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Somerset Council
Educational Psychologist's Contribution to

This advice has been written as part of an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (Children and Families Act 2014).

This report should be read as a whole, stored and shared in a secure manner. No parts of the report should be duplicated in isolation without prior consultation with, and the permission of the signatory or their line manager. Any quotations from the report should be clearly referenced.

Sources of Information

The information in the report comes from the following sources:

Reading of the panel pack and any reports held by Inclusion Somerset Educational Psychology Service.

Consultation with staff at Anytown working with Felicia, including Mrs Speight Class Teacher and Pam Salt, SENCo.

Discussion with Felicia's parents, Daisy and Ron, on Teams on 12.01.24

Observation, assessment and discussion with Felicia on 13.01.24

Relevant Back round Information

Relevant background information is available in documents included in the panel pack. Only additional relevant background information is included here.

Felicia lives at home with her mum, Daisy, her dad, Ron and her older sister, Dianne. She is in Year 3 at Anytown Primary School. Felicia was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) with a demand avoidant profile and significant sensory differences, in May 2022, through a private assessment by Dr Charlene Andrewson, Clinical Psychologist, and Colleen Hathway, OT. This has been validated by The CYP Neurodevelopmental Partnership Team (letter dated 7th December 2022). Felicia has since been re-referred for an ADHD assessment and is awaiting triage. Felicia has had involvement from Paediatrics to support with her sleep and mobility and was referred to CAHMS for high levels of anxiety and CBT has been offered. There is involvement from wider services including CAOT and Autism and Communication Service has completed a Barriers to Learning Assessment and school have submitted cycles of ADPR.

Felicia was assessed by Private Educational Psychologist, in September 2023, who identified Felicia's cognition was within the average range, with articular strengths in visual spatial skills and verbal communication but identified weaker working

memory and processing speed. She explored Felicia's executive functioning skills using the Brief Assessment and identified difficulties with planning, organisation and sustained attention. She also identified difficulties with social and emotional regulation and felt Felicia was masking to a high degree in school, which was causing her extreme anxiety and was leading to emotional dysregulation and physical outbursts at home. (please refer to full report).

Felicia also received a private OT assessment, Patricia Rush in Oct 23, which identified difficulties with fine motor skills, body coordination, strength and agility alongside significant sensory processing needs. (please refer to full report).

Felicia has significant challenges attending school. She will often arrive late in the morning due to her anxieties reaching a peak, but finds it difficult to articulate this, representing this as flight, flight, freeze response. Her parents have had to put locks on the windows at home as she has tried to escape from them when heightened. They also have locks on the bathroom doors, as when Felicia is in fight response, Dianne can go there to be safe. Felicia and her family have had support from PFSA and CAOT. Felicia's behaviour continues to be concern at home and she can be violent to her sister and parents and FIS are now involved. Dianne is receiving support from Young Carers. Felicia and her family have been supported by the school PFSA in school and in the home. This has included intervention and 1 :1 support to Felicia and Dianne. A home risk assessment has been completed by the PFSA due to the level of violence and other unsafe behaviours. School now have a new PFSA. The previous PFSA is now the pastoral lead and is providing pastoral support to Felicia and Dianne.

Felicia has an EBSA support plan which is designed to reduce the pressure around particular trigger points and support her anxieties around attending school. It is designed to enable her to have flexible timings to attend school in the morning, allowing her longer to get ready, avoid the crowds of children and parents, sensory breaks and aids throughout the day and emotional regulation support. She also can access small sensory support group in the afternoon. Despite this support in place, her attendance remains poor and parents feel her anxiety is increasing and her motivation to attend school reducing. Parents report it can take up to 3 hours trying to encourage her out of the car some mornings, and her father has needed to change his job so he can be at home and be more flexible and responsive to Felicia's needs. She is waking more though the night with nightmares due to heightened anxiety and they report that she is a 'shell of her former self'.

Part of Felicia's EBSA individualised support plan, she has access to alternative timetable in the afternoons which is largely sensory based and designed to develop her fine and gross motor skill needs, play and attachment needs, alongside her sensory needs. Felicia has the choice to access this but will sometimes choose to be in the main class instead. She has sensory breaks throughout the day, and she is now more able to identify when she needs these. She has sensory materials on her desk which she can use to regulate, or she can go outside the class for a movement and regulation break. Felicia finds assembly, break and lunchtime too bus

and eats her lunch in a quiet space with a friend because she finds the noise of school overwhelming. At lunchtime, she will remain in the corridor with a friend and do colouring/Lego.

Felicia is currently below ARE and she continues to access a small, targeted phonics group to develop these skills. She has not yet passed her phonics screening.

