An ‘at-a-glance’ guide to the EHC Needs Assessment Process

Step 1 (week 0 – 6)
Is an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessment needed?
Making this decision is the first step in the process. The child/young person will already be supported by agencies and have a relevant combined (or equivalent) support plan in place

- The school/educational setting, parents or professionals working with the child/young person make a request for an EHC assessment to the local Area SEN Team.
- An SEN Officer will contact the family to ensure they understand what will happen next. The SEN Officer will talk to the family about their views and aspirations based upon information provided in the request form. Most families will have submitted information about their views at the point of request through key working activities. However, if the family or SEN Officer feels that further support is required to gather this information, the SEN Officer may suggest the involvement of independent support at this point.
- The information received from the family, school/educational setting and other professionals (including information relating to preparation for adulthood post 14) is then shared with a local multi-agency group who use this information to look at whether an EHC assessment should be carried out. The decision as to whether an assessment is agreed lies with the local authority.
- If the decision is yes, the multi-agency group explores all of the information from parents and professionals to decide what further information or assessments are required to inform the plan. For young people post 14 further advice or information gathered from professionals should include a focus upon what is required to prepare the young person for adulthood. An independent support worker will be suggested if it is felt that further support is required to assist the family through the process and ensure that their views are represented.

What happens in Step 1 for the child/young person and the family?

- As part of key working activity, parents should have had discussions with their child/young person’s school/setting and the professionals working with the child/young person before making a request for an EHC assessment.
- Once a request has been received, the SEN Officer will contact the family to discuss their aspirations, explain what will happen and gain more information if needed. They will support the family to ensure that their voice is clear in the information that will be used at the decision making panel. The SEN Officer will ensure that the family are happy with the information that will be shared.
- The SEN Officer contacts the family to discuss the decision and how it was reached. If an assessment is not agreed, the family will be offered a way forward meeting to consider the support that has been suggested or arranged.
- If the family are unhappy with the decision not to assess they have the right to appeal to a tribunal. The SEN Officer will explain how to do this.

What happens in Step 1 for schools/settings and professionals?

- Before a request for an EHC assessment is made, children/young people will normally have in place support plans that show how agencies have worked together to identify and support the child/young person’s needs. For young people post 14 this should include preparation for adulthood.
- Professionals have a duty to ensure that all relevant information is included in a request for assessment. Where the request is made directly by a parent, professionals should be aware but key services will also be alerted by the SEN Officer. Professionals have a duty to ensure that SEN Officer is provided with information that may help to make the decision.
- Designated professionals (Health, Social Care & Education) will be notified whether an EHC assessment has been agreed.
- If assessment is not appropriate the professional representation at the decision making panel will inform appropriate staff of any follow up or further support required.

1 An SEN Officer ensures the smooth running of the EHC assessment and planning process
2 A multi-agency group is a decision making group made up of professionals from education, health and social care
3 An independent support can help the family with expressing their views and aspirations
What happens in Step 2 for the child/young person and the family?

- The SEN Officer speaks with the family to confirm or add to their views. This can be via a face to face meeting if preferred.
- The views of the family will be populated directly on to the plan and will include information about aspirations. For young people post 14, Connexions Services must provide information for the meeting based upon impartial information advice and guidance already provided about preparation for adulthood/careers.
- The SEN Officer will give the family information about personal budgets and talk briefly about how they could be used.
- The SEN Officer and the school/setting will meet the family to agree the content of the EHC plan. The SEN Officer will invite professionals who have contributed to the assessment to the meeting if this is requested by the family. The family and professionals involved should agree how the child/young person will be involved in the meeting.

What happens in Step 2 for schools/settings and professionals?

