



A Parent Guide to the EHCP Application and Review Process

Are you feeling overwhelmed by the EHCP application and review process? We understand this can be a daunting experience, so we have put together this handy guide to help you understand each step of the EHCP process. It contains key information, answers to frequently asked questions and useful links.

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Please be advised that information about SEND and the EHCP process can vary between local authorities. Always check your area's local offer (see the Useful Links and Support section for more information).

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. This resource contains links to external websites and/or external apps. Please be aware that the inclusion of any link in this resource should not be taken as an endorsement of any kind by Twinkl of the linked website and/or app, or any association with its operators. You should also be aware that we have no control over the availability of the linked pages and/or apps. If the link is not working, please let us know by contacting TwinklCares and we will try to fix it although we can assume no responsibility if this is the case. We are not responsible for the content of external sites and/or external apps.

Education, Health and Care Plan

What is it?

An Education, Health and Care Plan or EHCP is a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). An EHCP is written and provided by a local authority (LA) in order to give children and young people the help and support they need in order to make progress academically, socially and emotionally.



When is an EHCP required?

An EHCP is required when a child's needs cannot be met by the usual support that is available to them in their school or setting. It should provide support until the age of 25 - not only while they are in education.

Who writes an EHCP?

An EHCP should include the views of the child or young person, their parents/ carers, any professionals involved, the class teacher and the **SENDCo** of the school.

As a parent, you will be asked to complete your views and feelings about your child's academic, social and emotional development. It is important to be open and honest so that the best possible support can be arranged. Your child's school or setting will be asked to complete a report about your child's needs, support and progress, which will then be submitted to the local authority.



Dissecting an EHCP

What is included?

An EHCP includes 12 sections of key information, including:

A

The views, interests and aspirations of your child

This section includes general information about your child, including their interests, likes and dislikes.

B

Your child's SEN or disability

Your child's needs will be recorded in this section in detail, including any diagnosis and difficulties they may have in educational areas.

C

Any health needs related to their SEN or disability

Health needs (**identified from the EHC Needs Assessment**) that relate to your child's SEND will be specified in this section.

D

Any social care needs related to their SEN or disability

These will also have been **identified in the EHC Needs Assessment**. The local authority might also include any social care needs that are not related to their SEND. If needed, and with yours and your child's consent, any Child Protection Plans can be included in this section.

Dissecting an EHCP

E

Planned outcomes for your child

This is about what your child wants to develop and what needs to be in place to help them achieve these outcomes. The outcomes will have timescales (which will vary depending on the outcome and the child) and will be measured and assessed during **EHCP reviews**.

They will cover the following areas:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs

F

Provision for the needs mentioned in Section B

This section details what will be provided to cater to each need specified in Section B. It will specify what will be provided, who will provide it and how it will be delivered. This could include:

- any education or training that is delivered as part of health or social care
- facilities and equipment
- staffing arrangements
- curriculum changes
- residential accommodation



Dissecting an EHCP

G

Any health provision

This section details any health provision needed to support the outcomes in Section E. It will specify what will be provided, who will provide it and how it will be delivered. This could include:

- medical treatments or medications
- **occupational therapy**
- **physiotherapy**
- specialist equipment (e.g. wheelchairs)

H1

Any social care provision that must be made for your child

This section will detail the type of support and who will provide the support. It could include:

- practical assistance at home (e.g. support with personal care or eating)
- support to access leisure and education facilities at home and in the community (e.g. after-school clubs or play schemes)
- travel assistance
- adaptations to the home or **OT** equipment
- help with the costs of holidays, meals and/or telephones
- non-residential short breaks



Dissecting an EHCP

H2

Any other social care provision related to your child's SEN or disability.

This is any social care provision that does not fall within Section H1. This can include:

- short-term school holiday support
- support whilst a parent is unwell
- support after a child has an operation

It may be provision identified by **Early Help** and Children in Need assessments or safeguarding assessments.

I

The name/type of school or setting

This section contains the name and type of education provider your child will attend. You will see this on the final EHCP - not the draft.

J

Details of any personal budget

You may be able to get a personal budget for your child, which allows you to have a say in how the money is spent to support your child. You can use the personal budget in three ways:

- You can have direct payments made into your account, so you can buy and manage services yourself.
- You can make an arrangement with your local authority or school where they hold the money for you but you still decide how to spend it (sometimes called 'notional arrangements').
- It might be that you choose someone else to manage the money for you (called a 'third-party arrangement').

