

Gateway referrals to BTA Outreach (Primary and Secondary)

Support from BTA Outreach for individual pupils is available through a referral to Gateway. We have been working with Primary Schools for 3.5 years now, but as a relatively new service for Secondary schools, we thought it might be helpful to clarify what a good referral looks like. We have recently seen some referrals which do not really meet the threshold for accessing the service, and are hoping that this reminder will help more of you to access support in a timely manner.

Panel will be looking for evidence that assessment has been carried out to investigate underlying needs, and for supporting information which demonstrates the intervention that is in place. Typically this may include the involvement of ISAT, and ideally either an EP assessment or a commitment to refer for an assessment when one is available. We appreciate that there may be some challenges accessing the EPS at the moment, nevertheless we can also see that many schools are managing to successfully obtain support from their EP, and are fully aware of the value that this adds to the process.

Unless Social Care are involved a CAF should be opened. The multi-agency process is integral to how BTA Outreach work with schools and parents/carers, and is also considered best practice in terms of safeguarding. If parents or carers have refused to engage with a CAF we would ask that evidence is provided as to why this is the case, and what action has been taken. If parents or carers are persistently refusing to engage in this process it can be considered as a safeguarding concern, and panel need to be aware of that.

As you know, SEMH is an area of need under the Code of Practice, and schools should be engaging in the Graduated Approach to address needs which may be manifesting as challenging behaviour. This means SENCO's really need to be involved in the referral process even if they are not to be the main point of contact in school.

We fully appreciate the challenges schools are currently facing with many vulnerable pupils, and demand for support is very high at the moment. Please be assured these are not hoops to jump through or bureaucratic barriers. BTA Outreach is a limited resource which has been funded by the LA to provide timely support for schools who have pupils with SEMH and challenging behaviour. Our ability to have a meaningful impact is very much dependent on us having access to good quality assessment and detailed information from you around what is going on for the young person at the centre of the process.

Many schools consistently do provide all the evidence and support described here, and we would like to thank them for continuing to do this. Of course we do recognise that there are exceptional situations when behaviour escalates before there has been an opportunity to engage with all the investigation and assessment outlined above. In circumstances like this we would encourage schools to approach ISAT in the first instance for advice, as it may be possible to access urgent support while the evidence is still being gathered. Ensuring that this is the exception and not the rule will help us to make sure that help and support are available to everyone who needs it

When a pupil has an EHCP, school should always approach their Complex Needs Team SPoC (Single Point of Contact) in the first instance. They can also offer you advice and guidance, and will work with you to determine whether a referral to BTA Outreach is appropriate.

Gateway referrals can be made via gateway@bromley.gov.uk

BTA Outreach can be contacted on 020 8308 9620 x207/203, further details at www.bromleytrustacademy.org.

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