBs face the dilemma of meeting the child's needs, and, at the same time, remaining within the special education budget or diverting funding from other budgets within ELBs, eg maintenance, to cover projected overspends in special education. This situation impacts on the delegated budgets to mainstream schools in that the greater the amount of money required by ELBs to meet the cost of centrally charged items, the less is available for allocation to mainstream schools. The situation is compounded each year as the resources associated with a statement remain in place until the children leaves school and the number of new statements being issued each year exceeds the number being ceased.

7.6.2 In its report (1998), the NIAO '*was surprised that the boards could not readily provide comparisons of the cost of different types of provision for pupils with special educational needs*'. The NIAO Report highlighted a number of difficulties in relation to special needs funding, these included:

- i. significant variations in the cost of special school provision between ELBs;
- ii. inconsistencies in the calculation of unit costs for special units; and
- iii. disparity between the costs of similar types of unit in different ELB areas.

7.6.3 The NIAO recommended that ELBs should take steps to develop management information systems which would enable them to carry out regular comparisons of actual costs per statemented children. The intention was that this would allow any anomalies to be examined and remedial action taken if necessary. The report also said that DE should exercise oversight of cross-ELB comparisons on a periodic basis.

7.6.4 As part of the examination of finances for this review, the Finance Group attempted to examine expenditure for 2000/01 in terms of 'type of special educational need' rather than seek to derive unit cost information for children in a particular type of provision. Cost comparisons could not be derived for a number of different reasons including the following:

- i. variety of special educational needs that are being addressed;
- ii. complexity of each individual child's needs;

- iii. the way in which provision is made; and
 - iv. different ways in which ELBs account for expenditure.
- 7.6.5 In addition, the current accounting practices do not distinguish between costs incurred at Stages 1-3, and Stages 4 and 5, eg peripatetic support and psychology.
- 7.6.6 The exercise conducted by the Finance Group showed that ELBs' ability to derive accurate detailed costings in 2002, has not changed since the publication of the NIAO Report, despite numerous attempts in the past to achieve this. ELBs still do not have an adequate information technology system (reference Section 9, Management Information) and variations still exist in how expenditure is coded to various headings. For example, when considering costs for the Special Education Service in the Southern ELB, the figure seems lower, but this could be attributed to the fact that there are no MLD special schools in this ELB. However, the opposing side is that the Southern ELB figure is the highest for special units (see table 10).
- 7.6.7 ELBs are concerned about the perception of inequalities in resource allocation. Whilst ELBs aim to ensure equity and transparency in the allocation of resources, the individual needs of a child are such that this is virtually impossible. For example, one of the ELBs has a child with autism whose parents would like their child to avail of a specific type of provision which would cost approximately £25,000 per annum. Whilst acknowledging that parents want what they perceive as the best for their child, the ELB's view is that there is not, as yet, sufficient evidence that the particular type of provision requested is effective and, consequently, is hesitant to commit to such a high level of resources at the expense of other children.
- 7.6.8 Parents also commented on the issue of inconsistencies in the allocation of resources between ELBs and within ELBs and expressed the view that provision '*boils down to money*'.
- 7.6.9 A number of principals would support the view that ELBs are doing their best within limited resources. Although children with special educational needs are required to be identified and assessed individually, it is not always appropriate to identify them separately for resource purposes and the child's needs and the educational environment should be considered in totality.
- 7.6.10 Although ELBs operate policies to provide some degree of consistency in the allocation of resources, such as adult assistance or equipment, they retain flexibility within these schemes to allow for particular circumstances which may arise. An additional concern identified through challenge sessions, was the level of equipment recommended by the Health and Social Services professional advice writers. ELB officers feel that on some occasions, such equipment, eg a standing frame, is recommended for use by the child in school, but is not used at home, or that some equipment specified is for medical not educational needs.

7.6.11 Children with statements may live in one ELB area and attend a school in another. This presents ELBs with the dilemma of who provides the equipment. The ELB in which the child attends school receives the funding for the child, but the statutory obligation to make provision rests with the ELB in which the child lives. To date there has been a gentleman's agreement that, the ELB area in which the school attended is located, meets the cost of the equipment. With increasing pressures on ELB budgets, there have been instances whereby the ELB in which the child is enrolled breaks the agreement and asks the child's 'home' ELB to finance the additional provision. This situation has also arisen in a small number of cases concerning the provision of classroom assistants.

7.7 MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

- 7.7.1 ELBs have considered the application of LMS to special schools in an attempt to make the funding mechanism more transparent. This has not progressed and this is partly due to the difficulties in assigning a value to, or attributing costs to a particular type of need.
- 7.7.2 The consultation survey asked schools whether they would like to manage the budget for all teaching staff in the school and 77% of special schools said that they would not like to manage the budget for all teaching staff. The same question was asked in regard to non-teaching staff and 74% of special schools indicated that they would not like to manage the budget for non-teaching staff.
- 7.7.3 No ELB has applied a formula to the centrally managed aspects of special needs funding relating to mainstream schools either. The survey showed that 40% of schools said that they would not like to manage the budget for all teaching staff and 21% indicated that they are not sure. Within this figure 47% of nursery and 46% of primary schools replied 'no'. The same question was asked in relation to non-teaching staff, again 44% of schools indicated that they would not like to manage the budget for all non-teaching staff and 19% indicated that they are not sure. In this question 50% of nursery and 49% of primary indicated 'no'.
- 7.7.4 The results of the school survey showed that 40% of all schools would like statemented children to be funded on the basis of a formula, however, an equal 40% indicated that they would not be in favour of this.
- 7.7.5 ELB officers are concerned that if the resources delegated to schools are not effectively used, there are implications for the number of children coming through to Stage 4. Of the mainstream schools surveyed in this review, 56% stated that they did not identify expenditure on special needs in the Board of Governor's Annual Report to parents.
- 7.7.6 ELBs and schools have also to manage earmarked funds. In the last number of years there has been a number of initiatives and many of these should have an impact on those children who have special educational needs that do not warrant a statement. Examples include allocations for Behaviour, Reading Recovery and Good Practice. Both ELBs and schools have expressed numerous concerns about the allocation of earmarked funds, including:

- i. the relatively small amounts may be insufficient to achieve substantial gain, particularly if the money concerned is to be allocated to a large number of schools as is the case with the Code of Practice funds;
- ii. critics advocate that some earmarked funds could be said to reward failure;
- iii. there is no evaluation or research of the effectiveness of earmarked funding regardless of the amount involved; and
- iv. earmarked funding encourages schools and ELBs to address individual areas rather than take a holistic approach.

7.7.7 On the positive side, some earmarked initiatives are reported to have worked well, but cease purely because of a lack of funding.

7.7.8 One of the principles of the current review of the ARNE is that earmarked funding should be minimised.

7.7.9 ELBs have stated that there is a small element of 'double funding' with regard to special educational needs. This occurs when a child moves from mainstream to specialist provision. In this case the mainstream school retains the money allocated within the formula budget for that child and the ELB has to meet the cost of the specialist provision centrally. One ELB did previously address this through its LMS Scheme, but the Common Formula Funding Proposals do not take account of in-year pupil movements.

7.7.10 In the challenge session held as part of the review, it was suggested that schools should be funded regardless of the number of special needs children, as adequate resourcing would enable schools to take a more holistic approach to dealing with special needs. One example put forward was that if each class had a classroom assistant then this resource could be used to, either help particular children with special needs, or to work with other children whilst the teacher focussed on those children with special needs. It should be added that no research has been undertaken that would illustrate that fewer children are being statemented since the introduction of the Primary One Initiative which provided funding for the employment of a classroom assistant for all P1 classes. Additional benefits arising from this may include more stable and effective classroom assistance.

7.7.11 Practice in Local Education Authorities

Hillingdon LEA has introduced an initiative for the provision of funding without a statement to shift resources away from the administration of the statement process and into schools. Hillingdon's Strategy for Inclusion/SEN document states that the scheme was introduced in May 2000 and in the first year 60% of the cases referred were approved. The LEA acknowledges that parents are often concerned about this type of approach, as they like the written document giving them the reassurance that schools will meet their child's needs.

- 7.7.12 In a best value review of Statementing of Special Educational Needs, Bedfordshire County Council attempted to establish a unit cost for the production of a statement. The authority reported that *'this proved to be extremely difficult for a number of reasons'* as relevant information was not available and data was not easily accessible. For purposes of the review the authority made a number of assumptions about the amount of time spent by various staff on assessments in relation to the number of statements per annum and estimated that the direct costs to Bedfordshire County Council per statement was £1053 at 1999/2000 prices.
- 7.7.13 Bedfordshire reported that this figure was surprisingly less than the £4,500 estimate which had been given to their review team from a previous study, but acknowledged that it did not know exactly what was included in the higher figure.
- 7.7.14 The Audit Commission Report on the *'Statutory Assessment and Statements of SEN: In Need of Review'*? states that the cost of producing a statement is approximately £2,500. On the basis of this figure, the cost to ELBs of producing 1588 statements in 2000/2001 would equate to £3.97m.
- 7.7.15 Some LEAs, which are experiencing budgetary pressures similar to ELBs, have considered alternatives for funding special needs provision. Part of this review sought comparative information on how special education is managed and financed in local education authorities in Great Britain. Information was gathered from a number of local authorities, but these reviews tended to focus on processes. References to finances in these reviews related to the equitable and transparent distribution of resources rather than the merits of any particular funding methodology.
- 7.7.16 This was also the case in the Audit Commission's Review of Special Educational Needs, although some case studies from Nottinghamshire and Newham were quoted in this document. These are detailed below.

Nottinghamshire

Resources for children with significant needs are delegated to seven area 'Mainstream Support Groups' and schools are grouped into 'families' beneath these, usually consisting of a secondary school and its local primary schools. SENCOs can apply for additional funding for individual pupils by completing a pro-forma, detailing the resources they think they require and how they intend to use them, together with supporting evidence. Each submission is moderated by SENCOs within the family of schools. A lead SENCO then takes them forward to the Mainstream Support Group where allocations are agreed once a year. A small contingency fund within each family of schools allows for unexpected changes during the year.

London Borough of Newham

Newham LEA delegated resources for pupils with statements from April 2000, including funding for learning support teachers and assistants. They also developed special arrangements for providing additional funding for children with 'exceptional resource requirements' – those that are hard to predict and often very high cost.

All schools are part of one of ten clusters, involving nursery, primary and secondary schools. Clusters meet every term to agree which children to request additional funding for, through their Exceptional Resource Panel. The panel is made up of representatives from each cluster, together with LEA officers. The emphasis is on peer moderation: officers act largely in an advisory capacity. The panel considers each case in turn and decides whether to allocate extra funding. About 270 children are supported in this way at present.