K

Advice and information from the EHC Needs Assessment

This section contains a list of advice given, based on information gathered from the EHC Needs Assessment.

Dissecting an EHCP

If your child is in or beyond year 9, their EHCP must set out the provision to support them in preparing for adulthood and independent living.



An EHC plan does not guarantee extra funding. It is also important to note that different local authorities may have different ways of banding or allocating funding/resources.



The Process

What happens when?

Starting the process



For the process of getting an EHCP to begin, an EHC Needs Assessment needs to take place.

- You can ask your local authority to carry out an EHC Needs Assessment if you think your child needs an EHCP.
- The SENDCo at your child's school can request an EHC Needs Assessment if they (or you) feel it is necessary.
- If a young person is aged 16 to 25, they can request an assessment themselves.
- A request might also be made by anyone else who thinks an assessment might be needed, such as your child's teacher, doctor, a member of your family, a friend or another health professional.
- An EHC Needs Assessment does not guarantee an EHC Plan.
- EHC Needs Assessments are requested via a standard process - an Education, Health and Care Assessment Request (EHCAR).

Weeks 1 - 6

The application is received by your local authority for an **EHC Needs Assessment**. A meeting is held with you (the family) and your child to explain the process and gather any other relevant information.

All the information gathered will be submitted and a decision will be made by the six-week deadline. If an EHCP is not needed, you will be provided with reasons why and offered the opportunity to talk about it.

Throughout the application process, you might like to use our **Meeting Notes Template** to keep track of what has been discussed in the various meetings you will be part of.

The Process

6-week deadline for decision

This deadline is for your local authority to make a decision about whether or not your child needs an EHCP.

Weeks 6 - 12

During this time, information will be gathered from:

- you (the parent or carer)
- your child
- your child's educational setting
- an **educational psychologist**
- a community or consultant **paediatrician**
- a **social worker**
- any other professionals that work with your child

The EHC Needs Assessment will require significant evidence from a range of agencies and professionals.

A **draft EHCP** will be drawn up based on agreed outcomes and will be shared with anyone who has provided information. You have the right to appeal.

12-week deadline for draft

This deadline is for a draft EHCP to be written for your child.

The Process

Weeks 12 - 16

During these weeks, a draft EHCP will be submitted for approval to issue as a proposed EHCP. Discussions will be held around schools and funding.

The proposed EHCP is written and formally issued. You and your child have 15 days to consider this plan and state your preference of school or setting. If the plan is not approved, the draft plan is issued as a SEND Support Plan to your child's school. You still have the right to appeal.

The local authority must agree with you and your child's choice of school or setting, unless:

- the school or college is unsuitable for your child's age, ability, skills and SEND
- your child's needs cannot be met in a way which will not affect the education of other children already in the setting
- placing your child in the setting will be an inefficient use of the local authority's resources

16-week deadline for response

You and your child formally agree to the proposed EHCP and request the setting to be named in the final EHCP.

If you do not agree to the proposed EHCP, there will be a meeting offered to discuss amendments, your preference of setting and a personal budget.

20-week deadline to issue EHCP

The local authority agrees to the requests and the final EHCP is issued. This plan will name the setting your child will attend and will be reviewed once a year in an annual **EHCP review** meeting.

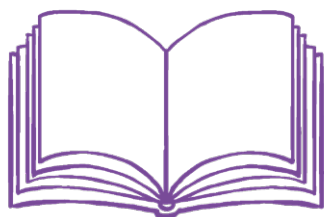
The Process

Reasons the 20-week deadline may be extended

There are several reasons why the 20-week deadline may be extended:

- Appointments with people the local authority requested information from might have been missed by you or your child.
- If your child is absent from the area for a period of at least four weeks, this could result in an extended deadline.
- It may be that exceptional personal circumstances affect you or your child.
- The deadline could be extended if the educational setting is closed for at least four weeks. This may delay the submission of information from the setting.

If you notice that this deadline has been missed, contact your school **SENDCo** or local authority.