Felicia has accessed support from the continence team at Musgrove due to daytime accidents and has an individual plan to support her to access the toilet.

School have identified that some of the current provision in place for Felicia:

Zones of Regulation

Toilet and movement breaks

Sensory aids and strategies

Desk screen

Visual support including personalised timetable

Special cup for drinking

Decompression time before going home

Sensory diet

Meet and Greet at school gate in mornings and handover to parents at the end of the day

Use of Talkabout

Daily QUAD provision for sensory activities in group of 1-2 children supported by a trusted adult.

Learning partner of her choosing

Weekly social skills group

School allow Felicia to wear what she is comfortable in, instead of uniform

Continence nurse working with school

Visual and social stories

Youn Person and Family 's Views, Interests and Aspirations

Parent carer and young person views are detailed in the Appendix A. In addition, Felicia and her parents also explained their best hopes were.

Felicia's views

From the information in the panel pack and from the school, an overview of Felicia's views are as follows:

Felicia voice (from EBSA Support plan dated 5.10.23): Things that make Felicia feel upset is the noise of school, the work being too difficult, and that Felicia finds it hard to concentrate. She finds that the seats hurt, and the toilets are 'too much'. She has named four key friends and knows that she can speak to her key adults, Miss Jones and Mrs Speight in the class or in the Hub. When Felicia is upset, she asks for her sister, Dianne or say's that she misses her mummy and daddy. When upset, she will seek comfort or become quiet and not speak.

Further information from work with PFSA: Felicia worries about feeling different and feels stupid and inferior to her peers. She feels embarrassed about forgetting things and not understanding the task or instructions. She fears the size of her class and the noise in her classroom. She doesn't like fire bells or low voices. She feels pain in her legs when sitting down and writing hurts her hands. She feels the need to move around. School uniform makes her feel uncomfortable, but she is embarrassed when wearing her own clothes to school. She is also scared of the toilets.

Summary of Felicia's voice during my visit on 13.01.24

I observed Felicia during a small group phonics session, handwriting whole class session and then she came to chat with me on a

Felicia was able to lead me to the room where we were meeting, I introduced myself and asked if she was ok if we had a chat about what was going well and not so well. She said 'yes'. She presented as quiet shy and anxious and often replied 'I don't know' to my questions, she found the wellbeing card activity, which involved less speaking much less anxiety-provoking.

Using a visual scale Felicia identified things at school as 5/10.

She needed some prompting to be able to articulate why she had put 5/10 and identify things that were going well. With suggestions she nodded and shook her head, and we identified the following as positives:

Her teacher
Friends
Spellings
Dividing and times

She identified the following as negatives:

The noise and how busy school is.
She didn't like doing Lego,

Lego was very interesting, as I suggested Lego as a positive as I knew it was something she did at assembly time. But she shook her head. When I explored further, it was clear it wasn't something she enjoyed, but she hadn't been able to tell the teachers this as she didn't want to offend. I then explored things she might like to do instead, and she nodded at colouring and puzzles.

She wasn't able to independently identify things that helped her, however she nodded or shook her head when I made suggestions:

She said the following helped her:

Sensory breaks — using the bars
Fiddle toys
Colouring
Fluffy earmuffs
Chewelry

I tried to explore the concept of ideal school with her, but she found both drawing, imagining and explaining anything that wasn't reality difficult.

I explored her understanding of feelings with her using emotion cards. In the task, she needed to match the name of the emotion with the photo. She was able to match sad, happy, tired, but muddled anxious, scared, angry, surprised where the emotions are more subtly different and often can be seen in the eyes. I then explored the different emotions with her and why she thought the people in the photos might be feeling these emotions, which she found very difficult. Some she said 'don't know', and others she used the

same scenario for a few eg Crealy for surprised and excited, sad and bored, she said maybe they haven't got anything to do', but angry, she said 'don't know'. When I asked about the different occasions she may have felt these emotions, she either used the same scenario or said 'don't know'. It was evident she really struggled with this activity of identifying, matching emotions, and linking them to scenarios for herself and others.