Some schools have concerns about the system, including the paperwork involved and funding decisions. However, SENCOs report that they now have a clearer understanding of the resources available and how other schools are seeking to meet similar needs. The system has enabled children with very high levels of need to be included in local schools, without requiring a statement. Now that it has been operating for a year, the LEA is commissioning an external review of the system.

Hillingdon

Hillingdon LEA uses the main special need for each child to determine the funding allocated to that child's school. Each of the types of special need has a cash value and schools receive the total cash value for all their children with statements for the period they are enrolled in the school. Like the schemes for LMS, various weightings are applied. The weightings vary for pupils in nursery and reception/year 1, but are the same for years 2-13. No age weighting is given to pupils with medical or complex difficulties or pupils with exceptional needs.

In their best value review of special needs, Hillingdon LEA recognised the issue of considerable resources being 'tied to individual children' and the need for restructuring of resources. The authority review team reported that it believes the long-term solution is to increase the funding to schools so that less children fall into the category of requiring additional individual support. The authority goes on to acknowledge that this will require a high level of trust between schools, parents and the authority and that this stresses the importance of working in partnership.

7.8 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS : RESOURCES

- 7.8.1 The fact that many children now have multiple needs that are met in a variety of ways, would require a complex methodology to ensure that resources are appropriately targeted. Such a mechanism would need to be constantly reviewed as new therapies, new ways of teaching and new 'centres of excellence' emerge. Whilst ELBs and DE both recognise the need to review how funds for special educational needs are initially allocated to each ELB and, secondly, from ELBs to schools, such changes will require thorough investigation, planning and transition arrangements. In addition, a management information system to provide accurate statistical information to support their operation is required.
- 7.8.2 Any changes in funding mechanisms should also concur with government thinking, that the distribution of resources to support children with special educational needs should be based on the key principles listed below. That is arrangements for funding should:
- i. be open and transparent, and distribute resources equitably between schools;
 - ii. support inclusion within mainstream settings wherever possible;
 - iii. enable needs to be met as early as possible and usually without the need for a statement;
 - iv. support raising standards and achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy and other key skills including the development of independence;
 - v. safeguard the rights and entitlements of children with the most exceptional special needs, including those with statements, to ensure that appropriate provision is available; and
 - vi. match the allocation of resources with the responsibility for ensuring outcomes in terms of child progress, attainment and well-being.
- 7.8.3 DE has engaged consultants to review the Assessment of Relative Needs Exercise, the mechanism used to allocate funding between ELBS. Within the overall ARNE mechanism, funding for special educational needs is based on historical expenditure in each ELB plus an increase for inflation, which it is recognised, does not promote a culture of efficiency or equity. The draft report from the consultants has stated that there is a *'desire to utilise indicators that are completely free from ELB control'* rather than apply an indicator whereby *'ELBs would be effectively controlling activity levels that are in turn feeding directly into the funding mechanism'*.
- 7.8.4 The consultants have quoted The Warnock Report indications that the incidence of children with special educational needs should be normally distributed across the school-age population i.e. there should not be a higher incidence of children

with special education needs in one board than another. They have therefore recommended that the number of children educated in schools in the board's area is used as an indicator of need, including the number of children at voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools in the board's area.

- 7.8.5 It should be emphasised that, while cost is important, it is not the sole determinant of best value. Other factors such as effectiveness and child/parental satisfaction with provision are equally important. It is proposed in the SENDB *'to remove the requirement in sub-paragraph 7(2)(b)(i) of the Education (NI) Order 1996 dealing with whether the school could meet the child's special educational needs and sub-paragraph 7(2)(b)(iii) of the 1996 Order which stated that a child with special needs being placed at an ordinary school should not be incompatible with "the efficient use of resources'.* It is in this context that the need for research as highlighted in paragraph 7.2.18 is significant.

8.0 WORKFORCE

8.1 BACKGROUND

8.1.1 At Stages 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice, a wide range of staff are involved, some of whom are not employed by the Education Service, e.g medical officers, and physiotherapists. The following are the main education stakeholders:

<i>ELB OFFICERS</i>	<i>SCHOOL BASED STAFF</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Education Administrative Staff• Educational Psychologists• Peripatetic Teachers• Outreach Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators• Other adult assistants

Table 12

8.1.2 ELBs have different structures to manage the Special Education Service and these are reflected in the operational practices within each ELB as highlighted in this report, eg Panels. In particular, this section focuses on the staffing issues raised through consultation.

8.1.3 Special Education Sections

The following are core activities common to all ELBs:

- i. co-ordination of the statutory assessment process by:
 - requesting advice
 - writing statements of special educational needs
 - liaising with parents, health professionals and schools
- ii. management of special education provision; and
- iii. development and application of policy and procedures, eg classroom assistance or equipment policies.

8.1.4 Educational Psychology

DE's recent Inspection Report on the Educational Psychology Service across Northern Ireland provides details regarding the work of educational psychologists. In the context of this report, educational psychologists provide the reports of assessments at Stage 3, psychological advice for statutory assessments at Stage 4 and on request for annual reviews.

Approximately 136 psychologists are employed on a full and part-time basis. (*Appendix 13*).

8.1.5 Peripatetic Teachers/Outreach Teachers

All ELBs have peripatetic/outreach teachers supporting the needs of children at Stages 3 and 5. Services are provided in the areas of:

- i. sensory impairment;
- ii. autism;
- iii. EBD;
- iv. literacy;
- v. speech and language; and
- vi. pre-school support.

This support can take the form of direct teaching, group work with children, advice to SENCOs/class teachers and inservice training.

8.1.6 Teachers and SENCOs

The Code of Practice requires all teachers to identify the special educational needs of children in their class, and at Stage 1 to take the initiative in differentiating their teaching and learning strategies. The Code of Practice also requires schools to identify a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The SENCO has a central role in the assessment and meeting of children's special educational needs.

8.1.7 Other Adult Assistants

At Stage 5 the statement may identify additional assistance which may involve the school employing an assistant at the ELB's expense. In some instances this is based on the recommendation from a Health professional. This assistant can be either for classroom, general, domestic or supervisory duties, depending on the special educational needs of the child.

8.2 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTIONS

- 8.2.1 Staffing structures vary across ELBs (*Appendix 13*). In some ELBs special education posts have undergone job evaluation, nevertheless, staff feel that there are still noticeable differences in grades and duties, which is causing discontentment. This is a consequence of the range of duties undertaken by individuals and organisational structures within each ELB.
- 8.2.2 It is acknowledged that DE has allocated earmarked money to increase administrative support following the introduction of the Code of Practice. However, the view in special education sections is that there is still a requirement for additional staff if the standard of service is to be improved.
- 8.2.3 Staff generally feel that they are working in stressful conditions. The reasons cited for this include:

- i. volume of work due to inadequate staffing levels;
 - ii. amount of paperwork;
 - iii. timescales for delivery of statements;
 - iv. inadequate computerised systems;
 - v. high expectations of parents; and
 - vi. the attitude of some parents who are under pressure because of a lack of understanding of the process.
- 8.2.4 The organisational structure deployed in an ELB can also contribute to the extent of the stress experienced by staff. Consultation with staff highlighted that assigning individuals to particular geographical areas provided continuity for schools, parents and others throughout the duration of the process.
- 8.2.5 In a number of ELBs difficulties have been experienced due to a high level of temporary staff. The training of such staff members can add to the workload of permanent staff, which in turn exacerbates the stress.
- 8.2.6 Staff report that they constantly struggle to balance the paperwork, the need to contact parents and schools, to keep up to date with current initiatives in education and, in particular, special education, as well as to attend relevant meetings and working groups. This often results in staff working in excess of their contractual hours. Within ELBs the special education section is acknowledged as being one of the most stressful areas in which to work. A number of ELBs has experienced a high level of absence due to sickness and consultation has shown that in these circumstances cover is not always available. Consequently, this adds to the pressure on remaining staff.
- 8.2.7 In England, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) encouraged parent partnerships in the area of special educational needs. The aims of the three-year programme (1994/95 to 1996/97) directed at local education authorities (LEAs) and schools in England were *‘to encourage partnership between parents, LEAs, schools and voluntary bodies in the work of identifying, assessing and arranging provision for pupils with special educational needs, particularly but not necessarily all those who are statutorily assessed and have statements of special educational needs. The development of active partnership schemes, including the provision of information and advisory services for parents of SEN children and the identification of ‘Named Persons’ is intended to reduce conflict and minimise the number of statutory appeals’*.
- 8.2.8 The evaluation of parent partnership schemes (1997) reports that there is strong evidence that they have made a difference, but there is much yet to achieve, particularly in schools and also in encouraging more parents to avail themselves of the parent partnership services. The evaluation adds that the Named Persons Scheme has been successful, but requires continuous investment of time and training and support resources to maintain it effectively within LEAs.

8.2.9 Research on determining the factors that appear to be essential in establishing and maintaining good practice in partnerships between parents, schools and local education authorities in England, shows that there can be no single model of parent partnership that matches the diversity of needs, local culture and provision across all local authorities. However, the core activities of examples of good practice in parent partnership include:

- i. working with parents;
- ii. information and publicity;
- iii. training, advice and support;
- iv. networking and collaboration; and
- ii. helping to inform and influence local policy and practice.

8.2.10 In consultation, parents stated that they would like to see the development of partnerships with parents similar to those established in LEAs.

8.2.11 It would appear that ELBs could adopt the principles of the parent partnership scheme. However, officers emphasised that the creation of additional posts to fulfil this role is not necessarily the only approach, but that capacity could be created within the system to allow all special education staff more time to liaise with the various parties concerned.

8.2.12 In addition, consultation with the Special Education Service staff highlighted the stresses to both parents and ELB employees caused by the inability of ELBs to deliver the provision specified in statements within the required time-scale.

8.3 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

8.3.1 In recent years DE has provided extra funding to train additional educational psychologists: to enable ELBs to employ additional educational psychologists to meet increased demand for assessments at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice; to meet the increased demand for psychological assessments in connection with the statutory assessment process within the time limits specified in the legislation; and to meet the demand for other services provided by educational psychologists. However, there have been difficulties in filling the additional posts and in retaining experienced staff. A number of reasons have been offered for this:

- i. a number of qualified psychologists choose not to apply for posts and prefer to remain in teaching;
- ii. experienced staff have been successful in obtaining more highly paid posts in other areas of education; and
- iii. a number of educational psychologists have left the province to work in the newly-established and rapidly expanding National Psychology

Service in the Republic of Ireland where rate of pay are considerably higher and where there is a much better career structure.