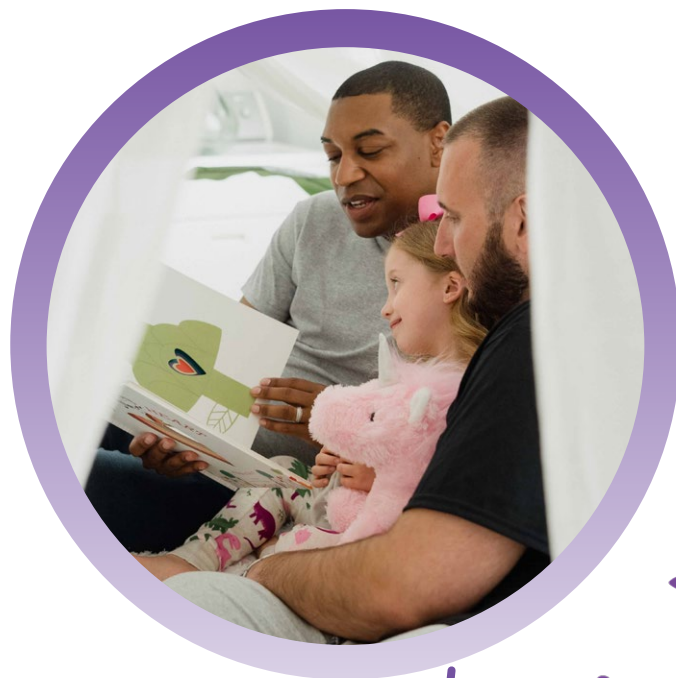


EHC Needs Assessment

What happens?

Once your local authority has received your request for an EHC Needs Assessment, they have a legal duty to carry out the assessment process. They will gather information about your child's educational, health and care needs, the provision required to meet those needs and the outcomes expected to be achieved by your child.

The process should focus on your child as an individual and allow both you and your child to express your views, wishes and feelings. The assessment should also highlight your child's strengths and victories, as well as finding out what outcomes they would like to achieve in the future. All support will be tailored to support your child, with the aim of minimising the demand on you and your child's family.



Who will my local authority speak to?

Your local authority must seek advice from a range of places. This includes:

- you (the parents/carers) and your child
- someone at your child's educational setting (e.g. their teacher, SENDCo or headteacher)
- medical advice and information from a health care professional
- psychological advice and information from an **educational psychologist**
- advice and information in relation to **social care**
- advice and information from any other person thought to be appropriate

If your child is in year 9 or beyond, they must also seek advice about how to assist your child in preparation for adulthood and independent living.

You or your child can ask your local authority to seek advice from anyone within education, health or social care that will be useful and relevant to your child's case. For instance, you might ask your local authority to seek advice from a **speech and language therapist**, an **occupational therapist**, a **physiotherapist** or someone who works in **Children and Young People's Mental Health Services**.



EHC Needs Assessment

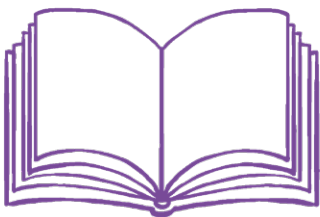
What might I be asked during the assessment?

For the assessment, your local authority will meet with you (the family) and your child to explain the process and gather any other relevant information. For example, they might ask you for:

- any reports from your child's school, nursery or childminder
- any doctors' assessments of your child
- a letter from you about your child's needs

Any meetings must take into account you and your child's views, wishes and feelings and should also aim to minimise any disruption for your child and your family.

You will be provided with information, advice and support services to guide you through the decision-making process. As far as possible, children under the age of 16 should be included in the decision-making process.



EHC Needs Assessment

How long does the assessment take?

Anyone supplying information towards the assessment has six weeks to submit it to your local authority. At the end of the six weeks when all the information has been gathered, two things can happen:

1A

The local authority decides an EHCP is not needed.

Your local authority might decide that, based on the advice gathered during the EHC Needs Assessment, your child does not need an EHCP. If this is the case, they must:

- inform you and your child within a maximum of 16 weeks from the request for the EHC Needs Assessment
- inform your child's school or education provider and health service
- provide reasons for their decision
- inform you of your **right to appeal** the decision, the time limit for appealing and the availability of information, advice and support services

1B

The local authority decides to draw up an EHCP.

