

EHC Assessments

An EHC Assessment commences on the date that a request is received from a parent, young person, school/setting or anyone else who knows the child/young person. Usually a request is made using an EHC1 form (schools or settings), EHC2 form (parents) or an EHC3 form (young person).

1 Leading up to MAP (within 6 weeks)

As soon as we receive a request for an EHC assessment one of our SEN Casework Officers will contact you to discuss the assessment, your wishes and aspirations for the future and to check if you need any further support to engage in the assessment process.

Within six weeks of the request, a Multi-Agency Panel (MAP) is held to discuss the request and for the council to decide whether or not to proceed with the EHC assessment. MAP will be looking at whether the child/young person has SEN, and whether they may require special educational provision to be outlined in an EHC plan; to do this they will consider whether there is evidence that despite the school or setting having implemented lots of support, the child or young person is still not making expected progress. The parents/young person are invited to this meeting, and they are able to invite someone to support them if they wish (for example the SENCo, a family friend, or someone from an independent support service).

If it is decided not to proceed with the EHC assessment, MAP will always provide advice as to what next steps should be taken to ensure sufficient SEN support for the child or young person.

2 Assessment period (6 weeks duration)

Once it has been agreed that an EHC assessment is appropriate, the council will gather any further evidence and advice required from people who are involved with the child/young person and family, usually including an Educational Psychologist.

These professionals have six weeks to undertake any assessments and submit their advice to the local authority. Once all this information and advice has been gathered, in most cases the council will begin to draft the EHC plan. In some cases the council may decide that the support required for the child or young person is available through SEN Support and would not need an EHC plan. If so, the council will write an Enhanced Support Plan instead of an EHC plan, which contains very similar information but does not have a legal basis.

If you've requested that we prepare a personal budget, we will do so at this stage. For information about personal budgets, see the Personal Budgets Handbook.

3 Next Steps Meeting (week 14-15)

Once the draft EHC plan has been sent out, parents and young people have fifteen days to let the council know whether or not they agree with the plan. A Next Steps Meeting will be held within this timeframe, and everyone who has contributed to the Plan, including the parents/young person, are invited. This meeting is the opportunity to give feedback on the draft EHC plan and discuss any amendments or changes that need to be made. If you haven't already done so, you can use this opportunity to notify the council of the school or other setting you wish to be named in the plan.

If the council has written an Enhanced Support Plan instead of an EHC plan, we would still hold a Next Steps Meeting in order to discuss the local authority's decision and for the school or setting to consider how to implement the recommended provision.

4 The final EHC plan (week 20)

Following the Next Steps Meeting in most cases the local authority is able to finalise the EHC plan and send it out to the family and all the professionals involved straight away. Sometimes where changes are needed, there may be a period of negotiation regarding the EHC plan's contents.

As soon as the EHC plan is made final it becomes a legal document and must be upheld.

5 Annual Review

EHC plans are usually reviewed every twelve months, starting from the date of the first final EHC plan (at least six monthly for children under statutory school age).

The review meeting will look at what progress has been made toward the outcomes specified in the EHC plan, and will recommend what changes the local authority needs to make to the EHC plan in light of this progress.

EHC Plans

What is an EHC Plan?

An Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan is a legal document for a child or young person with special educational needs or a disability (SEND) aged 0-25 which sets out the child or young person's...

The graphic shows a blue document titled "Dave's Plan" from Leeds City Council. The document header includes "Leeds City Council Education, Health and Care Plan for David Davidson (DOB: 21-Mar-2006)". The main title is "Dave's Plan". Below the title is a drawing of a child in a wheelchair playing tennis. Surrounding the document are six circular icons, each with a label and icons representing that concept:

- strengths** (green circle): A thumbs up, a person, and a person with a ball.
- aspirations** (orange circle): A person, a person with a hard hat, and graduation caps.
- provision** (pink circle): A hand holding a book, gears, and an open book.
- needs** (green circle): A person with glasses, a person with a lightning bolt, a person in a wheelchair, and a person with a hearing aid.
- outcomes** (purple circle): A star, a bar chart with an upward arrow, and a checklist with a checkmark.
- personal budget*** (yellow circle): A hand holding a pound coin.

At the bottom of the document, there are fields for "Ver:" and "Date:". The logos for NHS Leeds, Leeds City Council, and "we are child friendly Leeds" are at the bottom.