- 8.3.2 The staffing difficulties experienced by the services are compounded by two other factors:
- i. the inability of service to cover long-term temporary absence caused by maternity leave, career breaks and long-term illness; and
 - ii. the level of requests from staff for part-time employment.
- 8.3.3 All ELBs are currently experiencing such difficulties in filling permanent and, in particular, temporary posts. The increased number of educational psychologists undergoing training should help resolve this situation but it has been drawn to our attention that the age profile of staff in these services is such that there is likely to be a serious problem staffing the services in the foreseeable future.
- 8.3.4 The Education Training Inspectorate report on the Inspection of the Educational Psychology Service in Northern Ireland (2000) recommended that *'ELBs should review the present working practices of psychologists to identify those tasks which could be done by others in the Education Service, thus freeing up the psychologists' time so that they have greater opportunities to enhance equality of support they can offer to schools, parents and children'*. In the course of the review, consultation reiterated this point. Schools and the Standing Conference on Special Education have expressed the view that valuable psychologist time is taken up administering and writing up the results of diagnostic tests that confirm the teacher's existing knowledge of the child's abilities. The principal educational psychologists believe that the role of educational psychologists has developed significantly in recent years and continues to develop and is no longer a role concerned pre-dominantly with assessment of basic subject difficulties in schools. Psychologists have developed expertise in a wide variety of fields in education and in particular difficulties experienced by children e.g. autistic spectrum disorder, dyslexia, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. They are also committed to disseminating research findings and best practice to schools and parents to enable them to manage more successfully the learning and behaviour of such children.
- 8.3.5 Some parents stated that they are unhappy with the level of input from educational psychologists to their child's statutory assessment. These parents feel that it is unfair to judge their child's capabilities on the basis of one or two short assessments that are carried out by a person who is a stranger to the child.
- 8.3.6 The Standing Conference on Special Education also highlighted waiting times for educational psychologists as an issue. This has been supported by the results of the survey which showed that 38% of schools felt that educational psychologists always provided a timely service. This view was reiterated in discussions, with schools, health staff and special education administrative staff all of whom stated that access to and timeliness of the service provided by educational psychologists needs to be improved.

8.3.7 Principal educational psychologists also highlighted that an increased amount of their time was being devoted to support schools with behaviour cases which are increasingly urgent, time-consuming and complex.

8.4 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : PERIPATETIC TEACHERS/OUTREACH TEACHERS

8.4.1 As referenced in Section 5.7.9, parents value the work of the peripatetic/outreach service.

8.4.2 Schools also value the service and identified the need for additional outreach and peripatetic support teachers. ELB officers would support this view with a reservation that the services are carefully managed to ensure efficient use of resources.

8.5 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : TEACHERS AND SENCOS

8.5.1 Special Educational Needs is not a core module of initial teacher training and consequently the common theme emerging for teachers and SENCOs relates to training

8.5.2 The Dyson Report identified that special needs teachers were concerned about their knowledge and ability to act as support teachers and the need for guidance and support for special needs teachers to develop skills in this area. The results of the best value survey showed that only 9% of schools are very satisfied and 43% of schools are satisfied that the professional development needs of teaching staff are being met. As a follow-up, schools were asked for suggestions in order to improve the quality of service. The responses made by schools are summarised overleaf:

Identification and Assessment of Special Needs

- Additional courses and inservice training
- Advice and training in diagnosing special educational needs
- Additional field officers, dedicated special advisers to provide support for teachers in planning
- Educational psychologists to be used more strategically and response times improved
- Diagnostic tests should be available for use by teachers
- Teachers and SENCOs should have additional time to address special educational needs, including extra time for withdrawal work
- Paperwork and administration should be reduced
- Parents should become more involved
- Statutory Assessment Process should be shortened
- Should be greater acceptance of school's perspective
- Additional resources

Curriculum Support for Children with Special Needs

- Additional funding, courses and inservice training (with a focus on teaching strategies and sharing good practice)
- Additional support for children (including more classroom assistants)
- Additional peripatetic/outreach help
- Expert advice in relation to areas such as Autism, ADHD, dyslexia and speech and language
- IT skills
- Additional resources
- Establishment of short term provision in areas such as EBD and reading recovery
- Additional time for withdrawal and remedial teaching
- Regular liaison with outside agencies regarding planning for statemented children

Use of Specialist Equipment

- The need for funded training in the use of equipment (including health and safety issues)
- Provision of information for schools on availability of specialist equipment
- How specialist equipment can be used to access subjects
- Lack of funding at ELB level for equipment and the inability of /lack of priority on the part of schools to purchase specialist equipment that is not within the remit of the LMS budget

Administration of Medicines for Children with Special Educational Needs

- The need for DE and ELBs to clarify policy, roles and responsibilities in this area
- The need to issue subsequent advice and guidelines
- The need to employ school nurses
- The need for training/specialist training
- The issue of the rights of children and teachers
- The prospect of litigation
- Union advice not to administer medication

Other Comments

- Training for adult assistants
- Liaison with H&SS
- Up to date information on syndromes and disorders and research findings
- Common criteria across ELBs
- Development in the special sector
- Code of Practice does not cater for all types of special educational needs
- Additional Resources
- Implementation of coherent policy
- Reinstatement of DE funding for Masters and D.A.S.E. qualifications
- Teachers wishing to undertake these courses have to finance their own studies
- Too much expected from teachers
- The need for training on restraint of children
- The promotion of inclusion
- Inset needs to be more proactive
- Budget constraints have implications for meeting the needs of children
- Lack of finance for training
- Parents should be bound to the process in the same way as other parties

8.5.3 At focus groups schools emphasised that the culture of a school is critical in the successful management of special needs. A whole school approach is required, rather than as described by one teacher a situation where '*teachers teach subjects and SENCOs teach children*'.

Issues raised by schools included:

- i. the need to develop partnerships between SENCOs and ELBs on special needs as well as between SENCOs in different schools;
- ii. the role of the SENCO is vital in school and needs to be developed as a specialist post rather than an '*add on task*';
- iii. SENCOs should be involved in the senior management team of the school;
- iv. the need to fund non-contact time for administration and liaison with ELBs and other statutory agencies;
- v. the need for more training on specific special needs;
- vi. special needs qualifications should be promoted;
- vii. the difficulty in appointing and retaining SENCOs;
- viii. SENCOs are overworked; and
- ix. in small schools the principal frequently fulfils multiple roles e.g. the principal, the SENCO and class teacher.

8.5.4 Suggestions were made for action on some of these areas. These ranged from using teachers in special schools to support mainstream teachers to promoting teacher exchange/secondments to special schools or units. The objective would be to enable staff to gain experience in particular needs, eg EBD. This experience could then be disseminated to other staff following the teacher's return to mainstream. Consultation with parents supported this view.

8.5.5 In focus groups, Health and Social Service professionals reported their views as follows:

- i. teachers need a knowledge of disabilities;
- ii. initial teacher training should incorporate an element on child development; and
- iii. there should be training for teachers on strategies to help children with needs, eg. language development.

The consultation also revealed that Health and Social Service professionals would like ELBs to provide training for therapists on the statutory assessment process, the special educational needs tribunal and other areas such as Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communications-Handicapped Children (TEACCH).

8.5.6 Parents also reported that teachers do not always appear to understand their children's disabilities and that in their view teacher training should be reviewed.

8.6 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : OTHER ADULT ASSISTANTS

8.6.1 The results of the best value survey showed that only 4% of schools are very satisfied and 38% of schools satisfied that the professional development needs of non-teaching staff are being met. As a follow-up for suggestions as to what would help non-teaching staff, suggestions in a number of areas are set out below.

Use of Specialist Equipment

- Clarification of roles and responsibilities
- The need for staff training
- Shortened process for repair or replacement of equipment

Administration of Medicines

- The need for consistent guidelines across ELBs
- The need for training
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities (some schools suggested that the responsibility should rest with H&SS rather than the education service)
- Legal implications

Other comments

- The need for regular training and staff development for a range of staff such as supervisors, classroom assistants and bus escorts in areas such as autism, ADHD, EBD, health and safety, manual handling, medical procedures/first aid, child protection, ICT, curriculum and parental issues
- Professional status of classroom assistants should be recognised
- Training should be accredited
- Adequate resources should be assigned to training
- Lack of career development and opportunities for staff
- ‘Schools’ need to spend more time with non-teaching staff
- Cluster groups should be established for classroom assistants
- Support should also be given for Governor training

8.6.2 A survey of the views of classroom assistants on their roles, responsibilities and training needs undertaken in the WELB (2001) highlighted the following:

- i. the need for additional training, particularly in the areas of learning difficulties, physical and medical difficulties and EBD
- ii. a need to review recruitment practices and the relevance of qualifications
- iii. classroom assistants could be included within school INSET
- iv. many teachers may require training or guidance on the effective use of classroom assistants
- v. Consultation with Health and Social Services highlighted the following issues in relation to adult assistants:
 - classroom assistants, like teachers need a knowledge of disabilities
 - classroom assistants have a key role to play in relation to children with special educational needs

One Health Trust quoted an example of a special unit where the classroom assistant facilitates therapy as a model of good practice, but acknowledged the contractual difficulties associated with this situation.

- vi. ELB officers indicated that the current list of qualifications for classroom assistants, recognised by the Joint Negotiating Council, is inappropriate and needs to be revised.

8.6.3 In a focus group of post-primary children various views were reported on classroom assistants. Their experiences revealed that some classroom assistants understand their needs and support their studies, whilst others '*make them feel special all the time*' – by being overprotective.

8.6.4 The view of parents on adult assistants was that there is no apparent consistency in allocation and that adult assistance does not foster independence.

8.6.5 Voluntary organisations hold the view that adult assistants need to help children find their role in the world and that they could be used more as a resource for teachers.

8.7 COMMON ISSUES FOR ALL STAFF

8.7.1 In addition to the specific issues detailed above, consultation with the main stakeholders identified a number of common issues which impact on all those involved in special education. These include:

- i. Freedom of Information;
- ii. SENDB;
- iii. Equality; and
- iv. Human Rights.

8.7.2 Staff are concerned that the implications of these for special education have to be addressed in addition to the existing heavy workload without extra resources.

9.0 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

9.1 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

9.1.1 Special education sections in ELBs have witnessed significant growth over the past five years, in the areas of caseload, administration, enquiries and expenditure.

9.1.2 Information systems have not kept pace with this growth and, as a result, a number of ad-hoc 'systems' have developed, some of which are manual and some quite highly sophisticated in terms of technology.

9.1.3 A feasibility study was carried out and issued in September 2000 regarding the provision of an information system to support the work of special education sections and educational psychology services in ELBs.

Some of the main issues and findings identified in the study related to:

- i. difficulties faced by ELBs collating information;
- ii. substantial time spent on keeping records up to date and checking information;
- iii. access by other sections to special education records;
- iv. no standard format for the collection of information across ELBs; and
- v. security and confidentiality of information.

9.1.4 In broad terms the study considered the following:

- i. range of options available;
- ii. specific options worthy of further consideration; and
- i. high level costs of each option.