I then used School Wellbeing Cards to explore her anxieties further and things that she felt helped her. I am aware the photograph isn't as clear, so I have listed her choices in a table as well:

Not true about me	Unsure	True about me
The don't believe me	My parents talk positively about school	I feel included at school
I enjoy learning and new topics	My parents want me to attend school	There is at least one adult I can talk to at school about my worries
The other kids are mean to me	I have one special friend	The teachers care about me
My parents need me to be at home	I can show my true feelings at school	There are people to help me
Sometimes I feel like I don't belong	I feel worried at school	I worry about school work
I feel worried at home	I feel unwell when I think about school	I do fun things outside of school hours
I don't have many friends	I want to attend school	I worry sometimes that bad things will happen
	I find the school environment overwhelming (ie noise, crowds)	I worry about break times
	I get to watch TV, play games etc if I stay home	I worry about being away from my parents
	I am pressure to attend school feeling	I worry about coming into school
		I have lots of friends
		My friends are there for me



Parent's views

Parent voice from App A: Felicia finds receiving compliments and praise difficult at home. Ron and Daisy (mum and dad) would like to further explore the things Felicia finds challenging so they can better support and manage her at home. Family life has become extremely challenging, and they are concerned about the impact on Dianne's (sister) wellbeing. She has previously had to lock herself in the bathroom while their parents de-escalate Felicia. Felicia is a 'shell' of the girl she was, due to masking behaviours at school and parents spend 4+ hours with Felicia at bedtime to help regulate her after the school day.

Mum hopes that Felicia has access to an education that supports her to make progress. Mum feels that this would be best in a specialist setting that specialises in PDA and ASD.

Parent meeting

I had a Teams meeting with parents on 10.01.24 where they identified the daily challenges that Felicia experiences coming to school and how it impacts on them as a family. They are increasingly concerned about Felicia's mental health and the impact of Felicia's anxiety and physical behaviour on Dianne and the family as a whole. They explained all the changes and adaptations they have made at home, and how they have to accompany Felicia to attend activities such as providing 1 : 1 support in swimming and Brownies (mum had trained as a Brownie leader to enable Felicia to attend). They have a Blue Badge, so they can park close to places as she can run off when frightened or anxious, without consideration of her own safety. They shared her sensory sensitivities and the impact of these and how she is scared of toilets so won't drink through the day, so she doesn't need to use the school or public toilets. They discussed her anxiety around being given choices, requests, and perceived demands and how they have adapted their approach and language to reduce Felicia's anxieties and discussed that they have attended training on ASC (Cygnet and Toucans), PDA and sensory processing.

They discussed that as a family they are in crisis, have accessed help from CAOT, PFSA, FIS and are about to start support from CAMHS. They discussed that they feel Felicia's need to please at school is causing her to mask her anxieties to such an extent that she is completely overwhelmed and exhausted when she comes home. She needed a week off school to regulate herself when her anxiety reached a peak before Xmas and she experienced burn out. They discussed her need to control everything at home and how she can become very aggressive if things don't go to plan. She will target family members, and this is many times each day. The family have needed to hide knives as they are concerned what she will do when heightened. They have locks on bathroom doors as

a safe space for Dianne and need to keep the front door and windows locked as she will run into the road without consideration for her safety.

They do not feel a mainstream school can meet Felicia's needs due to many triggers and the sensory and social challenges and feel that she is not achieving her potential academically. They feel she needs a small school that specialises in ASC and PDA such as Middlecombe School.

Psychological Formulation and Summary of Special Educational Needs

This summary should be read in conjunction with all other advice and information gathered as part of the statutory assessment process.

My psychological formulation has been developed from a combination of reflection from previous assessments, school and parent reports and my observation and 1:1 meeting with Felicia.

Felicia is a young lady with many strengths. She enjoys creative subjects and sensory play, is well-liked by peers and has a good relationship with key staff. She enjoys swimming, climbing, trampolining, playing in the park, loves playing with her family cat and enjoys role play. It was a pleasure to meet Felicia and from discussion with her class teacher, I saw her on a 'typical' day. She was polite, and smiled, was quiet, and appeared quite anxious and apprehensive about my visit and it was clear she was trying hard to 'get it right'. She tried hard to answer questions but struggled more with verbal interaction and relaxed more when she could express herself through cards, rather than language.

Felicia has received a private diagnosis of autism, with a demand avoidant profile and associated sensory processing needs. This has been verified by the Somerset CYPNP Team. In line with her autism diagnosis, she experiences social communication, interaction and social understanding challenges, sensory integration difficulties and struggles with changes to her routine and transitions. She experiences significant anxieties linked with perceived demands and finds making choices when there are too many options overwhelming. She is often unable to express these anxieties at school and they build throughout the day and week and are displayed at home through emotional dysregulation and physical outbursts, often directed at family members. The family have been supported by PFSA, accessed training and advice on neurodiversity and FIS and CAMHS are supporting. She has had support from the school pastoral lead on recognising and managing emotions in herself and others and will continue to need this individualised support from a

trusted adult. She needs support recognising her triggers and how anxiety builds, and support to develop coping strategies that are right for her that regulate and calm her.