*where agreed and appropriate

MAP (Multi-Agency Panel)

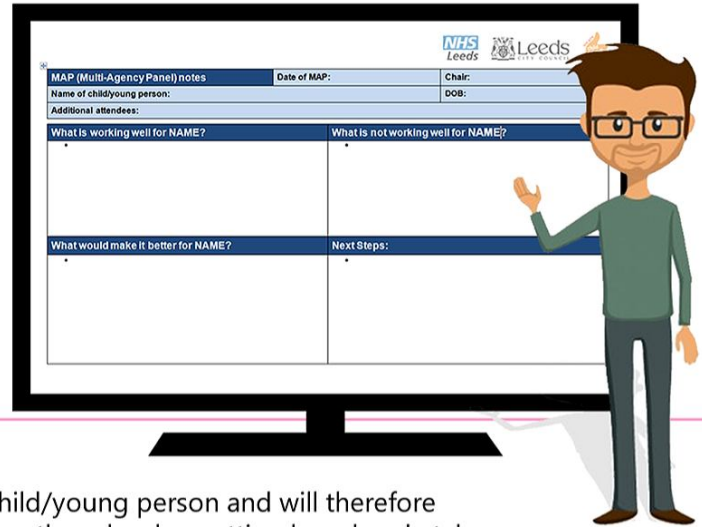
is the process by which Leeds City Council agrees whether or not to proceed with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment. Leeds is unique in that we invite parents/young people to be part of this decision-making process.

Who's there?

MAP is chaired by a SEN Casework Officer. On a usual MAP day there will also be:

- two school representatives
- an Educational Psychologist
- a social worker
- a representative from the NHS
- someone taking the notes

For cases regarding older young people, there will also be a SEN Casework Officer Post-16.



What happens in MAP?

MAP will have already read all the information about the child/young person and will therefore already have a good picture of their needs, and what actions the school or setting has already taken to implement appropriate support.

MAP will answer 3 questions:

What's working well? What's not working so well? What would make it better?

Notes will be taken on the TV screen where everyone can see them; these will form the written record of the meeting. These questions help us to summarise the information we have received already, and extract any additional information that has not been clear in the paperwork.

Once we have answered these questions, we will together decide what are the best next steps that need to be taken to ensure the child / young person's needs are met. This could be a referral to a particular professional, additional guidance or support that the school or setting can put into place, etc. If it is considered that the child / young person might require special educational provision to be outlined in an EHC plan, then an EHC assessment may be the best next step for the child / young person. This decision whether or not to proceed with the EHC assessment is made in the MAP meeting.

What happens next?

The notes that you saw being written at the meeting will be typed up and sent out to you with a letter explaining the next steps.

Proceeding with an EHC assessment

If it has been agreed that an EHC assessment is appropriate, we will gather any further evidence and advice required from people who are involved with the child/young person and family, usually including an Educational Psychologist. Please let us know if there is anyone specific you would like us to ask for information and advice.

These professionals have six weeks to undertake any assessments and submit their advice to the local authority. Once all this information and advice has been gathered, in most cases we will begin to draft the EHC plan. In some cases we may decide that the support required for the child or young person is available through SEN Support and would not need an EHC plan. If so, we will write an Enhanced Support Plan instead of an EHC plan, which contains very similar information but does not have a legal basis.

The letter we send to you will contain the date of a 'Next Steps Meeting' where we will be able to discuss the outcome of the assessment process.

Not proceeding with an EHC assessment

The professionals involved with the child/young person and the school or setting will be informed of the outcome of MAP. They will also receive a copy of the notes, which will explain what actions need to be taken to further meet the child/young person's needs through SEN Support.

Further details



Venue

Adams Court,
Kildare Terrace,
Leeds LS12 1DB



Parking

Parking at Adams Court is limited, so if you are intending to travel by car, please make sure you give yourself ample time to park and walk to the building. Parking spaces are available for Blue Badge holders.



How do I book a MAP slot?

If you wish to attend this meeting please let us know as soon as possible. If we do not hear from you or if you do not wish to attend the meeting, we will still consider the request at the MAP meeting. You are welcome to bring someone along to support you at the MAP if you wish. However, please be aware we may not be able to arrange for everyone to attend who wishes to do so.

What date and time slots are available?

MAP happens every Thursday (including school holidays, excluding Christmas bank holiday week). There are eight 30-minute parental appointments available each week, between 9:30am and 1:45pm.