If your local authority decides an EHCP is needed, they must:

- inform you and your child of their decision and give reasons
- make sure a plan is prepared
- give you and your child 15 days to look at a draft plan, provide your views and have the chance to ask for a particular school or education provider to be named on the plan
- issue a final plan within 20 weeks of the request for an EHC Needs Assessment

Guidance for EHCP Review Meetings

Note: These meetings may be called annual review meetings or EHCP review meetings; for the purposes of this resource we have called it an EHCP meeting.

What happens in the first EHCP review meeting?

In the first EHCP meeting, the SENDCo will make sure that you and your child, your child's teacher and any outside agencies have all had the opportunity to comment on all how they would like to proceed. This could include setting some targets and discussing what will be put in place to help your child meet them.

Following this initial meeting, you should expect your child's EHCP to be reviewed annually and you should receive regular feedback on their progress.

What happens before an EHCP review?

Prior to an EHCP review, you will be asked by the **SENDCo** to complete a report about your child's support and progress over the year. After completing the form, the SENDCo will collate all the information and invite you into school for a meeting. This will be organised at a mutually convenient time for all those involved.

What happens during an EHCP review?

During the annual EHCP review, your child's progress will be checked against their agreed outcomes. It is likely to be the SENDCo who will chair the meeting and they will invite everyone supporting your child.

The meeting will usually end with everyone in agreement about the targets and a timescale put into place for review. Depending on the specific targets, these may be reviewed termly to check that any support that has been put in place is appropriate.



Guidance for EHCP Review Meetings

Will my child be involved with EHCP reviews?

Your child will be invited and encouraged to give their views in a child-friendly way, depending on their age and stage. Some children may wish to attend their review in person, whereas for other children, it may not be appropriate.

Your child may be asked to talk about how they would like to be supported or what strategies the education setting can put into place to help them progress with their learning. This could include a range of things depending on the specific needs, for example:

- additional adult support during lessons
- specific therapies, such as **speech and language** or **occupational therapy**
- adjustments to the classroom environment, such as a different chair or desk
- the use of technology to aid communication



What questions might I be asked?

This will largely depend on the age of your child and the nature of their needs. The overall aim of the meeting is to make sure you give as much information as possible about how you feel your child can be supported while at their education setting. Be prepared to talk about things that work well at home as well as things that don't.



Guidance for EHCP Review Meetings

What questions should I ask?

Here are some ideas for questions you might want to ask during your meeting:

- How will the school be able to support my child?
- Will my child have a member of support staff assigned to them?
- If so, for how much time will that member of staff be working with them?
- Are you aware of any support available for parents in the local area?
- How will the school monitor and review my child's progress and how will it keep me informed?
- What can I do if I feel the support isn't working for my child?



EHCs and 'Phase Transfer'

What Is a 'phase transfer'?

'Phase transfer', sometimes called 'transition', is the term used in education to describe when children move from one phase of education to another. In the SEN and Disability Regulations (2014) this is defined as moving from:

- early years education to school
- infant school to junior school
- primary school to middle school
- primary school to secondary school
- middle school to secondary school
- secondary school to a post-16 institution

What will happen to my child's EHC during a phase transfer?

In the SEN and Disability Regulations it states that if your child is within 12 months of a phase transfer, the local authority must review and amend, where necessary, their EHC plan before:

A

31st March in the calendar year of the child or young person's transfer from secondary school to a post-16 institution

B

15th February in the calendar year of the child's transfer in any other case

The EHC plan should also name or type of school, post-16 or other institution which your child will attend following that transfer.

The SEN and Disability Regulations also say that if your child is planning to move from one post-16 institution to another post-16 institution at any other time, the local authority must:

- review and amend, where necessary, the young person's EHC plan at least five months before that transfer takes place
- ensure that the EHC plan names the post-16 institution that the young person will attend following the transfer

EHCPs and 'Phase Transfer'

What if the EHCP needs amending?