Felicia is a bright girl and tries hard with her learning, however, finds some aspects difficult and is current Working Towards ARE in Maths and English. She has identified needs in auditory sequencing, working memory, processing speed and spelling, for which she accesses small group support. Alongside her learning needs, Felicia has identified fine and gross motor skill difficulties which impact her handwriting and balance. She finds sitting in a chair for prolonged periods of time painful and she continues to receive guidance and support with her handwriting from her class teacher. Her private OT assessment indicated that DCD should be explored further by a Paediatrician.

Felicia at times finds the busyness of the classroom overwhelming and uses her sensory resources within the class or goes outside for a movement break to help regulate herself. She is reported to be easily distracted and finds listening and concentrating, especially on auditory instructions with background noise difficult. She needs instructions broken down and supported by visual cues. Her attention and concentration needs are being further explored through an ADHD assessment with the CYPNP team.

Felicia thrives on routine and finds change unsettling. Transitions are a trigger, as are changes in routine and staffing and she needs preparation and support from a trusted adult to prepare for any changes in advance.

Felicia is a shy, but friendly young lady who is well liked by peers and staff, has a good group of friends, however, finds many aspects of social interaction and social communication difficult. She can be literal in her understanding and misinterpret jokes which really upsets her. She finds identifying and expressing emotions difficult and articulating her needs and wants. She often won't say if she is anxious or upset, or if she doesn't like something, and it takes a skilled adult who knows her well to pick up on subtle indicators she is worried or upset and then try to unpick it with her, support her and find a way forward.

Felicia is keen to please and masks many of her challenges at school, these then cumulate and result in emotional dysregulation and physical outbursts at home. She exhibits fight, flight, freeze response at home and it impacts greatly on her sleep. The family have accessed support from Cerebra and she takes Melatonin, however she continues to wake with nightmares and stomach aches which the family explain are due to extreme anxiety she has about attending school.

It is clear that Felicia is a young lady who has clear strengths, however her social, communication, and sensory needs are having a significant impact on her emotional wellbeing and her ability to attend and make progress at school. She will need a personalised approach and ongoing support with developing her social communication and interaction skills and her emotional and sensory regulation skills. Her needs and the provision required to meet her needs is Above SEN Support. Her parents feel very strongly that despite the personalised approach at Anytown the have seen a deterioration in Felicia's mental health and feel that her needs cannot

be met in a mainstream school. They feel she needs a small quiet class to enable her sensory needs to be met with staff experienced working with autistic children with a demand avoidant profile so her emotional and social needs can be met, and she can make progress.

Identified Areas of Special Educational Needs

	Areas of Need
Cognition and Learning	<p>Felicia has average cognitive skills, however, has been identified as having a specific difficulty with auditory and visual short-term memory, processing speed and spelling.</p> <p>Felicia's high levels of anxiety impact on her attendance and ability to access some of her learning within the classroom. At times she finds the noise and busyness of the classroom overwhelming and needs to access a regulation break outside the class.</p> <p>It has been noticed that Felicia's anxiety levels can build throughout the term, and she can reach overwhelm. She has needed a few days without the pressure of attending school to lower her anxiety levels and then she has been able to return to her previous attendance pattern.</p> <p>Felicia's phonological knowledge and spelling has been identified as an area of relative weakness and she accesses small targeted phonic group daily to continue to develop these skills.</p> <p>Felicia is Working Towards ARE in Maths and English. She finds writing particularly difficult, combining her handwriting difficulties alongside challenges of planning and organising her ideas onto paper. Felicia has identified executive functioning needs and struggles with planning, task initiation, and remaining focussed on a task.</p> <p>Felicia has identified working memory needs and struggles to follow and remember multi-step instructions. She is easily overwhelmed when given verbal instructions, especially in busy environments. She will often become fixated on one aspect and miss the holistic meaning.</p> <p>Felicia finds organisation difficult and will misplace items in school.</p>