Please make sure you are at Adams Court in good time before your appointment. The MAP panel has a strict timescale to keep to and the discussion about the child or young person will start promptly.



Can I bring someone with me?

MAP has been designed so there is an opportunity for parents / young people to attend and be part of the decision whether to carry out an EHC assessment. You are welcome to bring someone along to support you at MAP if you wish. Often this is a relative, family friend, SENCo from the school or setting, or an Independent Supporter from Scope or SENDIASS.

Can I bring my child?

Your child is welcome to attend the meeting and be part of the decision making process, however it is not necessary for them to do so. Unfortunately we do not have any facilities to care for children whilst their parents attend the meeting, so if you wish to bring your child with you, they will need to be with you in the meeting.



What happens if I don't attend?

If we don't hear from you, or if you don't want to attend MAP, we will proceed to consider the EHC assessment on your behalf. We will still use the same questions and format, and will still send you the notes afterwards. It is important to note that whether or not you choose to attend MAP does not have an impact on the decision whether or not to proceed with an EHC assessment.

I need some support to attend the meeting

If you need us to make any access arrangements, or if you need interpretation support, please let us know as soon as possible and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.



You can also seek advice and support from Leeds SEND Information Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) who will be able to offer support regarding any of the above information. They may also be able to come with you to MAP. You can call the Helpline on 0113 378 5020 or send an email to sendiass@leeds.gov.uk

Barnardos are able to provide impartial advocacy to young people in asserting their rights, being involved in decision making processes and ensuring that their views are listened to and taken into account. Please contact 0113 2395570 or freephone 0800 6527212, or email leedschildrensrightsservice@barnardos.org.uk

How can I get in touch?

For any further information, or to book a slot at MAP please contact us using the details below.



0113 378 5256



sensap@leeds.gov.uk

Next Steps Meetings

are held toward the end of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment and give us the opportunity to discuss the outcome of the assessment, what happens next, and your preferred choice of school or setting.

Who comes to the meeting?

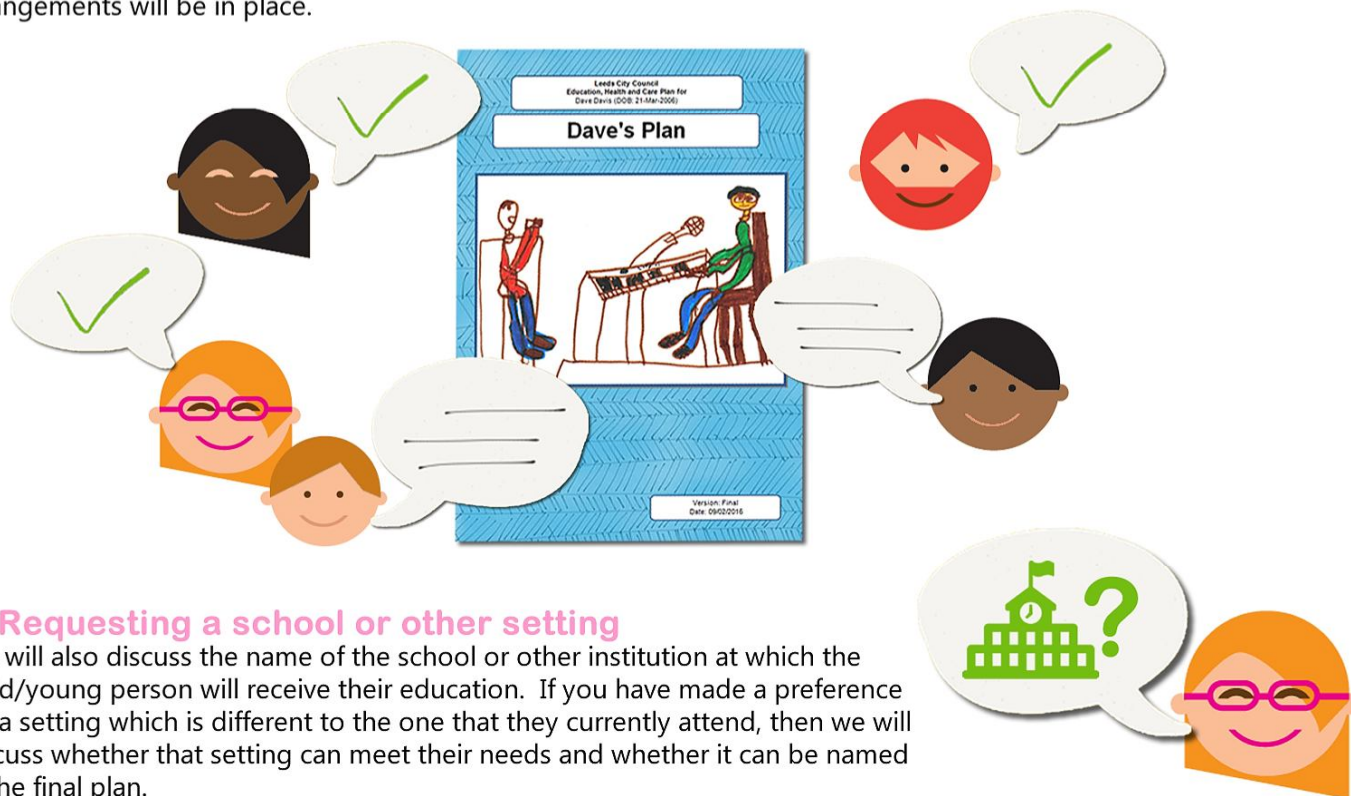
The Next Steps Meeting is chaired by your SEN Casework Officer, and held at the school or setting attended by the child/young person. Other attendees usually include the SENCo or class teacher, and sometimes the Educational Psychologist and other professionals who are involved.