9.1.5 In some ELBs up to twelve systems may exist with duplicate data. These systems hold information on many areas including:

- i. formal statementing;
- ii. proposed statements;
- iii. classroom assistants;
- iv. hospital and home teaching;
- v. peripatetic teaching service;
- vi. schools lists;
- vii. lists of Children in Units and Special Schools;

- viii. equipment lists;
- ix. Code of Practice (Stage 3);
- x. transfer lists; and
- xi. annual reviews.

9.1.6 The systems have not adequately kept pace with changes in procedures and legislation and this difficulty is compounded by the number of other information systems that ‘interface’ with special education. The main interfaces are with: -

- i. Finance (Costing / budgetary information);
- ii. Educational Psychology (where considerable information on children is already collected and stored);
- iii. Education Welfare (where a new information system is in the process of development);
- iv. Schools and, particularly, Classroom 2000 (C2K) which holds child data; and
- v. DE, Health Boards, etc.

9.1.7 It is apparent that current systems within ELBs do not provide all of the functionality required of them, which in turn leads to less efficiency and places a greater bureaucratic burden on ELBs and schools.

9.2 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES : MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

9.2.1 Consultation within the best value review has reiterated the findings of the feasibility study. All of these difficulties would be addressed by the introduction of a standardised system for special education, which would support the increased administrative and managerial functions. These difficulties have increased as a consequence of the introduction of the Code of Practice.

9.2.2 During the course of the review considerable difficulties were identified in gathering statistical information on Stages 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice. ELB staff identified an increasing number of requests for statistical information, particularly from DE in order to reply to Northern Ireland Assembly questions. This presents ELBs with difficulties, as it is necessary to manually check records for the information requested and there is usually a short time in which to prepare a response.

9.2.3 In the survey issued as part of the best value consultation 52% of schools replied that they used information technology to manage/administer the special educational needs register. A similar percentage of schools indicated that they use information technology to manage other administrative aspects of special educational needs. A wide range of software/packages is used.

9.3 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

9.3.1 A new management information system will ultimately improve efficiency and effectiveness through:

- i. streamlining all records on one system;
- ii. automation of standard documentation;
- iii. more accurate and reliable information; and
- ii. greater use of statistics to support the management of performance.

9.3.2 The statutory performance management framework is at the heart of best value in England. This makes provision for annual reporting by best value authorities on a set of national performance indicators and standards set by Government.

In specifying indicators and targets for Local Government the Government has attempted to ensure that they are a balanced set reflecting the broad range of local services.

9.3.3 Best Value Performance Indicators are of two types:

- i. Corporate Health Indicators that provide a snapshot of how well the authority is performing overall; and
- ii. Service Delivery Indicators which are designed to enable comparisons to be made between the performance of different authorities, including different types of authorities and within an authority over time. Authorities will need to set targets against all indicators which are relevant to the services they provide.

9.3.4 In order to ensure that the best value performance indicators give a balanced view of performance, the Government has adopted five dimensions of performance. These are:

- i. strategic objectives;
- ii. cost/efficiency;
- iii. service delivery outcomes;
- iv. quality; and
- v. fair access.

9.3.5 The NIAO Report on Indicators of Educational Performance and Provision (February 2002) highlights that *'performance measurement cannot take place in isolation. It needs to be linked directly with the strategies and plans of the Boards, which in turn, must derive from the overall direction established by the department. With an increasing emphasis on continuous performance improvement there is a need to ensure performance*

measurement systems are developed and used to assess how the Boards are progressing in terms of their wider strategic goals and how they can further improve their overall performance’.

- 9.3.6 It would therefore be critical that the special education information system supports the performance management information system.
- 9.3.7 In developing appropriate measures, targets and indicators for the Special Education Service, consideration should be given to the sources of information, method of retrieval and potential use of technology.
- 9.3.8 Typically, a range of performance indicators for the Special Education Service would initially cover those areas as specified under the legislation in relation to due dates, processing times and the quality of service delivery, together with satisfaction surveys for example.
- 9.3.9 A range of performance indicators might typically include the following:
- i. school population at a given date;
 - ii. number of
 - Children with statements at a given date
 - Children with statements in mainstream schools at a given date
 - Children with statements in resourced mainstream/unit provision only at a given date
 - Children in special schools at a given date
 - Statements per population under 5, 5-15 and 16 and over*
 - New statements issued between given dates
 - Statements ceased between given dates
 - Statutory reviews received between given dates
 - Statements amended between given dates
 - Statutory reviews requiring an amendment to the statement between given dates
 - Referrals received under 5, 5-16 and 16 and over
 - Statutory assessments initiated under 5, 5-16 and 16 and over
 - Final statements issued under 5, 5-16 and 16 and over
 - Notes in lieu issued under 5, 5-16 and 16 and over
 - Parental representations received within 29 days
 - Parental advices received within six weeks
 - Educational advices received within six weeks
 - Educational Psychology advices received within six weeks
 - Medical advices received within six weeks
 - Speech and language therapy advices received within six weeks
 - Occupational therapy advices received within six weeks
 - Physiotherapy advices received within six weeks
 - Social Services advices received within six weeks
 - Proposed statements with exceptions issued within 18 weeks* ++
 - Proposed statements without exceptions issued within 18 weeks*

- Proposed statements issued with core advice (ie medical, educational and psychological) within 18 weeks
- Final statements with exceptions issued within 26 weeks
- Final statements without exceptions issued within 26 weeks
- Final statements with core advice (ie medical, educational and psychological) issued within 26 weeks

iii. total budget for special educational needs;

iv. total spend on special educational needs; and

v. total cost of provision for statemented children: mainstream school/ resourced mainstream school/unit, special school.

++See Section 5.9.4 for details of exceptions.

9.3.10 *These indicators were highlighted in the NIAO Report on Indicators of Educational Performance and Provision. The report states that the NIAO *'regard the percentage of pupils with a statement of s.e.n as a valuable performance indicator as it focuses attention on the variances between Boards. By doing so it provides the Boards with the opportunity to evaluate the extent to which there is equity in how special educational needs are assessed and provided for'*. The NIAO considers it essential that ELBs are able to collect and disseminate information on how they are performing against the eighteen-week target for issue of a proposed statement.

9.3.11 This review has identified a lack of true performance measures and indicators, primarily because of the lack of support and infrastructure in terms of technology. The North Eastern ELB is the only ELB which is able to report on many of the above indicators, but despite this the North Eastern ELB acknowledges that its existing management information system is not fully utilised owing to the lack of staff time to develop the system.

9.3.12 In addition, there is no formal mechanism for establishing the satisfaction levels of either parents or schools with the Special Education Service. The consultation exercise with schools has been extensive and could be refined to use as a basis for future consultation in this area. The results of the research commissioned by DE with parents on the statutory assessment process are awaited and could provide an initial benchmark for this area.

9.3.13 Boards' Information Systems Programme Directorate (BISPD) is currently considering the possibility of procuring an integrated pupil data system, whereby ELB sections would share information held on an individual child. This would obviously impact on the development of an information system for special education and could be enhanced through links with schools via the Classroom 2000 (C2K) system.

9.3.14 It is noted that since the Feasibility Study in 2000 there have been three unsuccessful attempts to acquire funding from a variety of sources.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 EMERGING THEMES

10.1.1 The terms of reference of this review focused on the delivery of the Special Education Service at Stages 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice at present and did not seek to examine the historical development of the service in detail.

10.1.2 The review, through challenge sessions and consultation with the various stakeholders, has highlighted a number of issues regarding the Special Education Service across Northern Ireland including:

i. Variations in Policies and Practices

- Examples include provision for particular needs, the placement of children with special educational needs in mainstream and the allocation of classroom assistance

ii. Provision and Resources

- The continuing increases in number and complexity of special educational needs and resultant greater demand for specialist provision creates financial pressures for ELBs.

iii. Professional Development

- This has a number of dimensions, commencing with a requirement for a greater special needs input in initial teacher training, greater continuing professional development and in-service training to enable all staff, teaching and non-teaching, to keep up to date with new developments and research findings.

iv. Parental Involvement

- Some parents feel that there is a lack of engagement on the part of the ELB and a lack of sharing of information with them.

v. Partnerships

- The general thrust of consultation highlighted the need for greater and more effective communication, co-operation and co-ordination between all stakeholders including statutory organisations, voluntary organisations, schools and parents. The contribution of the voluntary sector, in particular, to partnerships is twofold; it offers information, advice and support to individual parents and it can give a voice to the parent perspective in the planning and delivery of services. Partnerships necessitate a dynamic and inclusive approach if a quality service is to be provided.

10.1.3 This best value review has shown that there are significant parallels with various publications on special education in Great Britain, including the Government's Green Paper on Special Educational Needs, *'Excellence for All*

Children (1997). The Green Paper identified a number of key themes to be addressed including:

- Raising standards for all
- Better working with parents
- Improving the Code of Practice and reducing the emphasis on statements
- Increasing inclusion
- Better regional planning
- Developing staff skills
- Improved co-ordination between agencies
- Tackling the increase in emotional and behavioural difficulties

10.1.4 In particular, this report has much in common with the Audit Commission's Report – *'Statutory Assessment and Statements of SEN: in Need of Review?'* which was published in autumn 2002.

10.1.5 A series of recommendations have been formulated based on the strengths and areas for improvement highlighted in the review. As recognised in the terms of reference of the review, it has not been possible to address all of the issues facing special education, given the complex and wide ranging nature of the service. Consequently, many of the recommendations point to the need for further in-depth examination and research.

10.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.2.1 The following are the recommendations arising from this review:

1. ELBs should review in partnership with schools the operation of the school based stages.
2. DE should progress the EQIA on regional criteria for the identification and assessment of special educational needs as soon as possible. ELBs should implement the regional criteria following impact assessment and pilot evaluation.
3. ELBs should review the functioning of panels and consider the value of a five ELB panel to moderate the application of regional criteria.
4. ELBs, in conjunction with Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), should establish a regional group, to consider the feasibility and piloting of local multi-disciplinary assessment centres. The establishment of such centres would enable relevant professionals to co-ordinate the assessment of children with special educational needs for the purpose of writing advice for the statutory assessment. Consideration should also extend to take account of the following:
 - Duplication in areas such as recording the history of child
 - The use of plain English in advice writing
 - The role of technology in managing the statutory assessment process
5. ELBs should review staffing levels and grades to:
 - Secure additional resources to enable ELB staff time to liaise with stakeholders in special education
 - Address disparity in staffing across ELBs.
6. ELBs should examine the statutory assessment documentation. This should address:
 - Information issued to parents
 - The use of ICT
 - Reduction of paperwork
7. ELBs should consider how best to establish the views of parents and examine ways of further developing their lines of communication and involvement.
8. ELBs should consider how best to promote links and develop arrangements with voluntary organisations working in support of children/families with special educational needs.
9. ELBs should review the organisation, structure and future role of the peripatetic/outreach services in light of the increasing number of children with special educational needs and attitudes of stakeholders

16. ELBs in conjunction with DE and DHSSPS, should consider relevant organisations such as CCMS, Council for Curriculum and Examinations Assessment and T&EA, future arrangements for the delivery of services to children with special educational needs. This should address issues such as:

- Statutory obligations

20. ELBs, in consultation with T&EA, should review procedures in relation to transition planning.
21. DE, Department of Employment and Learning and T&EA should develop links with further and higher education institutions to increase provision for young people with special educational needs leaving the school

- 10.2.2 Whilst many of the recommendations target specific areas they, should be viewed as an integrated package. They also require to be taken forward in light of other impacting legislation, the work of the Regional Strategy Group, the pending results of the research commissioned by the DE on parental attitudes to special education, and any implications from the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland.
- 10.2.3 Over time, this work should result in a change in ethos with a more positive attitude towards children with special educational needs.
- 10.2.4 Such change may be accelerated by imminent legislation e.g. SENDB and will also require existing legislation to be amended.
- 10.2.5 It has to be acknowledged that special education is an emotive area that requires constant review in response to the ever-changing environment outlined in the course of this document.

