

Understanding SEND for Parents

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i If NO, information, advice and guidance provided



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1 Education Health and Care Plans (EHC Plan)

1. What is an EHC Plan?

An Education Health and Care Plan is a legal document, which sets out a description of a child or young person's needs (what he or she can and cannot do) and what support or services will be provided by education, health and/or social care to meet those needs.

A really good EHC Plan will link aspirations (hopes and ambitions) to needs, provision and outcomes

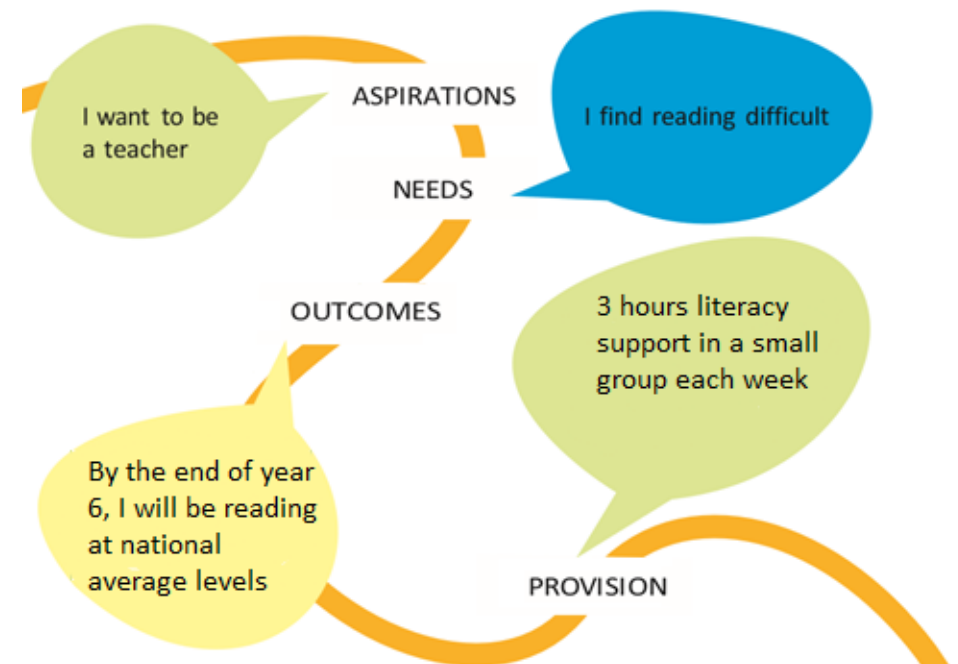
2. When is an EHC Plan needed?

- Most children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) will have their needs met from within an education setting's own resources.
- A small number of pupils will need additional support beyond what the setting would normally be expected to provide through SEN Support, in which case they may be eligible for an EHC Plan.
- Local authorities **MUST** issue a plan for a child or young person whose needs cannot be met from the support and services normally available to mainstream schools and settings.

3. How do you get an EHC Plan?

- To decide whether an EHC Plan is necessary, the children and young people will need to undergo an **EHC NEEDS ASSESSMENT**. This is often not the first step in the process for helping to meet the needs of the child or young person.

- Before a request for an EHC needs assessment is made, the child or young person will often have in place a support plan that shows how agencies have worked together to identify and support the pupils needs and identifies how the pupil has been supported using resources which are normally available in the setting.
- An EHC needs assessment will not always lead to an EHC plan. The information gathered during an EHC needs assessment may indicate ways in which the school, college or other provider can meet the child or young person's needs without an EHC plan.



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Education, Health & Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA)

What is an EHC Needs Assessment?

An EHC needs assessment:

- Is an assessment of the education, health care and social care needs of the child or young person.
- Can only be undertaken if the child or young person has or may have special educational needs - it does not apply where there are only health and/or care needs, no matter how severe.
- Is not a process for referring a child or young person to a specialist service to be assessed where the child or young person is not already known to the service.

Who can request an EHCNA?

- SENCo/Teacher: If you think your child or young person may have special educational needs, you should speak to their teacher, Head Teacher, or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) at their school, college or education setting first.
- Parent/Carer: A parent or carer can also ask for an assessment if they think their child or young person is not making progress even with support.
- 16-25 Young Person: A young person can request an assessment for themselves if they are aged 16 to 25.
- Anyone with contact to the child or young person such as a health professional.