What happens in the meeting?

1. Discussing the Draft EHC Plan

The SEN Casework Officer will talk through parts of the EHC plan and give everyone the opportunity to suggest any changes that need to be made. You may wish to come prepared with any suggested amendments.

If you have requested information about a personal budget, this will also be discussed at the Next Steps Meeting, including discussion about how the money can be spent, who will have control of the budget and what monitoring arrangements will be in place.



2. Requesting a school or other setting

We will also discuss the name of the school or other institution at which the child/young person will receive their education. If you have made a preference for a setting which is different to the one that they currently attend, then we will discuss whether that setting can meet their needs and whether it can be named in the final plan.

What happens next?

If the changes requested are all agreed and are relatively minor, if you wish we can agree them at the meeting and they will be included in the final copy of the plan. If the changes are more substantial we will write them up after the meeting and circulate a "2nd Draft EHC Plan" to you and the professionals who provided advice for the assessment, and the school or setting you've requested.

The SEN Casework Officer may also need to ask professionals for further clarification on specific aspects of the plan following the Next Steps Meeting if there are some areas that cannot be agreed at the meeting.

In any case the EHC Plan will be finalised within 20 weeks of the original request. This is usually between 1 and 5 weeks after the Next Steps Meeting.

Next Steps Meetings (continued)

What happens if I don't get an EHC Plan?

In most cases, following an EHC assessment period the local authority will issue a draft EHC Plan. In some cases we may decide that the support required for the child or young person is available through SEN Support and does not need an EHC plan to be in place. If so, the council will write an Enhanced Support Plan instead of an EHC plan, which contains very similar information but does not have a legal basis.

If the council has written an Enhanced Support Plan instead of an EHC plan, we would still hold a Next Steps Meeting in order to discuss the local authority's decision and for the school or setting to consider how to implement the recommended provision. We will also discuss your right to appeal the local authority's decision.

Further details:



Venue

If possible we try to hold the meeting in the school or educational setting that your child/the young person attends. If this is not possible, we can arrange meetings elsewhere such as at Leeds City Council premises or your home.



Date and time

The Next Steps Meeting is scheduled for around Week 14 - 15 of the assessment process. We send you the date and time of the Next Steps Meetings in all our letters right from the beginning of the assessment so that you are able to plan ahead.

Next Steps Meetings usually last between an hour and 90 minutes, depending upon the nature of the discussion and what amendments are being requested.



Can I bring someone with me?

Yes of course, you are more than welcome to bring someone to support you, such as a relative or friend. You can also ask someone from SENDIASS to support you at the Next Steps Meetings. You can contact them on 0113 378 5020 or send an email to sendiass@leeds.gov.uk

Barnardos are able to provide impartial advocacy to young people in asserting their rights, being involved in decision making processes and ensuring that their views are listened to and taken into account. Please contact 0113 2395570 or freephone 0800 6527212, or email leedschildrensrightsservice@barnardos.org.uk

What happens if I don't attend?

