9. Parent, Carers Quick Guide to accessing SEND support

This guide is to be further developed in partnership with families. A young person’s guide will also be developed at the same time. We would be interested in knowing if this type of document would be of interest and use to you.

‘My child needs more help in Pre-school. School or College, what do I do?’

- Through this stage of the process a representative from the education setting must support you and your child
- Write down your concerns and those of your child
- Ask what the education setting’s policy is for voicing your concerns
- Arrange to meet with the Class Teacher/Head Teacher/ SENDCo to discuss concerns, include your child when appropriate
- The education setting will undertake an assessment of need
- Keep in contact with the school, they may be asking other experts to be involved, you will be notified of this and will have opportunity to contribute to those meetings
- Meet with the teacher or SENDCo to revise the plan if need be
- Use the Local Offer website for information and guidance
- Attend review meetings

‘If more support is required for my child, what can happen next?’

- A request can be made for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment of your child can be considered – this is the start of a potential maximum 20 weeks process)
- Anyone can make this request, the young person (16 year plus), parent carers or professionals
- Through the following process a member of the SEND team will be your main point of contact to work with
• The SEND Team will contact you and speak with you and your child
• The SEND team gathers information from professionals, including school, Social Care Teams, Health Professionals such as Therapists and Education Psychologist.
• Contact is also made with North Somerset Council’s Special Educational Needs Disability Children’s Team to gather information from them if they are already or have been working with you and your child
• The SEND Team will contact you to inform you the request for an EHC assessment has been either agreed refused – this happens within the first six weeks of the overall process
• The SEND Team will tell you what the options of support are available for you if an EHCP assessment is refused and will suggest who you may speak to next for support
• If the request for and EHCP is agreed, then the following process must take place within the remaining 14 weeks
• If you are not happy with the decision at this stage, you can seek mediation and/or appeal to the First Tier Tribunal

‘It has been agreed that my child would benefit from an EHC assessment, what happens next?’

• The SEND Officer will meet with you and your child to discuss the ways forward and to share what information had so far been collected
• The meeting will help you to identify any further assessments which need to take place from other professionals, including School, Educational Psychologist, Social Care and Health professionals such as Therapists etc
• You may be asked to put together a profile of your child and for them to tell their story too
• This information will help to identify and inform a decision to be made whether an EHC plan is needed
• If not – the SEND Team will produce a Feedback following assessment report which will detail what support our child/young person needs at a school support level. They will also speak with you and will signpost you to other support that is available via the Local Offer  www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localoffer
• If and EHC Plan is needed, you and your child will be invited to meet with the professionals involved to co-produce your child’s EHC plan
• The draft EHC plan will be shared with you, you will have up to 15 days to respond
• Further consultation may take place between you and the SEND Team
• The EHC Plan is issued
• It will then be implemented
• The EHC Plan will be regularly reviewed every year with you, your child and professionals

“What if I don’t agree with any of the decisions made?”

• Request a way forward meeting with the SEND team and school
• Contact an independent advisor. For example, in North Somerset with have an independent Special Educational Needs and Disability Advice Service (SENDIAS) known as Supportive Parents. They have a support team and an information, advice and support line.

0117 989 7725
It is open from 10am through to 2pm on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays during term time, with an answer phone at other times.
Or email: support@supportiveparents.org.uk SENDIAS will work with you through this process and any of the processes discussed.

• Mediation - There are informal arrangements that have been set up to help resolve disagreements that can be accessed by any parent of a child or young person with Special Educational Needs. Disagreement resolution can be requested at any time during the EHC Needs Assessment process from Global Mediation.
They can be contacted on 0208 441 1355, or email info@globalmediation.co.uk. Website: www.globalmediation.co.uk

• SEND Tribunal - Parents or the young person can appeal to the SEND Tribunal about key decisions within the EHC Needs Assessment process. More detailed information may be found in the Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment in North Somerset document which maybe found on the Local Offer website: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localoffer