Not in Education Yet? If you would like more information about this process and your baby or young child is yet to attend a setting or unable to attend due to special needs, you can talk to other professionals involved such as your Health Visitor or GP.

How will I be involved?

- SENAR aim to ensure that you as a parent, parent carer, child or young person are involved in the assessment process as far as possible and that a person-centred approach is used throughout the assessment period.
- You will be allocated a named Case Officer who will work with you during the assessment period. Your case officer will keep you informed of progress and will let you know if the EHC needs assessment process is delayed for any reason.
- The process will start with your case officer asking you to share information about yourself if you are a young person aged over 16 or about your child and family if you are the parent of a child with SEN. They will ask you who is involved in supporting you/your child and will also ask about you/your child's hopes and aspirations for the future and what outcomes you would like to achieve.
- You can contact your case officer if you would like to discuss any aspect of the process or if you would like an update on progress. Your case officer will share the outcome of the assessment with you once a decision has been reached. There will be a meeting either to discuss next steps if it is decided that an EHCP is not necessary or to discuss the draft plan if an EHCP is to be issued.
- At the end of the process, you will be asked for your feedback about your experience of the assessment.

What happens during an EHCNA?

Weeks 1 to 6:

- The 20-week timescales start at the point that the request is received by SENAR. The information included within the request will be considered by a panel of practitioners from across education, health and care and a decision made about whether it is necessary to undertake an EHC needs assessment. The LA will inform you of the outcome of the panel by week 6. This

decision will be given in writing and may be followed up by a telephone call.

- If an assessment is agreed, you will be allocated a Case Officer who will contact you to discuss the assessment, this could be a phone call or be face to face. Your Case Officer will talk to you about what to expect from the process, will ask some questions that help explore your child or young person's or your needs and difficulties, and will discuss with you which agencies are currently involved with you/your child or young person and the family as they will be asked to contribute to the assessment.
- If you/ your child or young person has complex health needs and is seen by a specialist, it is important that you share these details at this meeting. Your Case Officer will review the information that you and the education setting have already provided to ensure that we contact the right services. Your Case Officer will also discuss your / your child or young person's longer-term aspirations and what outcomes will be important for them to achieve as it is crucial that both your and your child's voice is clearly evident.
- If an assessment is not agreed SENAR will send you formal confirmation of this via a letter which will also detail the reasons for not undertaking the statutory assessment. SENAR may also offer a meeting to discuss the decision and next steps. The letter will also provide you with information about how you can appeal this decision. You can find further information about this on the Birmingham SEND Local Offer website ([Local Offer Birmingham | SEND Advice and Information](#))

Weeks 6 to 14:

- SENAR will seek advice from all agencies identified as being involved with you / your child or young person. This will include medical advice from health care professionals; educational advice; psychological advice from an educational psychologist (EP); advice and information in relation to social care and Early Help services; advice and information from any other agency that SENAR thinks is appropriate and any agency that you as a young person or as the

parent/carers of a child reasonably request that the LA seek advice from.

- These agencies have up to 6 weeks to submit their advice to SENAR.
- SENAR may receive privately commissioned reports during the assessment. SENAR will consider all evidence provided to it during the assessment. However, it should not be assumed that because a professional has recommended certain provision, that SENAR must accept that. It is for SENAR to determine the weight it gives to the professional evidence before it, considering various factors such as:
 - The qualifications, experience, and professional regulation of the report author.
 - The method of assessment, e.g., has the professional seen the child/young person in their educational setting, have they triangulated their findings through discussions with other professionals.
 - The correlation between the assessed needs and the recommended provision and whether the recommended provision is reasonably required to meet the assessed needs.
 - Whether the recommendations are within the authors' area of expertise.

Weeks 14 to 16:

