

Interim advice for Schools and Academies regarding requests from Paediatricians or other Health professionals for a child to be seen by an Education Psychologist regarding a possible diagnosis of Autism.

December 2018.

The Local Authority is aware that a number of schools/academies are receiving requests from paediatricians to engage an educational psychologist to support a possible autism diagnosis. In some cases the child concerned may be achieving well in school and not be considered as a priority for the school to use their resources in this way. Whilst it is the case that NICE Guidelines identifies potential input from an EP as good practice, it is recognised that this can be an undue demand upon the schools resources.

Work is on-going between the Local Authority and Health to agree a refreshed 'autism pathway' to address this issue. In the meantime the LA advice is that school should consider the child in the light of the request from the Paediatrician and any parental, or other, concerns that have been expressed. You should consider this alongside your own school assessments, observations and analysis of the child's needs and whether, taken in the round, this suggests that the school need to take any action to support learning/emotional wellbeing. If, acting within the schools SEN procedures and the SEND Code of Practice you conclude that it would be appropriate to involve an educational psychologist then you should do so.

However if, in the light of your refreshed analysis, school are still of the opinion that the child is not a priority for referral to an educational psychologist, the LA recommend that you share that conclusion with the parents and record this on the child's record. The child's voice should of course be one factor in this consideration, eg the extent to which they are happy and have friendships at school.

It may be that the child reportedly exhibits challenging behaviour at home but not school, in which case you may recommend to the family that they request Early Help Support, via First Response.

Schools and academies are under no obligation to commission EP input where you are confident that you are meeting the child's needs and good progress is being made.

Advice can be obtained from the Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service, through the Local Offer: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/education-and-childcare/educational-psychology-service>

And about Early Help Support: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families/early-help-for-children-and-young-people>

If you have any queries about this advice please contact tom.common@leics.gov.uk