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Our Ref: 2009/0008645  
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Dear Ms McConnell

I refer to previous correspondence with Ministers about your complaint that Solihull Local Authority are operating a blanket policy by failing to specify and quantify provision in statements of special educational needs (SEN).

Let me begin by apologising for the length of time it has taken to be able to reply in full to your complaint. As you know we have been pursuing your complaint with Solihull and it has taken some time to obtain, and review, the information requested from them.

In order to determine whether the authority are operating a blanket policy in failing to quantify and specify provision in statements of special educational need we have examined a sample of statements from the authority. The LA has also examined a sample of fifty statements issued during the period to which you refer.

The sample statements we examined would not indicate Solihull is operating a blanket policy. The authority has reported that in the sample they looked at, the majority were detailed, specific and where appropriate quantifiable for both mainstream and special school settings. However, they did find a small number where they felt it could be argued the statement was not sufficiently quantified and specified.

The authority has said it will use the annual review process to further scrutinise the content of current statements, clarify any perceived shortfall in terms of specificity and quantification and make appropriate amendments where necessary.

Solihull has also stated that the paragraph within the statements relating to funding is included to identify the sum of additional money that the school will be given in addition to the resources already allocated to the school through delegation. It is not intended to remove the requirements to quantify or specify.

In view of the current Lamb enquiry into parental confidence in the SEN framework Solihull is also working alongside other West Midlands local authorities to look at ways in which they can improve specificity and quantification within statements. This work is being led through the West Midlands SEN Regional Hub, which is part of our work delivered through the National Strategies.

In light of the current, and future, actions being taken by Solihull LA I do not feel there is an expedient direction the Secretary of State could make at the present time. I have brought this matter to the attention of the Department's National Strategies SEN Adviser for the region and asked that the work the authority has committed to is carried through.

I would like to thank you for raising this issue with the Department.

Yours sincerely

  
John Hodgson  
SEN Operations Team Leader  
SEN and Disability Division