- Professionals gather further information or carry out assessment to clarify what the needs/outcomes are in their area of expertise and what the best strategies would be to meet needs. Professionals will be mindful of the outcomes sought by parents in writing their contribution. For young people post 14 professionals should also reflect what may be required to prepare the young person for adulthood.
- Professionals and school/education setting should respond to the requests to attend the EHC Planning Meeting. If unable to attend they should provide prompt clarification of any issues to help them inform the draft plan.
- The SEN Officer will use information from the family and other professionals to pre-populate the plan.
**Step 3 (week 12 – 16)**
Producing the EHC Plan or providing feedback following the EHC Needs Assessment

- Most EHC assessments will result in an EHC Plan.

- If an EHCP is not required, all of the information that has been gathered and used at the EHC planning meeting will be provided in the form of written feedback following an EHC Needs Assessment. The SEN Officer will offer a further meeting with the family to explain how the actions and outcomes set out in the feedback will be delivered.

- Where an EHCP is agreed, parents will be sent a copy of the EHC Plan in draft form and will be asked by the SEN Officer to name the school, college or other educational setting they would prefer.

- The SEN Officer will explain to parents/young people the process for considering their choice of educational setting and make arrangements to consult with settings about placement.

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**What happens in Step 3 for the child/young person and the family?**

- If a plan is agreed, the SEN Officer will send a copy of the EHC plan in draft form to the family. The family can make any final comment on the plan and say what educational setting they would like. The family have 15 days to do this.

- If an EHC plan has been agreed the family will be asked by the SEN Officer to confirm that they would like a personal budget to be drawn up.

- If an EHC plan has not been agreed, written feedback will be sent to the family. The SEN Officer will offer to arrange a meeting with the family to explain why the decision not to produce an EHC plan has been made. This meeting will also agree how the outcomes identified in feedback will be achieved. The family can ask for other professionals to attend this meeting to assist with this discussion. The SEN Officer will explain the parents’ right of appeal against the decision and where they can go for more advice.

**What happens in Step 3 for schools/settings and professionals?**

- If an EHC plan is not needed, professionals may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss how everyone involved will work together to achieve the outcomes identified for the child/young person.

- The professionals will be responsible for ensuring that the actions/support outlined in the coordinated plan is taken forward.

- If an EHC plan is not produced, the SEN Officer will send the written feedback to the professionals who have contributed to the assessment.
### Step 4 (week 16 – 20)
**Finalising the EHC Plan**

- The SEN Officer will work with the family to agree the final EHC plan.
- A final EHC plan will be issued.
- The EHC plan must be reviewed annually but parts of the plan can be reviewed more frequently if required.

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<tr>
<th>What happens in Step 4 for the child/young person and the family?</th>
<th>What happens in Step 4 for schools/settings and professionals?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Child/young person and parents will receive a copy of the final EHC plan.</td>
<td>• The final EHC/written feedback will be sent to the governing body, proprietor or principle of any school, college or education provision named in the plan.</td>
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<td>• At this stage, if the young person or parent remains concerned about provision they may:</td>
<td>• A copy of the plan will be sent to all of the professional who have contributed to the plan so that they are clear about what their service has agreed to deliver.</td>
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<td>- Talk to an independent supporter, coordinator or other agencies (e.g. SENDIASS)</td>
<td>• A copy of the EHC/written feedback will also be sent to social care providers (if involved) and the contact identified by the Clinical Commissioning Group.</td>
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<td>- Ask their education setting for a meeting to help implement the plan. They can ask also ask an independent supporter to attend this meeting.</td>
<td>• The Local Authority must arrange the special education provision specified in the plan.</td>
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<td>- They can request that the education setting invite the professionals who have contributed to the assessment to the planning meeting.</td>
<td>• The social care provision must be provided in line with responsibilities set out in the Children Act 1989 or for young people over 18, as set out in the Care Bill.</td>
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<td>- Formally raise their concerns through agency complaints processes.</td>
<td>• The Clinical Commissioning Group must ensure that the specified health provision is made.</td>
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<td>- Seek mediation/independent advice</td>
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<td>- Take up their right to appeal to tribunal.</td>
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