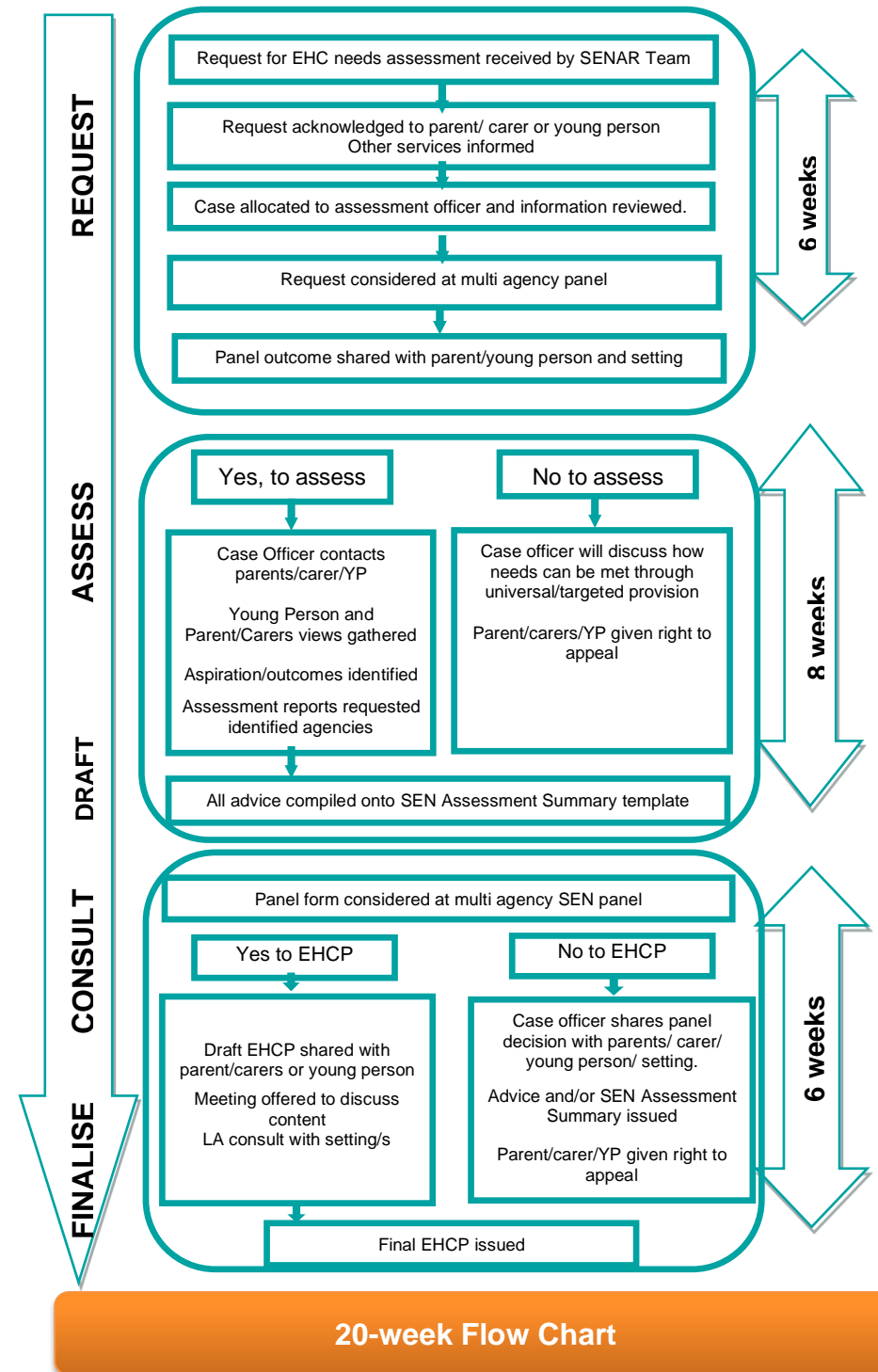
- SENAR will consider all the advice received as part of the assessment and will make a decision about whether an EHCP is required. This decision is made via a multi-agency meeting with representation across education, health, and care partners. Your Case Officer will formally write to you to inform you of the decision by Week 16 or will contact you to notify you of any delay.
- If it is decided that it is not necessary to prepare an EHCP, your Case Officer will offer to speak with you to explain the decision and discuss next steps. You will be provided with a summary of the assessment and the advice that contributed to the assessment.
- You will receive formal confirmation of this decision in a letter which will provide you with information about how can appeal this decision. You can find further information about this on the Local Offer website.

Weeks 16 to 19:

- Where SENAR have decided an EHC plan is required the draft EHCP will be issued to you. The Case Officer will contact you to explain the content of the EHCP as well as your preference regarding the education setting to be named in Section I of the final EHCP.
- You can request any changes based on the assessment advice, that you would like to be made to the EHCP before the final plan is issued. You have 15 days to respond.
- SENAR will consult with your preferred education setting and may also consult with other settings that may be suitable. The education settings should respond within 15 days to consider the request for placement and determine whether they are able to put in place the provision that has been identified in Section F of the EHC plan.
- If a specialist setting is the most suitable setting and is your preference, the Case Officer will refer the case to a placement and funding panel for a final decision.
- Not all independent education settings are approved by DfE (approved educations are listed on the Section 41 here: [Independent special schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)). If your preference is for one of these settings SENAR will consult with them but does not have the same ability to name them if they do think they are a suitable education setting for you / your child or young person.