10.3 WAY FORWARD

- 10.3.1 A draft report was issued for consultation on matters of accuracy and any necessary amendments have been incorporated in this final version.
- 10.3.2 Following acceptance by the Best Value Project Board of the recommendations, a Performance Improvement (Implementation) Plan will be prepared by the ELBs.
- 10.3.3 As part of its own process of continuous improvement, the CMSU welcomes any further responses relevant to the nature of the review process applied.

11.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The significant contribution of all those directly involved in the review is to be commended.

The contribution of the Central Steering Team, both in terms of time, effort, patience and honest commitment to the review process, has been most welcome and an invaluable part of the review. The work of those members of the Consultation Group, the Finance Group and other staff in the ELBs is gratefully acknowledged.

While thanks are extended to all those who participated in the consultation exercise, particular gratitude is due to the schools who returned the questionnaire, facilitated visits with CMSU staff and hosted meetings with parents.

Similarly the Steering Team would like to record its gratitude to those voluntary organisations that, not only contributed to the review from an organisational perspective, but also facilitated focus groups with parents and children.

Finally, thanks are also extended to those parents and children who gave freely of their time to give their views and experiences of the Special Education Service.

APPENDICES

BEST VALUE PROJECT BOARD

MEMBERSHIP

Mr J Curran (Chairman), Inter-Board Services Manager (Five Boards)

Mr B Mulholland, Chief Administrative Officer (Belfast Education and Library Board)

Mr G Irwin, Senior Education Officer (North Eastern Education and Library Board)

Ms P Valentine, Chief Librarian (North Eastern Education and Library Board)

Mr M Graham, Chief Administrative Officer (South Eastern Education and Library Board)

Mr T Heron (Chief Administrative Officer (Southern Education and Library Board)

Mr A Rainey, Chief Administrative Officer (Western Education and Library Board)

Mr J Stewart (Classroom 2000)

Mr F Ferguson (Department of Education)

Mr E McCloy (Department of Education)

CMSU

Mr G Flynn, Head of Unit (until July 2002)

Mrs M Maguire, Best Value Officer

Mrs J McAneney, Secretary

OBSERVER STATUS

Mrs P Weir (Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards)

Mr T Wright (NIPSA)

Mr J Donaghy (UNISON)

Mr A Elliott (GMB)

Mr D Henderson (ATGWU)

SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTRAL STEERING TEAM

MEMBERSHIP

Mr M O'Loan, Assistant Senior Education Officer (Western Education and Library Board)
(Chairman)

Ms I Knox, Assistant Senior Education Officer (South Eastern Education and Library Board)

Ms R Moore, Education Officer (North Eastern Education and Library Board
[March 2001 to June 2002])

Mrs B Dorrity, Education Officer (North Eastern Education and Library Board
[August 2002 to October 2002])

Mr J McCullough, Assistant Senior Education Officer (Belfast Education and Library Board)

Mr D Ryan, Assistant Advisory Officer (Southern Education and Library Board)

Ms I Murphy, Department of Education

Mr G Reilly, Principal, Limavady High School

Mr W Haddick, Principal, Killard House Special School, Newtownards

CMSU

Mr G Flynn, Head of Unit (until July 2002)

Mrs M Maguire, Best Value Officer

Ms R Moore (July 2002 to October 2002)

Mrs J McAneney, Executive Officer

Following the appointment of the Head of Unit to another organisation, the service of Ms Moore was engaged to secure completion of the review.

SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSULTATION GROUP

MEMBERSHIP

Ms A Lyle, Assistant Advisory Officer (Belfast Education and Library Board)

Ms P Mellon, Best Value Officer (Belfast Education and Library Board)

Mrs P Grindle, Principal, Mitchell House Special School, (Belfast Education and Library Board)

Ms C Johnston, Best Value Officer (North Eastern Education and Library Board)

Ms R Moore, Education Officer (North Eastern Education and Library Board)

Mr W Ridge, Principal, Ballymoney HS (North Eastern Education and Library Board)

Ms L Conn, Assistant Principal Officer (South Eastern Education and Library Board)

Mr N McBride, Best Value Officer (South Eastern Education and Library Board)

Mr L Rice, Principal, St Kieran's PS (South Eastern Education and Library Board)

Mrs R Aiken, Best Value Officer (Southern Education and Library Board)

Miss U Donnelly, Support Officer (Southern Education and Library Board)

Mrs V Quinn, Principal, Ashgrove Nursery School, Newry (Southern Education and Library Board)

Ms H Duffy, Best Value Officer (Western Education and Library Board)

Mrs M Hart, Education Officer (Western Education and Library Board)

Mr M Dobbins, Principal, Foyleview Special School (Western Education and Library Board)

Ms T Nixon, Deputy Director, Eastern Health & Social Services Board

Mr M Donnelly, Senior Adviser, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr G Flynn, Head of Unit, CMSU

Mrs M Maguire, Best Value Officer, CMSU

Mrs J McAneney, Executive Officer, CMSU

APPENDIX 4

SPECIAL EDUCATION FINANCE GROUP

Mr M Dowling, Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Belfast Education and Library Board)

Mr J Lynn, Finance Officer (North Eastern Education and Library Board)

Mr D Morgan, Senior Administrative Officer (South Eastern Education and Library Board)

Mrs A Ardis, Development Officer (Southern Education and Library Board)

Mr K Doran, Chief Finance Officer (Western Education and Library Board)

Mr F Keenan, Administrative Officer (Western Education and Library Board)

Mr A McCandless, Department of Education

Mr G Flynn, Head of Unit, CMSU

Mrs M Maguire, Best Value Officer, CMSU



NORTHERN IRELAND EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS
 SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE
 FUNDAMENTAL SERVICE REVIEW

*b-d - Optional information

a, e-k - Compulsory information

+Delete as appropriate

a Board: +Belfast/North Eastern/South Eastern/Southern/Western

b* School Name:

c* Address:

d* DENI Reference No:

e Sector:

+N

f Nursery Unit Provision:

g Special Unit:

+None/Single/Double – if so complete the following box

Special Unit Provision funded directly by the Board:

Please tick to indicate provision available in your school

	Code of Practice	
	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Stage</i>
	3	4-5

None

MLD

Speech & Lang

Behaviour

Reading

Hearing

Other -
please specify

h Management Type:

+ y
pecify

i **Enrolment No (at Oct 2001):**
(maximum physical capacity)

--

j **Actual Number of Pupils at**
Oct 2001 Census:
FTE

Main school:
Nursery School:

Special Unit:
Total:

k **No of Pupils on Special Needs**
Register (at Oct 2001):

Code of Practice		
<i>Stages</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Stage</i>
<i>1-3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
None		
MLD		
SLD		
Speech & Lang		
Behaviour		
Reading		
Hearing		
Other - please specify		

SECTION 1				
POLICY AND PROVISION				
<i>Please indicate your response to the following questions by ticking the appropriate box.</i>				
		Yes	No	
		Not Sure		
1	Are you aware of the legislation that defines the Board's statutory duties in relation to children with special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Are you aware of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Are you aware of the Board's policy on special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Is your school's Board of Governors aware of its responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice for special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Do you feel that the Code of Practice facilitates the identification of children with special needs in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Are you aware of the range of Board provision available for children with special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Do you feel that schools have sufficient input to strategic planning and policy development for special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Would you like more involvement in strategic planning and policy development for special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 2

STAGE 1 TO 3 OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE

9	Are you satisfied that you are able to meet the special educational needs of children at Stages 1 to 3 of the Code of Practice?	Yes Not Sure	No
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10	If the answer to question 9 is no, what additional support from the Board would assist you in meeting the needs of children at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice?

STAGES 4 AND 5 OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE

11	To what extent are you familiar with the Board's criteria for determining the need for a statutory assessment for children with special educational needs?	<i>Fam: Familiar</i>	
		Very Fam	Fam Not Fam
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12	Indicate your level of agreement with the following:	<i>SA</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
		<i>A</i>	<i>Agree</i>
		<i>Dis</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
		<i>SDis</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
	12.1 The criteria used for statutory assessment are appropriate	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>
		<i>Dis</i>	<i>SDis</i>
	12.2 The statutory assessment process is easy to follow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.3 Six weeks is a reasonable period of time to submit educational advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.4 The statutory assessment process is completed in a reasonable period of time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.5 Schools are sufficiently involved in the statutory assessment process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.6 Parents are sufficiently involved in the statutory assessment process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.7 I am generally happy with the decision-making process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.8 I am happy with the level of paperwork involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 3
POST STATEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

<p>13 The needs of statemented children in your school are being met as specified in their statements of special educational needs under the following categories:</p> <p>13.1 Teaching and learning</p> <p>13.2 Physical access to the building</p> <p>13.3 Access to medical therapies, eg speech therapy</p> <p>13.4 Access to transport</p> <p>13.5 Provision of equipment and furniture</p> <p>13.6 Other, eg special dietary requirements</p>	<p>SA <i>Strongly Agree</i> A <i>Agree</i> Dis <i>Disagree</i> Sdis <i>Strongly Disagree</i> NA <i>Not Applicable</i></p>
	<p>SA A Dis Sdis NA</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<p>14 Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about the Annual Review Process:</p> <p>14.1 It assesses progress towards meeting the objectives specified in a child's statement</p> <p>14.2 It collates information for use in planning future support for the child</p> <p>14.3 It assesses progress towards meeting targets</p> <p>14.4 It reviews the special provision made for the child</p> <p>14.5 It considers the appropriateness of ceasing to maintain or amending the statement</p> <p>14.6 Where appropriate, it sets fresh targets for the coming year</p> <p>14.7 I am happy with the amount of paperwork involved</p>	<p>SA A Dis</p> <p>SDis</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>