	<p>Felicia finds problem solving difficult and can become overwhelmed when asked to make a decision or work out a possible outcome.</p> <p>Felicia finds assessments at school challenging and needs them broken up into 15 minute chunks, with sensory breaks.</p> <p>Felicia's focus and attention is being explored by the CYPNP team. She struggles with active engagement and will often become distracted and struggles to maintain concentration, especially in busy environments.</p> <p>Felicia struggles with change and any routine, staff change needs pre-warning, or she will become very anxious.</p>
Communication and Interaction	<p>Felicia has identified social communication and interaction needs. She finds articulating her wants and needs very difficult and needs adults to notice her changes in non-verbal communication eg head down, playing with her hands, to then explore if she is anxious, upset or needs something. Even then she may not be able to articulate what is wrong and will respond 'don't know' and needs trusted adults to problem solve and explore possible triggers and solutions. Felicia's communication and interaction skills impact her level of vulnerability at school as she won't say she doesn't like something as she doesn't want to offend eg she admitted she doesn't like lego at school during my 1 :1 chat, however this was a supportive strategy in place at school which she was using daily, didn't like, but hadn't felt able to say.</p> <p>Felicia is becoming more able to communicate when she needs a sensory break, but again this is often facilitated but the supported adult working with her. Felicia has identified difficulties with social use of language and pragmatics. She can be literal in her interpretation and can misunderstand details of conversations, fixating on individual elements and then become very confused or upset as she has misunderstood.</p> <p>Felicia can misunderstand jokes and can take things very personally that weren't meant with ill-intent.</p> <p>Felicia can be very physical with her communication at home and will kick and hit her sister and parents to reflect her level of distress. This often happens at</p>

	<p>the end of a school day if she has been 'holding it together' all day and they experience a coke bottle effect at home'.</p> <p>Felicia is friendly, popular and likes having friends, however, finds the complexities of social communication and interaction difficult and finds managing friendships stressful at times especially if she feels she may offend someone. This can make her very anxious and can be a trigger to her not wanting to come into school.</p>
Social, Emotional, and Mental Health	<p>Felicia has been identified as autistic with a pathological demand profile. She experiences extreme anxiety around perceived demands and needs any requests to be presented indirectly and depersonalised.</p> <p>Felicia making decisions difficult and finds too much choice overwhelming. If presented with too much choice she can withdraw at school and become dysregulated and physical at home.</p> <p>Felicia finds many aspects of school life challenging. Including the social, emotional, social and sensory aspects, however masks many of these challenges at school. Trusted adults can now tell when she is feeling overwhelmed, upset or anxious and will support her, but despite this support at school, they still experience a 'coke bottle' effect at home.</p> <p>Felicia's sensory needs impacts her ability to access the classroom and busier environments eg the hall at collective worship. She reports that she finds the classroom noisy and overwhelming, and her high levels of anxiety impact her attendance.</p> <p>Felicia finds changes to her routine challenging and needs warning of these in advance. She finds transitions between activities and from break to learning are times she needs a sensory break to regulate her anxiety levels.</p> <p>Felicia finds identifying emotions in herself and others difficult. She finds many aspects of her environment, especially at school triggering and this can lead to overwhelm quickly, however she doesn't show this until she gets home. her anxiety levels can be at a concerning level at home and she has been referred to CAMHS. A parent assisted CBT programme has been offered.</p>

Sensory, Physical, and Health	Felicia has identified sensory processing needs. She has a varied profile and is sensory seeking with some aspects eg movement and soft tactile fabrics,
	<p>chewing etc but sensory avoiding with noise, smells, certain fabrics and noise. She wears ear defenders at times, an adapted school uniform and has access to sensory resources which she likes and has identified regulates her. She has a flexible timetable which enables her to avoid points in the day which are particularly busy and alternative provision for break, lunch and collective worship.</p> <p>Felicia has identified gross and fine motor skill difficulties and DCD was suggested to be further explored following her OT assessment. Her fine and gross motor skill difficulties affect her handwriting, balance and ability to walk long distances because she has pain in her legs.</p> <p>Felicia is movement seeking and proprioceptive activities regulate her. She has been referred for an ADHD assessment to further explore her attention, concentration, hyperactivity and impulsivity. She is reported to display much higher levels of hyperactivity and impulsivity at home, however his attention and concentration difficulties have been reported in both settings.</p> <p>When Felicia is heightened, she is unable to keep herself safe and has tried to climb out of upstairs windows and out of car windows (when it is parked). She will also hurt others at home and her sister has needed to lock herself away to keep herself safe.</p> <p>Felicia accesses support from the continence team for constipation and takes Movicol. Her anxiety levels and sensory needs also impact her toileting. Felicia struggles with sleep and has support from Paediatrics. She takes Melatonin to assist her sleep</p>

If there is anything you would like to discuss with me about this report, I would be pleased to speak to you.

A Collaborative Outcomes Meeting (COM) will take place in due course, facilitated by the Educational Psychologist and will include the young person and their parent carers, the school, the SEND Area Reviewing Officer and relevant professionals as appropriate. The coproduced Outcomes and Provisions for both the EHCP if agreed, or SEN Support if agreed will be written up in a COMs document. This COMs document and the above report provides the full EP advice. Further information can be found on the Local Offer here: <https://beta.somerset.gov.uk/collaborative-outcomes-meetings-quide/>

Electronically signed by:

Educational Psychologist

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