

Information for Parents/Carers

Requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment

Introduction

If you are concerned about your child and think that your child may have a special educational need or a disability, first talk to your child's

- GP, health visitor or other health professional
- early years professional or educational setting
- school or college

They will discuss your concerns and advise you of the best way forward.

Information, advice and guidance are also available from other organisations and local support groups (details can be found in the Wandsworth Local Offer - Wandsworth FIS | SEN and Disability)

School, college or other educational settings will be able to meet the needs of most children and young people using their Special Educational Needs support systems. However, sometimes more support is required. If this is the case, you or your child's educational setting could make a request to the local authority for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment for your child.

Young people between 16 – 25 years and other professionals may also make a request to the local authority for an assessment.

What is an EHC needs assessment?

An EHC needs assessment is an assessment by all of the people who know and are working with you and your child to look at your child's educational, health and social care needs. If the local authority agrees that your child needs more help than is available in their educational setting, the assessment may lead to your child getting an Education, Health and Care Plan.

What is an Education, Health and Care Plan?

An EHC Plan is a legal document that describes your child's education, health and care needs and the support they must be given. Your child must have special educational needs in order to be eligible for a Plan. A Plan clearly identifies the agreed personal outcomes for a child/young person and the support required in order to achieve those outcomes in education and in preparing for adult life.

Key Principles underpinning the assessment process

- Children, young people and their families are fully involved.
- The views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families are considered throughout.
- The assessment process is simple.
- The process is flexible and responsive to the child/young person's changing needs.
- Information, advice and support are available to families.
- Young people over 16 years have access to clear information, advice and support.

What happens during the assessment process?

Considering the request.

The local authority receives the request for an EHC needs assessment for your child and must contact you in writing within 6 weeks to tell you if they are going to carry this out. If they decide not to, you will be given information about your right to appeal against this decision.

The assessment

When the local authority agrees that an EHC needs assessment is appropriate, they will name a plan coordinator from within the Special Needs Assessment Service who will work with you and the professionals working with your child to complete the assessment.

A lead professional will be in touch with you about a multi – professional EHC Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting. The lead professional will:

- tell you about the purpose of the meeting.
- ensure that you are aware of what to expect.
- explain the option of a personal budget that may be available if an EHC Plan is agreed and
- make sure that your child's views and ideas are represented in the

assessment.

Everyone involved in the Team Around the Child will work together with you to:

- decide and agree on your child's needs.
- consider the desired educational, health and social care outcomes for your child.
- work out the specific support needed to achieve these outcomes.

Information from the other professionals involved will be asked for, if it is not already available. The assessment process will result in the development of a proposed Plan.

Decision

The local authority will write to tell you whether or not they are going to progress from the proposed Plan to a statutory EHC Plan. They will confirm the support that will be given and who will provide it; e.g. by Health or the local authority and if appropriate what element of the support may be provided as a personal budget/direct payment.

If the local authority is not going to make a statutory EHC Plan they must write to you within 16 weeks of the first request to tell you this. They will provide information about your right of appeal.

Draft of the Statutory Plan

Once the local authority has reached their decision, a draft of the statutory Plan will be sent to you as soon as possible. You will have 15 days to put forward any further views about the Plan to the local authority and to confirm which school or college you would like your child to go to.

If you have any questions or want to present your views in person to the local authority you can ask to meet the Education, Health and Care Panel.

The local authority must consult with your preferred educational setting before naming it in the final statutory EHC Plan.

Final Statutory Plan

The final EHC Plan must be sent to you within 20 weeks of the initial request. Once the final EHC plan is issued another Team Around the Child meeting will be set up to plan how best to put the agreed support for your child in place.

A date for a review Team Around the Child meeting will be set at this point. This should be within a maximum of 6 months for early years children and 1 year,

for older children/young people. The lead professional will co – ordinate the planned review meeting

What if the local authority does not agree to assess my child or to issue an EHC Plan?

If you are unhappy about the decisions made by the local authority you should in the first instance seek to discuss and resolve those issues with your case manager/plan co - coordinator. If disagreements remain, then the local authority will provide you with information about mediation services.

If you still disagree with the local authority you will have the right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. This is an independent body that considers and decides the outcome of parents/carers' appeals against the decisions of local authorities about children's special educational needs.

Further support

The Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service can offer information, advice and support to parents and young people. This may also be provided by an independent support champion. For further information contact:

Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service

Telephone: 020 8871 8065

Email: wiass@wandsworth.gov.uk

Website: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/pps

Independent Support Champion for Wandsworth

Telephone: 020 8947 5260.

Email: IS@cafamily.org.uk

Summary of Education, Health and Care needs assessment