Weeks 19 to 20:

- The final EHCP will be issued naming a suitable educational placement in Section I of the EHC plan.
- If you do not agree with the education setting that has been named in the EHCP, the accompanying letter will provide you with information about how can appeal this decision.



More About Outcomes

- Where a child/young person is identified to have SEN then the school will develop outcomes to be achieved by the child/young person following targeted intervention.
- Where an EHC plan is agreed it will incorporate long term outcomes into the EHC plan (Section E). These outcomes will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time specific (SMART).
- A long-term outcome will usually span a period of 2 -3 years or a specific key stage. Outcomes are reviewed annually at the EHC annual review meeting and progress towards achieving these outcomes is monitored and recorded.
- It is important that, no matter the age of the child/young person, outcomes focus on the special educational needs identified and work towards preparing the child/young person for adulthood.
- An EHC plan will usually have up to 5 long term outcomes however this may vary depending upon the needs of the child/young person.

Feedback

- SENAR wants to work with parents/carers/young people to create a plan that is right for you / your child or young person. Feedback from you is essential in order for us to further develop the service that we provide to you. When we issue the final EHC plan we will ask you to complete a short questionnaire/survey.
- This can be completed online or in its paper format. Your responses will be used to inform and develop future SEND services in Birmingham.

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What Happens Next?

- Your child's EHCP is finalised and shared with the setting named in Section I of the EHCP as well as those agencies that have provided advice during the assessment process.
- Your / Your child or young person's EHCP will be reviewed by the local authority at least every 12 months. These annual review meetings will normally be organised and chaired by staff at your child's school and invites will be sent to all practitioners involved with you /your child or young person. The purpose of the review is to ensure that your /your child or young person's EHCP remains up to date and provides an accurate reflection of your / your child or young person's special educational needs. If there are concerns about the level of provision, or if your/your child or young person's needs have changed significantly, then an early review meeting can be requested, and who needs to attend this can be discussed with your case officer.
- At the annual review meeting you will be able to discuss your / your child or young person's progress towards meeting their outcomes. The meeting will consider whether to maintain, amend or cease the EHCP.
- The EHCP is not amended each year and the most recent Annual Review document should be read alongside the EHCP.
- From Year 9 onwards the Annual Review must also focus on transition to adult life.
- You can find out more about the Annual Review process on the Local Offer. You may also find it helpful to speak to the SENCo, class teacher or form tutor at your / your child or young person's school to find out more about the annual review process, how you and your child will contribute to the review so that your voices are included.

4 Jargon Buster

SENAR	Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review
Assessment Summary	The working document using the EHC Template. The Assessment Summary will become the EHC Plan if SENAR decide to issue, otherwise it will be issued as feedback
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EHCP Coordinator	The individual working within the SEN Team at Achieving for Children who coordinates the creation and maintenance of EHC Plans (sometimes called Case Worker)
EHC Needs Assessment or EHCNA	A statutory process undertaken by the Local Authority (Achieving for Children) to determine what support a child or young person needs, normally resulting in the issue of an EHC Plan
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator - a specialist teacher
Multi-Agency Meeting	Multi-Agency Meetings are a key element of the process of successfully working with children and young people who have been identified as having unmet needs and require support from more than one agency/service to meet these needs.
Assessment Summary Review Meeting	The local authority must send the draft EHC plan (including the appendices containing the advice and information gathered during the EHC needs assessment) to the child's parent or to the young person and give them at least 15 days to give views and make representations on the content. During this period, the local authority must make its officers available for a meeting with the child's parent or the young person on request if they wish to discuss the content of the draft EHC plan.
LA	The Birmingham Local Authority

5 Where can I get further advice, support and information?

Email Address for sending request by email

SENAR@Birmingham.gov.uk

Postal Address for sending a request by Post

Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review (SENAR)
 Directorate of Children, Young People and Families
 PO Box 16289
 Birmingham
 B2 2XN

The Local Offer is a website where you will find help, advice, and information about the services available for a child or young person from birth to 25 years with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND).

<https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/>