Evaluations of Need by Remote Video Platform

In the light of the DfE SSIN 04/20 issued in May 2020, **SASC has been asked to clarify what an evaluation of need carried out in line with SASC guidance should contain** to constitute eligibility for application for DSA. The SSIN refers to the SASC position that as an emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis, '*it is possible for assessors to produce a professional interim evaluation of need based on a remote screening and diagnostic interview*[1].'

The Student Loans Company (SLC) will be expecting the following elements in the evaluation of need:

- **Author credentials** and **student details**.
- The **specific statement** as advised by SASC for reports produced as a result of assessments of need carried out via online video platforms, i.e.

'Public health guidelines currently recommend physical distancing to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This evaluation of need could not therefore be carried out in person but is based on a process using an online video platform. It does not use a full range of tests to deliver a full diagnostic assessment but instead, following publisher and professional guidelines, uses a more limited range of tools. As such, the outcomes must be treated with caution. They do not provide a 'diagnosis' of a specific learning difficulty/neurodevelopmental difference but do provide an evaluation of need together with some useful indicators of areas of strength and weakness based on the taking of a detailed background 'history', the administration of a diagnostic questionnaire and the administration of a limited range of tests. The recommendations made should be regarded as preliminary and, where necessary, advice has been given as to the appropriateness of referral for further assessment when this becomes possible.'

- A **summary of the evidence of need** in an Overview section of the report, with the impacts of strengths and weaknesses highlighted and key recommendations made. These could include a recommendation for a follow up 'top-up' assessment, carried out, when possible, in a conventional face-to-face, physical setting, by the same assessor and, if appropriate, re-submitted to SLC as further evidence of a disability.
- A full **background information section,** including, where relevant, a summary of any previous history of interim assessment or assessment for access arrangements.
- Description of **test conditions** and how these may have affected the administration of the evaluation of need.
- **Results of tests of attainment** i.e. reading, writing and spelling, including reading **and/or** listening comprehension, using tests that have been made available and approved for use remotely by the test publishers, following instructions given for their remote administration by the publisher.

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[1] The relevant SASC guidance is available at
https://sasc.org.uk/SASCDocuments/Diagnostic%20assessment%20online-SASC%20position%20paper%20March%202020%20final.pdf and
https://sasc.org.uk/SASCDocuments/Physical%20Distancing%20and%20SpLD%20Assessment%20SASC%20Guidance%20May2020.pdf

- An **additional diagnostic evidence section** reporting the results of screening questionnaires for possible DCD, attentional, visual difficulties, difficulties with sense of number etc, *as appropriate and needed*.
- As tests of cognitive skills and abilities may be more difficult to administer remotely, **cognitive tests will not be *required*,** although assessors with access to such tests may administer and report those that have been made available and approved for remote use by test publishers, following instructions given for their remote administration by the publisher.
- It is **important that tests used in an evaluation of need are considered acceptable by the publisher for remote use.** For tests standardised using in-person administration, remote methods would be considered an **adaptation** of the standardised administration and should be taken into consideration when reporting and interpreting the results, and therefore the reliability and validity of test outcomes. In general, assessors need to be acutely aware of, and, where necessary, report on, how judgements they reach may be affected by the limitations of a remote evaluation of need.
- The reporting of **standardised scores** and the use of **test score tables** should only be included for tests that have been made available and approved for remote use by test publishers and where the instructions for their use have been followed.
- Assessors carrying out evaluations of need via remote assessment are advised to read the **full SASC guidance on physical distancing and SpLD assessment** which highlights in more detail some of the risks and the possibilities of assessments carried out remotely.
- **Elements of the SASC recommended report formats** can be adapted as appropriate to the Evaluation of Need.

AVAILABLE TESTS

As of the date of this update, SASC has checked with the main publishers in this field and the following tests or sub-tests of larger batteries are currently available for remote online test administration, with, in some cases, detailed and specific guidelines **regarding remote administration practice. Please note that the use of some tests remotely is still in 'hybrid' form, and will involve the posting, in advance, of some materials to the client. Assessors need to be aware that there are risks to test security in sending materials to clients by post, even if this is permitted by the publisher.** Publishers' websites should be checked regularly as these details can change.