The following question should only be completed by schools with post-primary provision

15	In your view the Transition Plan:	SA SDis	A	Dis
15.1	Allows adequate preparation for the young person's transition to adult life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.2	Involves all the relevant parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.3	Is relevant to MLD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.4	Is relevant to SLD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.5	If you agree it is relevant, at what age should transition planning take place for MLD pupils?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
15.6	If you agree it is relevant, at what age should transition planning take place for SLD pupils?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

SECTION 4
PUPILS TRANSFERRING FROM OTHER SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

16 Children with special educational needs transferring to your school have had their needs identified:

		Always <i>True</i>	Sometimes <i>True</i>	Hardly <i>True</i>	Never <i>True</i>
16.1	Stage 1-3 of the Code of Practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.2	Stage 4 of the Code of Practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.3	Stage 5 of the Code of Practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16.4 Record any comments below:

17 The arrangements for children with special educational needs transferring to your school are satisfactory

- 17.1 At Stage 1-3 of the Code of Practice
- 17.2 At Stage 4 of the Code of Practice
- 17.3 At Stage 5 of the Code of Practice

Always
Hardly
True
True

Sometimes
Never
True

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17.4 Record any comments on such arrangements below:

**SECTION 5
INCLUSION**

18 The thrust of Government policy is to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream primary/secondary schools. To what extent would you agree with this (tick one box only)

18.1 All children with special needs should be appropriately supported in a mainstream school

18.2 All children with special needs should be appropriately supported in a mainstream school but some of them will need to be taught in special units to facilitate appropriate inclusion

18.3 Children with special educational needs, wherever possible and practical, should attend a mainstream school/unit, although there will be some for whom a special school will be more appropriate

18.4 More children with special educational needs should be taught in special schools

PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT HAND BOXES

SECTION 6		
QUALITY AND RESPONSIVENESS		
<p>It is important to establish how satisfied schools are with the quality of service and responsiveness of those involved in the delivery of the Special Education Service and how important those services are to you.</p> <p>Please indicate in your responses below whether the statement is always true, sometimes true, hardly true or never true or tick N/A if appropriate. Please also indicate how important the quality of service provided by each of the services in relation to Special Education is to your school.</p>		
<p>19 The following services provide good quality advice and support in relation to Special Education</p>		
<i>Current Experience of Service</i>		Importance for You
Always Never True Sometimes N/A True Rarely True	INTERNAL	Very Important Not Important Fairly Important
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.1 Special Education Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.2 Curriculum Advisory and Support Service	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.3 Education Welfare Service	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.4 Health	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.5 Human Resources (Personnel)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.6 Outreach Services	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.7 Peripatetic Service	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.8 Educational Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.9 Transfer and Open Enrolment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	19.10 Trans	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Current Experience of Service</i>						Importance for You		
Always N/A True	Sometimes True	Rarely True	Never True	EXTERNAL		Very Not Important	Important	Fairly Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.11	Clinical Medical Officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.12	Clinical Psychologists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.13	Community Nurses for Learning Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.14	Health Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.15	School Nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.16	Consultant Psychiatrists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.17	Occupational Therapists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.18	Physiotherapists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.19	Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.20	Speech and Language Therapists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>		
20 The following services provide a timely service in relation to Special Education, eg producing a statement, making provision								
Always N/A	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	INTERNAL		Very Not	Important	Fairly

True	True	True	True		Important	Important
					Important	Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.1 Special Education Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.2 Curriculum Advisory and Support Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.3 Education Welfare Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.4	He	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Current Experience of Service</i>		Importance for You
Always Never True Sometimes N/A True Rarely True True	INTERNAL CONT'D	Very Important Not Important Important Fairly Important
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.5 (Personnel)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.6 Outreach Services	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.7	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.8 Educational Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.9 Transfer and Open Enrolment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Always Never True Sometimes N/A True Rarely True True	EXTERNAL	Very Important Not Important Important Fairly Important
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.11 Clinical Medical Officers	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.12 Clinical Psychologists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.13 Community Nurses	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.14 Health Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.15 School Nurses	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.16 Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.17 Occupational Therapists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.18 Physiotherapists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.19 Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	20.20 Speech and Language Therapists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

21 Officers within the following services are accessible when required for matters relating to Special Education										
<i>Current Experience of Service</i>					Importance for You					
Always True	Sometimes True	Rarely True	Never True	N/A						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	INTERNAL					
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Important		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.1	Special Education Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.2	Curriculum Advisory and Support Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.3	Education Welfare Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.4	Health and Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.5	Human Resources (Personnel)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.6	Outreach Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.7	Peripatetic Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.8	Educational Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.9	Transfer and Open Enrolment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.10	Transport Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Always True	Sometimes True	Rarely True	Never True	N/A	EXTERNAL					
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Important		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.11	Clinical Medical Officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.12	Clinical Psychologists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.13	Community Nurses for Learning Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.14	Health Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.15	School Nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Current Experience of Service</i>				Importance for You			
Always Never True True	Sometimes N/A True	Rarely True	EXTERNAL CONT'D		Very Not Important Important	Important Important	Fairly Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.16	Consultant Psychiatrists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.17	Occupational Therapists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.18	Physiotherapists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.19	Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.20	Speech and Language Therapists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
22 Staff within the following services are aware of the needs of schools in relation to Special Education							
Always Never True True	Sometimes N/A True	Rarely True	INTERNAL		Very Not Important Important	Important Important	Fairly Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.1	Special Education Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.2	Curriculum Advisory and Support Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.3	Education Welfare Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.4	Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		

<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.5 Human Resources (Personnel)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.6 Outreach Services	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.7	Peripa <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.8	Education <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.9 Transfer and Open	En <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.10	Transp <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Current Experience of Service</i>		Importance for You
Always Never True True	Sometimes N/A True	Rarely True
Always Never True True	<i>EXTERNAL</i>	Very Not Important Important
Always Never True True		Very Not Important Important
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.11 Clinical Medical Officers	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.12 Clinical Psychologists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.13 Community Nurses for Learning Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.14 Health Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.15 School Nurses	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.16 Consultant Psychiatrists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.17 Occupational Therapists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.18 Physiotherapists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.19 Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	22.20 Speech and Language Therapists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Current Experience of Service</i>						Importance for You				
Always True	Sometimes True	Rarely True	Never True	N/A		Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23	The partnership between the school and the Training and Employment Agency is positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	24	The partnership between the school and institutes of Further and Higher Education is positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	25	The individual Board sections provide a coherent service in relation to Special Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 7
PROPERTY**

Issues such as disabled access or the provision of disabled toilets etc are dealt with by a number of organizations depending on the type of school as follows:

<i>Type of School</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Controlled	Area Boards
Maintained	CCMS/Department of Education
Grant Maintained Integrated / Voluntary Grammar	Department of Education

Please indicate your views of Property Services by **completing the one relevant section** which relates to your school

26 Property Services provide good support and advice in relation to Special Education

Always True	Sometimes True	Rarely True	Never True	N/A		Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26.1 Area Board Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26.2 CCMS/Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26.3 Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27 Property Services provide a timely service in relation to Special Education, eg making provision

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27.1 Area Board Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27.2 CCMS/Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27.3 Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28 Property Services staff are accessible when required

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28.1 Area Board Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28.2 CCMS/Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28.3 Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

29 Property Services are aware of the needs of the school in relation to Special Education

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29.1 Area Board Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29.2 CCMS/Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29.3 Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 8
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

30 In respect of special educational needs, how satisfied are you that the professional development needs of teaching staff are being met?

	Very		Satisfied
Not satisfied		satisfied	Hardly
			satisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

31 In respect of special educational needs, if you answered **‘hardly satisfied’** or **‘not satisfied’** in relation to question 30 above, please tick those areas where you are not satisfied.

31.1	Identification and assessment of special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.2	Curriculum support for pupils with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.3	Use of specialist equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.4	Administration of medication	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.5	Other – please specify	

32 If you have ticked a box(es) at 31 above, what suggestions would you make in order to improve the quality of service?

32.1 Identification and assessment of special needs

32.2 Curriculum support for pupils with special needs

32.3

Use of specialist equipment

35.2

Administration of medication

	<p>35.3 Other – please specify</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>			
36	<p>In respect of special educational needs, how satisfied are you that the development needs of Governors are being met in relation to school policy setting?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Very</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">satisfied</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">satisfied</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Hardly</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Satisfied</p> <p style="text-align: center;">satisfied</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
37	<p>In relation to question 36, if you answered ‘hardly satisfied’ or ‘not satisfied’ what suggestions would you make in order to improve the service?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>			
<p>SECTION 9</p> <p>INVOLVEMENT</p>				
38	<p>Do you think enough is being done by Boards to promote the involvement of parents at Stages 4 and 5?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Not</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No</p> <p>Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
39	<p>Do you feel that pupils with special educational needs are sufficiently involved in the statutory assessment process at Stage 4?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
40	<p>Do you feel that pupils with special educational needs are sufficiently involved in the statutory assessment process at Stage 5?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

SECTION 10 RESOURCES				
Boards retain some resources to fund centrally delivered services such as special unit teachers and classroom assistants for statemented pupils in mainstream schools. Other funding is made available to mainstream schools via the LMS formula. Special schools have some resources made available to them under Article 56 Delegation with staffing levels being determined and funded by the Board.				
		Yes	No	Not Sure
41	Would you like to manage the budget for all teaching staff in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42	Would you like to manage the budget for all non-teaching staff in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43	Would you like statemented pupils to be funded on the basis of a formula?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS ONLY				
44	Do you identify expenditure on special needs in the Board of Governor's Annual Report to parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 11					
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
		Yes			No
45	Does your school use information technology to manage/administer the SEN register?	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
46	If yes please indicate what software/information technology package is being used				
47	Does your school use information technology to manage/administer other administrative aspects of special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
48	If yes, please indicate what software/information technology package is being used?				
SECTION 12					
SCHOOL ENROLMENT					
		SA	A	Dis	SDis
49	Should Boards continue to retain the power to direct a grant- aided school to accept a child with a statement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50	Do you agree that statemented pupils should be in addition to the schools admission number?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This questionnaire should be returned to the Central Management Support Unit, The Southern Education and Library Board, 3 Charlemont Place, The Mall, ARMAGH, BT61 9AX, in the envelope provided, not later than MONDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2001.

