

## GUIDE TO THE EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLAN

The whole assessment and planning process from the time the assessment is requested until the final education, health and care (EHC) plan is issued lasts up to **20 weeks**.

### Pre request and referral

The education setting, parent(s) or an educational, health or care professional working with the child or young person can make a request for an EHC needs assessment to the Local Authority (LA)

- A request form is completed, and all referral information is collated and submitted to the LA for consideration. A copy of the request form and guidance for an EHC needs assessment can be found on: [Information for SEND professionals - Hillingdon Council](#) referring through STRONGER FAMILIES HUB: <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/stronger-families>.

- The date the LA receives the completed request for an EHC needs assessment triggers the start of the 20 week assessment process.
- The request will be considered by the LA to identify whether an assessment leading to an EHC plan is necessary or if an early years, school or college based support plan remains appropriate.
- Parent(s) will have been involved in discussions with their child's education setting. Normally, they will have been involved in the development of the early years, school or college-based support plan, discussions about the request for an EHC needs assessment and contributed to the process by completing the form 'All About Me' Section.

Professionals need to be sure that the request is in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and Harrow's eligibility guidance for an EHC needs assessment.

## Weeks 1-6

### Is an EHC needs assessment necessary?

Making this decision is the first step in the process.

- Within 4 weeks of receiving the request the Local Authority officer will send a letter to the parent(s) and or YP and the referrer to explain the process, provide timescales and introduce SEND Officer who will be the key point of contact.
- The SEND officer will liaise with the setting if appropriate to identify any additional reports or assessments that may be required by the multi-agency panel when making a decision on whether an EHC needs assessment is necessary.
- The request is discussed at the multi-agency panel. The parent(s) and/or YP are advised of the outcome of the panel decision on whether or not an EHC needs assessment is necessary.
- If an EHC needs assessment is appropriate, the parent(s) and/or YP will be offered a '*Way Forward Meeting*' and advised by the SEND officer on next steps.
- If the LA decides not to proceed with an EHC needs assessment the reasons will be set out clearly in a letter to the parent(s) and/or YP.

## Weeks 6-12

### The planning stage

- The SEND officer will write to the parent(s) and or YP to confirm that an EHC needs assessment is going ahead and at the same time write to professionals to inform them of the assessment and ask them to gather further information or carry out an assessment if required or agreed.
- Professionals and providers should respond to requests to support the assessment process. If advice or assessments are required they should clarify what the CYP's needs/outcomes are in their area of expertise and what the best strategies would be to meet needs.
- Professionals should make the initial contact with the parent(s) and or YP if they wish to see the CYP for an assessment

## Weeks 12-16

## **Producing the EHC plan**

- The SEND officer uses all collated information that the parent(s) and or CYP and professionals have provided to draft an initial EHC plan.
- Once drafted the SEND officer will share this plan with the parent(s) and or YP and offer coproduction meeting to discuss and agree content and any outstanding issues that the panel will need to decide upon.
- Following the panel the parent(s) and or YP are advised of the outcome of the panel decision on whether or not an EHC plan is appropriate.
- If it is agreed an EHC plan is appropriate the parent(s) and or YP and all involved professionals will be advised.
- The resources identified as needed to deliver the plan will be agreed and allocated.
- Personal budgets are identified where appropriate.
- A copy of the draft EHC plan is sent to parent(s) and or YP for them to make any final comment on the EHC plan and to express a preference for an education provider. The parent(s) and/or YP have 15 days to do this.
- If the outcome of the EHC needs assessment is that an EHC plan is not appropriate, the reasons will be set out clearly in a letter to the parent and referrer.

The SEND officer will also explain the parents/young person's right of appeal against this decision and where they can go for more advice.

## **Weeks 16-20**

### **Finalising the EHC stage**

- The SEND officer will work with the parent(s) and/or YP to finalise the plan and identify the educational placement.
- Educational settings will be consulted on whether they can meet needs as specified in the EHC plan.
- Personal budgets are identified where appropriate.
- The final plan will be issued with a review date. An identified SEND officer will continue to monitor the plan through the annual review process.
- The LA will arrange that the SEN provision as identified in the plan is put into place.
- The Integrated Care Services must ensure that specified health provision is made.

### **Once the plan has been finalised**

At this stage, if the young person or parent(s) remains concerned about provision, as set out in the EHC plan they may talk to their SEND officer or other agencies (e.g. Parent Carer Forum/ SENDIASS/ other voluntary agencies).

Parent(s) and/or YP can formally raise their concerns and may:

- Raise their concerns through a complaints process
- Seek mediation/independent advice and/ or

Take up their right to appeal to tribunal.