Following the review, the LA may consider amending your child's EHC plan. If this happens, the LA must:

- Send you a copy of the EHC plan and information about the proposed amendments and any supporting evidence
- Tell you about your right to request that a particular school or other institution is named in the plan
- Give you at least 15 days from the day the draft plan was served to:
 - request that a particular school or other institution be named in the plan
 - request a meeting with an officer of the local authority if you would rather speak to someone about the EHC plan (you can also give your opinions in writing)

If your child has an EHC plan, they should:

- not go through the usual school admissions process
- only request your preferred school during the notice period of proposed amendments (mentioned above)
- not be disadvantaged by refusing to go through the normal admissions process - they are not required to do so

Additionally, if your choice of school or institution is not approved by the LA and named in the EHC plan, you have the right to appeal.



Useful Links and Support

SENDIASS is an impartial and confidential service offering advice for parents and carers. Each area has its own SENDIASS; you can find your local service by clicking [here](#).

The **SEND local offer** provides useful information for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families. It is there to help families, individuals, groups and organisations find information. Each local authority provides its own local offer - search online to find the information relevant to you.

You might like to look at the government information, documentation and guidance about children with SEND. Click [here](#) to see the selection. Also, you can take a look at their **overview** of how to begin the application process.

Remember, so many parents will have been through this process, or may be going through it at the same time as you. Reach out to other parents and utilise the support available to you. Here are some more useful links:

Independent Provider of Special Education Advice www.ipsea.org.uk

National Children's Bureau www.iasnetwork.org.uk

Council for Disabled Children www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

NSPCC - supporting children with SEND

Family Action - SEND information for parents and carers

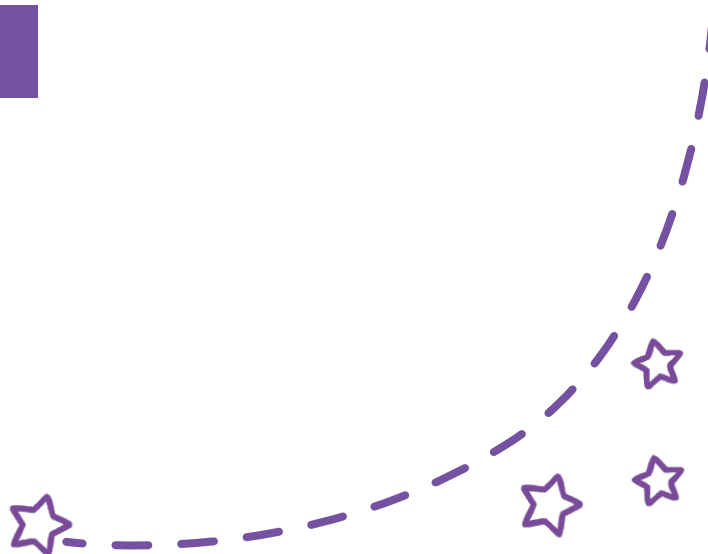
Twinkl Parents SEND Facebook group

Legislation and Related Government Guidance

SEN Regulation 2014

SEN Code of Practice

SEND Guide for Parents and Carers



EHCP Vocabulary

Here are a few important definitions of words used throughout this guide. Take a look at our [SEND Glossary for Parents](#) for more key terms that may be used during the EHCP process.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment

An EHC Needs Assessment (sometimes called an EHC assessment) is the first step to getting an EHCP. It is an assessment of a child or young person's education, health and care needs, relating to their SEND. The local authority carries out this assessment, collecting information about the child's needs and the provision required to meet those needs. This must be requested via an EHCAR.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). An EHCP is written and provided by a local authority (LA) in order to give children and young people the help and support they need in order to make progress academically, socially and emotionally.

An Education, Health and Care Assessment Request (EHCAR)

An Education, Health and Care Assessment Request is used to request an EHC Needs Assessment from the Local Authority (LA).

local authority (LA)

Your local authority is responsible for a range of services, such as social care and schools, in your local area. You can ask your local authority to carry out an assessment if you think your child needs an EHCP. They will carry out an assessment and decide if your child needs an EHCP. It will be your local authority who are responsible for securing the provision outlined in your child's EHCP.

EHCP Vocabulary

right to appeal

During the EHCP process, you have the right to apply for a decision to be reversed at certain points. You can appeal if you do not agree with the EHCP your local authority has made, or if they:

- refuse to carry out an EHC Needs Assessment or reassessment
- refuse to create an EHCP after carrying out an assessment or reassessment
- refuse to change the sections of an existing EHCP which are about education (sections B, F and I)
- decide your child does not need an EHCP any more