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

*NAME(S): _____

*POSITION(S): _____

*NAME(S): _____

*POSITION(S): _____

* *Optional information*

OFFICE USE ONLY:

KEYED BY: _____ **CHECKED BY:** _____

SCHOOLS VISITED

- Mitchell House Special School (Belfast Education and Library Board)
- Jordanstown School (North Eastern Education and Library Board)
- Ballymoney High School (North Eastern Education and Library Board)
- Killard House Special School (South Eastern Education and Library Board)
- St Kieran's Primary School, Poleglass (South Eastern Education and Library Board)
- Ceara Special School (Southern Education and Library Board)
- Ashgrove Nursery School, Newry (Southern Education and Library Board)
- Brownlow College (Southern Education and Library Board)
- Foyleview SS, Londonderry (Western Education and Library Board)
- Limavady High School (Western Education and Library Board)

FUNDAMENTAL SERVICE REVIEW : SPECIAL EDUCATION

CONSULTATION WITH BOARDS OF GOVERNORS

TELEPHONE QUESTIONNAIRE/FOCUS GROUP SESSION



<i>Please indicate your response to the following questions by answering yes, no or not sure.</i>			
		Yes	No
1.	Are you aware of the legislation that defines the Board's statutory duties in relation to children with special educational needs?	Not Sure	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Are you aware of the Code of Practice for special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are you aware of the Board's policy on special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Is your school's Board of Governors aware of its responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice for special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Do you feel that the Code of Practice facilitates the identification of children with special needs in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Are you aware of the range of Board provision available for children with special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Do you feel that schools have sufficient input to strategic planning and policy development for special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Would you like more involvement in strategic planning and policy development for special educational needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Are you satisfied that schools are able to meet the special educational needs children at Stages 1 to 3 of the Code of Practice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Has your Board of Governors established a school policy in relation to the provision of education for children with special educational needs?	Yes	No
		Sure	Not
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	If the answer to question 10 is yes, does your Board of Governors review this policy regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Does your Board of Governors report annually to parents on:

- | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. | Steps taken to implement the school's SEN policy? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | Any special arrangements for the admission of pupils who have special educational needs, but for whom no statement is maintained? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. | Steps taken to prevent pupils with special educational needs from being treated less favourably than other pupils? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. | Facilities provided to assist access to schools by pupils with special educational needs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

13. In respect of special educational needs:

- a. How satisfied are you that the development needs of Governors are being met in relation to school policy setting?

Very		
	Satisfied	
	Hardly	
Not		
satisfied	satisfied	satisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

- b. If you answered 'hardly satisfied' or 'not satisfied' what suggestions would you make in order to improve the service?

14. Any other issues you wish to comment on

MM/JMcA

APPENDIX 8

OTHER CONSULTEES

1. Health and Social Services* (including a range of professional staff from Boards and Trusts)
2. Council for Catholic Maintained Schools*
3. Governing Bodies Association
4. Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
5. ELBs – Chief Education Welfare Officers*
6. ELBs – Transport Officers*
7. ELBs – Principal Educational Psychologists*
8. ELBs – Special Education staff (NEELB, SEELB, SELB)*
9. ELBs – Behaviour Support Teams*
10. Special Educational Needs Tribunal*
11. Teachers' Unions (Standing Conference on Special Education)*
12. Non-teaching Unions
13. Association of Educational Psychologists
14. Training and Employment Agency*
15. Schools outside Northern Ireland
 - Daldorch House School, Scotland
 - David Lewis Centre for Epilepsy, Cheshire
 - Doncaster College for the Deaf
 - Ellesmere College, Shropshire
 - Mary Hare Grammar School, Berkshire*
 - RNIB, Vocational College, Leicestershire*
 - Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford
 - St John's Catholic School for the Deaf, Yorkshire
 - St Mary's Dominican Convent, Cabra
 - Underlay Garden School, Lancashire
 - The Royal Blind School, Scotland
16. ELBs, (this included a range of committees, sub committees and groups of principals)*

* *Participated in consultation*

APPENDIX 9

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

- 1 AFASIC NI
- 2 ASBAH*
- 3 Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus
- 4 Barnardos, NI
- 5 British Diabetic Association
- 6 British Epilepsy Association
- 7 Carers National Association
- 8 Children's Law Centre*
- 9 Chinese Welfare Association
- 10 Circles Network/Credo Project
- 11 Cystic Fibrosis Trust
- 12 Down's Syndrome Association*
- 13 Families in Contact
- 14 Family Care Society (NI)
- 15 Family Information Group
- 16 Include Youth
- 17 IPSEA*
- 18 MENCAP*
- 19 Muscular Dystrophy Campaign
- 20 NI Dyslexia Association
- 21 NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
- 22 National Deaf Children's Society
- 23 NICVA

- 24 NSPCC
- 25 PAPA*
- 26 Parents Advice Centre
- 27 RNIB*
- 28 RNID (NI)
- 29 Save The Children
- 30 SENSE Resource Centre
- 31 The Cedar Foundation*
- 32 The Haemophilia Society
- 33 The National Autistic Society
- 34 Threshold
- 35 VOTE Project
- 36 DELTA
- 37 Nexus Institute
- 38 NIPPA
- 39 The Blind Centre
- 40 SKILL
- 41 Nucleus
- 42 Tullyally Youth Management Group
- 43 Youth Shadow Council
- 44 Derry Children's Commission
- 45 Derry Healthy Cities

* *Participated in consultation*

FUNDAMENTAL SERVICE REVIEW : SPECIAL EDUCATION

FOCUS GROUP SESSION

TEMPLATE FOR CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN

1.	Do you like your school?
2.	Would you prefer to be in a different type of school?
	Would you like to go to a different type of school for part of the week?
4.	Do you have all the equipment and books etc that you need?
9.	Do you like being in a small class or would you prefer to be in a large class?
10.	Do you have a classroom assistant?
11.	Do you like having a classroom assistant to help you?
12.	Do you think you have a wide choice of subjects at GCSE or A Level?
9.	Do your teachers have high expectations of you academically?
10.	Would you like to be involved/more involved in determining your individual education plan?
11.	Would you like to be involved/more involved in the annual review of your progress?
12.	What do you hope to do when you leave school?
13.	Do you think you receive enough careers support?
	Do you think you receive enough training to give you independence e.g. use of public transport?
15.	Do you think having health staff e.g. Ots coming into school is a good idea?
16.	Do you participate in any youth club activities?
17.	Are there any other comments you want to make about your life in school?

APPENDIX 11

----- Education and Library Board

PROPOSED STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

THE EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND ORDER 1996 PART II ARTICLE 16 STATUTORY ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

The following statement is made by the ----- Education and Library Board in respect of the child whose name and other particulars are mentioned below.

CHILD

Surname:

Other names:

Home Address:

Sex:

Religion:

Home Language:

Date of Birth:

CHILD'S PARENTS OR PERSONS RESPONSIBLE

Surname:

Other names:

Address:

Relationship to Child:

Telephone no:

When assessing the child's special educational needs the Board took into consideration the representations, evidence and advice set out in the appendices to this statement.

PART 2: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The child's special educational needs, in terms of the child's learning difficulties which call for special educational provision, as assessed by the Board.

Paul is the second child to ** and ** **. He has one sister, aged 15 years. He was first referred to the ELB's psychology service at the age of three years eight months by Dr ***, Senior Clinical Medical Officer. Dr *** had then assessed Paul and had identified concerns about difficult behaviour, poor communication, feeding difficulties and an obsession with numbers and letters.

Paul was assessed (February 2000) by an educational psychologist using the Wechsler Pre-school and Primary Scale of Intelligence (revised UK Edition) who found that his overall ability was within the lower end of the above average range IQ 116-130). However he was found to have a very mixed profile of skills. Paul's practical abilities were towards the upper end of the above-average range of abilities, whereas his verbal skills were towards the bottom of the below-average range. Paul's weakest skills were in understanding what happens in everyday situations and in describing the meanings of words. Attainment levels in reading and number skills were found to fall above the average range of ability.

A clinical psychologist has also been involved with Paul and his family. From July 1998 to December 1998 appointments were arranged to assess Paul's functioning in a number of ways: parent/child interviews, play observations, school and home observations, psychometric assessment and completion of the Child Autism Rating Scale. The aim of this assessment was to:

- Estimate Paul's level of intellectual ability;
- Assess his social, emotional, behavioural and communicative functioning;
- Assess his feeding difficulties;
- Evaluate parent management strategies.

At the end of this assessment the clinical psychologist concluded that overall Paul was a 4 year old boy whose development was delayed in a number of areas including speech and language, motor skills, social skills and self help. Although at that time he displayed a number of unusual behaviours such as handflapping and ear covering these did not appear to be at a high level. There were also areas of his social and communication skills which appeared to have improved and be reciprocal in nature i.e. ability to turntake, initiate contact with others, show curiosity in personal contact, copy others and become involved in pretend play. Although he had shown obsessional behaviour in the past the clinical psychologist reported that there had been some resolution of these through the use of behaviour management strategies. The clinical psychologist at this time felt that it was too early to provide a diagnosis for Paul's difficulties, if indeed that would be appropriate. However the conclusion of a privately commissioned report by a private psychologist (May 2000) based on an assessment, previous reports and the developmental profile obtained from Paul's

mother and grandmother, indicated that Paul has social and communication impairments, and difficulties with social understanding. This coupled with his limited symbolic development and propensity towards repetitive activities and routines is consistent with a diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder.

Paul is a child who (because of his comprehension, motivation and attention difficulties) learns well through the visual channel. As a result his learning environment should be very visual. Objects, furniture, personal belongings etc. should all be well labelled. Specific areas in the classroom should be clearly identified and visually marked. Paul will benefit from his own visually presented timetable showing the activities he is going to participate in during the day. This will help him predict what is going to happen next and may reduce some of the confusion he experiences. Task directions should also be made explicit by using jigs/symbols/written instructions to show the sequence of procedures to follow.

Like many other children with an autistic spectrum disorder Paul can display very different patterns of behaviour in different settings and with different individuals. It would appear that at the moment Paul's behaviour is a much greater problem at home than it is at school. This may be reflective of the naturally more structured routine of the educational setting. Behaviour concerns include Paul's:

- Lack of social skills and adherence to social rules
- Impulsiveness
- Eating, gagging, vomiting
- Bed wetting
- Lack of empathy
- Temper tantrums
- Perfectionism
- Rudeness and aggression
- Inappropriate behaviour in public places
- Lack of co-operation
- Dependence on other to do things for him.

Paul's pattern of behaviour stems from a central problem with social, communication and symbolic development which affects how he processes information and makes sense of the world. His social difficulties are the result of an underlying brain dysfunction.

Paul's special educational needs have been identified as follows:

- 1 Some areas of verbal functioning, notably comprehension, significantly poorer than functioning in other verbal areas and than measure of general ability would suggest;

- 2 Learning difficulties resulting from the above;
- 3 Some delay in the acquisition of age appropriate independence;
- 4 Difficulties in areas of social communication;
- 5 Immature social/emotional development with suggestion of adherence to routine and obsessive behaviour.

The attached reports contain more detailed information about this Paul's specific attainments and special educational needs.