TEST PUBLISHER	TEST	LINK TO GUIDANCE
Pearson Q-Global	**WRAT 5**	More guidance on tele-practice from week ending 15th June 2020. **Check publisher's website for details.**
Pearson Q-Global	**WRMT 3**	
Pearson Q-Global	**DASH & DASH 17+**	Will be available from week ending 15th June 2020. **Check publisher's website for details.**
Pearson Q-Global	**KTEA 3**	https://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk/Psychology/ChildCognitionNeuropsychologyandLanguage/ChildAchievementMeasures/ktea3/ForThisProduct/telepractice-ktea3.aspx
Pearson Q-Global	**WIAT-III-UK**	https://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk/Psychology/ChildCognitionNeuropsychologyandLanguage/ChildAchievementMeasures/wiat-iii/ForThisProduct/telepractice-wiat-iii.aspx
Pearson Q-Global	**WAIS-IV-UK**	https://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk/Psychology/AdultCognitionNeuropsychologyandLanguage/AdultGeneralAbilities/WechslerAdultIntelligenceScale-FourthUKEdition(WAIS-IVUK)/ForThisProduct/telepractice-wais-iv.aspx

Pro Ed Inc USA	CTOPP 2 Some stimuli available digitally	https://www.proedinc.com/Products/13082E/ctopp2-virtual-picture-bo ok.aspx **Publisher's webpage says: 'Overview coming soon'.** On purchase there is a link for a downloadable PDF and files of the various stimuli **NB.** Portions of CTOPP-2 can be administered in a virtual format with stimulus materials on screen and the audio portion of the test can be done via downloadable audio files. Assessors should bear in mind that even if sub-tests are available for remote use, **they have not yet been re-standardised for this mode of use**. If used remotely, it would be absolutely vital to check that the person tested has an optimum audio experience on the platform used, with no time lag or latency.
Pro Ed Inc USA	**Gray Oral Reading Tests: Fifth Edition (GORT 5)** Virtual Examiner's manual and virtual student book	https://www.proedinc.com/Products/13927E/gort5-virtual-student-book.aspx **Publisher's webpage says:** 'This is a digital product available on RedShelf after purchase. You will receive an email after purchase indicating how to access the product'.
Pro Ed Inc USA	**TOWRE 2** Word cards and examiner's manual available virtually.	https://www.proedinc.com/Products/13911E/towre2-virtual-examiners-manual.aspx **Publisher's webpage says:** 'Overview coming soon'.
PAR Inc via PARiConnect	AAB	https://www.parinc.com/Using-PAR-digital-assessments-during-the-COVID-19-crisis
PAR Inc via PARiConnect	FAM	https://www.parinc.com/Using-PAR-digital-assessments-during-the-COVID-19-crisis
PAR Inc via PARiConnect	FAR	https://www.parinc.com/Using-PAR-digital-assessments-during-the-COVID-19-crisis

Evaluations of need carried out remotely are interim measures only and, as COVID-19 restrictions on physical distancing are eased, conventional face to face assessment in the same physical setting will become possible again, albeit with the need for **risk assessment** and the subsequent **adoption of appropriate measures**, depending on context, e.g. use of a clear screen, disinfecting of shared materials, assessment sessions split into shorter time slots on different occasions, awareness and reporting of any modifications to test administration etc. Practitioners working in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should be guided both by their relevant devolved government's COVID-19 advice and their education, examination and funding bodies' requirements.

SOME USEFUL ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

TEST PUBLISHER	LINK TO GUIDANCE
Pearson	Disinfecting Testing Materials https://www.pearsonassessments.com/content/dam/school/global/clinical/us/assets/telepractice/disinfecting-test-materials.pdf
WPS	Remote Assessment Guidelines • https://content.wpspublish.com/Submitted-Content/pdfs/remote_assessment_guidelines_r2_051220.pdf Statement on Tele-assessment • https://pages.wpspublish.com/en/wps-tele-assessment-statement Assessment Validity Considerations during COVID-19 • https://content.wpspublish.com/Submitted-Content/pdfs/Assessment%20Validity%20Considerations%20during%20COVID-19%20.pdf
Pro Ed Inc USA	Pro-ed's Statement on Tele-Assessment • https://www.proedinc.com/Downloads/PRO-ED_Tele-Assessment.pdf
PAR Inc	COVID-19 Resources • https://www.parinc.com/COVID-19-Resources#53477257-practice-related-information