

Lorna Woolley

INDEPENDENT SEND CONSULTANT

Service Overview

Paperwork

Following an email enquiry we send parents this Service Overview and the following:

- An invitation to book an appointment for a telephone consultation, the first 15 minutes of which are free.
- An Enquiry Form requesting your contact details and essential information about your child or young person. This needs to be completed and returned at least five days before the date of your telephone consultation.
- Our Terms and Conditions, for your signature.

Initial consultation phase

The aim of the consultation phase is to provide advice on what strategies to pursue and to help you decide whether to make use of one of our school-search services: **basic search** or **full service**. Having read your responses on the Enquiry Form, we will undertake initial research, plan how best to support you, and prepare to answer any questions you may have.

Our charge for this initial phase of work is £195. This includes the telephone consultation and provision of a customised list of recommended professional advocacies and expert witnesses.

The telephone consultation generally lasts around one hour. However, for your peace of mind, the first 15 minutes of the consultation are free, so if at that point you decide not to proceed there will be no charge.

If we agree to continue working together we will confirm details in a Terms of Engagement letter before beginning the school-search process.

School-search services

Basic search

Charged at £520, payable in advance, our basic search provides you with a list of all specialist provision schools, both maintained and independent, within your area. A 30-minute follow-up Zoom consultation is included within the cost; any additional activity beyond this will be charged at an hourly rate of £130.

Our school searches are based on local authority practice regarding allowable travelling time from the home postcode: for day provision, up to 45 minutes each way for a primary-aged child and 75 minutes each way for a secondary-aged child.

Each entry on our basic search list will provide the following details:

- School name and website address
- Local authority
- Type of school (maintained or independent)
- Age range and main areas of SEND supported
- Ofsted/ISI rating. Currently we can search on Good and Outstanding Ofsted reports. However, this may change due to the scrapping of single headline grades for schools.

Full service

We begin by reviewing all the diagnostic reports and other information, and agreeing with you a list of criteria for the school search, which typically takes 3–4 hours' work. This will be invoiced at £130 per hour (£390–£520) before the school search begins.

The full-service school search by our team typically takes up to 16 hours (up to £2,080 based on an hourly rate of £130, invoiced on completion), depending on the complexity of the child's needs, the geographical area and other factors. In complex cases, or if the search needs to be widened for any reason, further work may be required. This will be invoiced at the end of each month at an hourly rate of £130.

Our full-service school search covers:

- Reviewing the history of the child's challenges and where you are in the process of finding suitable provision for their needs.
- Explaining the EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) process, including appeals, and the benefits of engaging a solicitor or other professional to prepare the EHCP.
- Providing guidance on the importance of gathering the right type of professional reports and other evidence for the EHCP.
- Studying any relevant material, such as up-to-date diagnostic reports and assessments, the education and placement sections of the EHCP, etc.
- Compiling a school-search report detailing how the provision matches the identified needs, and the educational and social benefits offered by the school(s).
- Based on agreed criteria, shortlisting schools able on paper to meet your child's identified needs and arranging a Zoom call with you to discuss next steps. The shortlist will usually include both Local Authority and independent settings.
- Arranging for you to visit one or more selected schools.

Timescale

The overall timescale for the above is dependent on the speed with which schools respond to enquiries and complete their decision-making. In addition, as there is a high demand for our services we may on occasion need to prioritise urgent cases.