PART 3: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

i. Objectives

Which the special educational provision should aim to meet

The objectives of the special educational provision to be made for Paul should be to:

- 1 develop skills in the comprehension of language and other verbal areas in which weakness persists;
- 2 improve Paul's ability to understand instructions and new information;
- 3 improve age appropriate independence with regard to daily living skills;
- 4 improve Paul's understanding of the rules of social behaviour and his ability to communicate effectively with his peers;
- 5 develop social/emotional maturity and to reduce Paul's dependence on routines and to increase his areas of interest thereby reducing obsessive play rituals as exhibited at present (January 2000).

ii. Educational provision to meet needs and objectives

The special educational provision which the Board considers appropriate to meet the needs specified in Part 2 and to meet the objectives specified in this Part, and in particular specify:

- (a) *any appropriate facilities and equipment, staffing arrangements and curriculum;*
- (b) *any appropriate modifications to the application of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;*
- (c) *any appropriate exclusions from the Northern Ireland Curriculum, in detail, and the provision which it is proposed to substitute for any such*

*exclusions in order to maintain a balanced and broadly based curriculum;
and*

(d) *where residential accommodation is appropriate, that fact.*

Provision for Paul's special educational need should include:

- 1 access to all areas of the Northern Ireland Curriculum at a level commensurate with his age and ability;
- 2 periods of small group teaching or support followed by an individualised programme of work overseen by a teacher with experience of pupils with special educational needs. In a mainstream school Paul will also have access to additional classroom assistant support, provided by the Board. From September 2001 this will be for 10 hours. An additional 4 hours 10 minutes of supervisory assistance will also be provided to cover the lunchtime period. This level of support will be kept under review in order to meet the changing needs of the child in response to the Education Plan;
- 3 a highly structured learning environment with a programme of enjoyable, stimulating and rewarding activities to improve understanding of the routines/sequences of his day; e.g. the TEACCH programme; A teacher, with experience of teaching pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, to meet with Paul's teacher and the SENCO for the purpose of supporting the education plan and providing advice if required;
- 4 an individually structured language and communication programme, to be devised in liaison with the speech and language therapy service: During the year 2000 the programme will focus on establishing comprehension for:
 - prepositions – in/on/under, in front/behind/beside;
 - pronouns – his/her
 - 'wh' questions and 'why – because' questions

In addition the programme will seek to establish:

- self feeding and monitor chewing skills;
- increased tolerance of a wider range of food and tolerance for eating alongside others;

Paul will need 1* weekly therapy with consolidation within the classroom setting. A teacher, with experience of teaching pupils with speech and language difficulties, to meet with Paul's teacher and the SENCO for the purpose of supporting the language component of the education plan and providing advice if required;

- 5 carefully structured teaching programmes appropriately paced and aimed at the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy;
- 6 structured teaching programmes aimed at the development of self help and independence; opportunities to extend independence and social skills through co-operative and small group activities with peers which may include role play;

consideration should be given to a 'buddy system' whereby a supportive peer or small group of peers are encouraged to be available for Paul during unstructured times such as break time;

- 7 a programme of activities which supports an environment in which positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. This programme should include:-
 - providing Paul with explicit boundaries;
 - providing consistent application of the consequences when Paul breaks the boundaries;
 - breaking the behaviours to be worked on into small achievable steps;
 - providing Paul with models of the specific behaviours which are desired;
 - the use of immediate rewards and positive reinforcement for good behaviour;
- 8 consideration of the seating arrangements in the classroom to ensure Paul is seated in an appropriate position to minimise the possibility of distractions by irrelevant stimuli;
- 9 a multi-sensory approach to learning with verbal instructions being accompanied by gesture;
- 10 a process of continuous assessment, development and monitoring of an Education Plan which, following consultation with the parents, should set out in detail;
 - (a) the nature of the child's learning difficulties;
 - (b) the special provision required, including school, Board and other agency staff involved, staff training required, frequency of support and any specific programmes, activities, materials or equipment;
 - (c) the nature of the support required from the parents at home;
 - (d) the targets to be achieved in a given time;
 - (e) any pastoral care or medical requirements;
 - (f) details of any information to be shared with other pupils, so that they may be aware of Paul's difficulties and supportive to needs;
 - (g) the review arrangements and date.

iii. Monitoring

the arrangements to be made for:-

- (a) *regularly monitoring progress in meeting the objectives specified in this Part;*
- (b) *establishing targets in furtherance of those objectives;*

- (c) *regularly monitoring the targets referred to in (b);*
 - (d) *monitoring the appropriateness of any modifications to the application of the Northern Ireland Curriculum; and*
 - (e) *regularly monitoring the appropriateness of any provision substituted for exclusions from the application of the Northern Ireland Curriculum; and*

any special arrangements for the reviewing of this statement.
- (a) The pupil's progress will be monitored on an annual basis and at each annual review consideration will be given to the appropriateness of the objectives specified.
 - (b) Within two months of this statement being formalised or within two months of the placement of the child, the school should, in consultation with the parents, establish the targets in furtherance of the objectives. Details should be provided to the Board.
 - (b) The school should regularly monitor, review and revise the short term targets referred to in (b).
 - (d/e) It is not envisaged that there should be any modification to or exclusion from the Northern Ireland Curriculum but if such is considered to be the case, the rationale behind such a view should be provided as an integral part of the formal review of progress.

PART 4: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION: PLACEMENT

- (a) *the type of school which the Board considers appropriate for the child and the name of the school for which the parent has expressed a preference or, where the Board is required to specify the name of a school, the name of the school which it considers would be appropriate for the child and should be specified; or*
- (b) *the provision for the child's education otherwise than at a school which the Board considers appropriate.*

Mainstream school with support

PART 5: NON-EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The non-educational needs of the child for which the Board considers provision is appropriate if the child is to benefit properly from the special educational provision specified in Part 3.

Eating difficulties

PART 6: NON-EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Any non-educational provision which the Board proposes to make available or which it is satisfied will be made available by a health and social services authority or some other body, including the arrangements for its provision, and the arrangements for monitoring progress in meeting those objectives.

Advice to the school regarding feeding from the appropriate Health and Social Services personnel

Education Officer (Special)_____

Date _____

Note: The names and dates in this statement have been changed to protect the identity of the child and professionals involved.

APPENDICES ATTACHED TO THE STATEMENT

- (a) Parental representations, evidence and advice
- (b) Educational advice
- (c) Medical advice
- (d) Psychological advice
- (e) Social services advice
- (f) Any other advice

APPENDIX 12

FORMAT OF PRESCRIBED NOTICE TO PARENT

1. A copy of a proposed statement of the special educational needs of xxxxxx xxxxxx is attached.
2. You may, in each case within 15 days*:
 - (a) make representations to the Board about the content of the proposed statement;
 - (b) express a preference to the Board for any grant-aided school, giving reasons for your preference, if you wish. If you would first like to have further information about any grant-aided school in this, or any other, Board area, you should let xxxxxx xxxxxx know immediately.
 - (c) require the Board to arrange a meeting to discuss the statement, including any advice on which it is based. If necessary, further meetings may be arranged which may include the person who gave the advice.
3. The Board is required to comply with any preference of grant-aided school you may express unless:
 - (a) the school is unsuitable to your child's age, ability or aptitude or to her special educational needs; or
 - (b) the attendance of your child at the school would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom she would be educated or the efficient use of resources.
4. If at the conclusion of these procedures you disagree with the Board's final statement, you may appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal against the description of your child's special educational needs, against the special educational provision specified including the school named, or, if no school is named, against that fact.

(It is important to note that any such appeal must normally be made within two months of the date when formal notice of the right of appeal is given by the Board; such notice is required by law to be given in writing to the child's parent at the time when the final statement is issued).

- * *Any approach to the Board under paragraph 2 above must be made not later than 15 days from the date on which you receive this notice, or 15 days from the date on which you last attend a meeting in accordance with paragraph 2(c) above, whichever is later. If the 15th day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or a public holiday you must do so not later than the following working day.*

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

EDUCATION OFFICER (SPECIAL)
A duly authorised officer of the Board

STAFFING STRUCTURES AND COSTS

1. SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION - STRUCTURES

The number of staff employed in each board area at December 2001 is as follows: -

Grade	Title	NJC Scale	Belfast	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Western
<i>Assistant Senior Education Officer</i>	<i>Assistant Senior Education Officer</i>		X	X	X	X	1
<i>Education Officer</i>	<i>Education Officer</i>			1	1		1
<i>Assistant Education Officer</i>	<i>Assistant Education Officer</i>			2			
<i>Assistant Advisory Officer (1-4)</i>			3			3	
<i>Senior Principal Officer 1 (2-5)</i>		49 - 52					
<i>Assistant Principal Officer (3-6)</i>		42 - 45			1		
<i>Senior Administrative Officer (7-10)</i>		38 - 41			3		
<i>Administrative Officer (2-5)</i>	<i>Special Needs Administrative Officer</i>	33 - 36					4
<i>Administrative Officer (2-5)</i>	<i>Support Officer</i>	33 - 36		2	1	3	
<i>Senior Executive Officer</i>		26 - 31	0.5	1	1		1
<i>Executive Officer</i>	<i>Executive Officer - Statementing</i>	18 - 25			1	1	
<i>Executive Officer</i>	<i>Executive Officer - Post Statementing</i>	18 - 25			1	1	
<i>Executive Officer</i>	<i>General/PA</i>	18 - 25		2			2
<i>Senior Clerical Officer</i>	<i>Senior Clerical Officer - Statementing</i>	14 - 17			1	2	
<i>Senior Clerical Officer</i>	<i>Senior Clerical Officer - Post Statementing</i>	14 - 17			1	1	
<i>Senior Clerical Officer</i>	<i>Home Tuition</i>	14 - 17			1		
<i>Senior Clerical Officer</i>	<i>PA</i>	14 - 17				1	3
<i>Senior Clerical Officer</i>	<i>General</i>	14 - 17	2.5				
<i>Clerical Officer</i>	<i>Clerical Officer - Statementing</i>	1 - 13			1	2	
<i>Clerical Officer</i>	<i>Clerical Officer - Post Statementing</i>	1 - 13			1	3	
<i>Clerical Officer</i>	<i>General</i>	1 - 13		4			
<i>Clerical Officer</i>	<i>Clerk Typist/Word Processor</i>	1 - 13	3		1	1	

Source: ELBs

Notes: X denotes a proportion of a post.

The staffing structures have changed in some ELBS since this date.

The overall responsibility for Special Education rests with the Senior Education Officer within each Board.

2. EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY ADMINISTRATION - STRUCTURES

The number of educational psychologists employed in each board area at January 2002 is as follows: -

	Belfast	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
Full-time	16	20	18	22	22	98
Part-time	13	4	9	8	4	38

Source: Department of Education