All attempts will be made to work around a family's circumstances to be able to involve them as fully as possible. If parents or young people do not wish to attend then there is no requirement on the local authority to hold a meeting.

How can I get in touch?

For further information regarding the Next Steps Meeting please contact us using the details below.



0113 378 5256



sensap@leeds.gov.uk

Preparation for Adulthood

From Year 9 (at the latest) and upwards, it is vital to begin to consider how well the young person is prepared for life as an adult. The SEND Code of Practice calls this "Preparation for Adulthood" and tells the professionals working with young people to consider four areas of preparation:



Employment

Every child in Year 9 and above is entitled to independent careers guidance to support their considerations and planning for future employment pathways. This includes consideration of moving onto further/higher education prior to getting a job. This also includes exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies. It will also involve thinking as early as possible about the young person's preferences for post-16 and post-19 education, employment and/or training options.

Independent Living

This doesn't necessarily mean owning and/or living in their own house, but having choice, control and freedom over their lives and the support they have, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living. It is important to consider:

- Cooking and food preparation
- Accommodation and housing
- Money management, budgeting and welfare benefits



Healthy Living

This means planning for the young person to be as healthy as possible in adult life. For example, it is important to consider whether the young person is able to manage:

- Personal hygiene and self-care
- A healthy lifestyle, including diet, exercise and substances
- Ensuring positive mental health and resilience

Community and Relationships

This means the young person engaging in society, including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community. For example, consider:

- Friendships
- Sex and relationships
- Independent travelling skills
- Enjoying a social life, hobbies and interests



Information about all of the above will be captured in the EHC plan and reviewed each year through the Annual Review process. For the Year 9 Annual Review, you may be contacted by the school's SENCo to help complete a specific Preparation For Adulthood document that will contribute to the contents of an EHC plan.

Resolving Disagreements

We are committed to providing the best possible service and we want to work with you to resolve any issues. If you are unhappy with anything in relation to an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment or an EHC plan, please contact us directly. We would like to resolve any disagreements locally with families, so we will look into any complaint and get back to you. If you're not happy with our response then you have the opportunity to escalate it.



Monitoring and Quality Assurance

If you are concerned about the quality of the special educational provision which is being implemented at your school or setting, or if you think that the provision stipulated in the EHC plan is not being provided effectively, you can contact SENSAP's Monitoring and Quality Assurance Officers who will be able to investigate the issue further on your behalf.



Disagreement Resolution

In some circumstances, a quick and non-adversarial way to resolving issues can be achieved through a disagreement resolution approach. Disagreement resolution arrangements are designed to resolve issues about the performance of duties, SEN provision, disagreements over health and social care provision and disagreements between health commissioners and local authorities. They are completely voluntary. Parents and young people can use the complaints procedures in addition to using disagreement resolution services.

Formal Mediation

If parents or young people wish to make an appeal to the Tribunal they must contact an independent mediation advisor within two months to see if this may be a suitable way of resolving a disagreement and to get mediation information. This would be when the local authority takes the following decisions:

- When a local authority decides not to carry out an EHC assessment
- When a local authority decides not to draw up an EHC plan
- After parents or young people receive a final or amended final EHC plan
- Following a decision to cease to maintain an EHC plan

If a parent or young person wants to have formal mediation then the local authority will arrange this with the mediation advisor within 30 days of being advised of this decision. Once mediation is completed the mediation advisor must issue a certificate within 3 working days so that the parent or young person can appeal to the tribunal if they still wish to.

If a parent or young person, after receiving all the information from the mediation advisor, decides not to go to formal mediation, the advisor will issue them with a certificate within 3 days of the parent or young person telling them. This will confirm that information has been provided and it will enable the parent or young person to lodge their appeal with the SEND tribunal. This will be either two months from the original decision being sent by the council or within one month of receiving the certificate, whichever is later.

If parents or young people disagree with the school, college or other institute named in the plan, they do not need to contact a mediation advisor prior to registering an appeal.

First-Tier SEND Tribunal

Following a certificate of mediation, parents and young people can appeal to the first-tier tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) against decisions made by the council about their education. For further information about how to appeal, and to access the relevant application forms, please search online for "SEND Tribunal" or call the tribunals service on 01325 289350.

In many authorities it is reported that parents/young people feel unnecessarily burdened by the thought of a Tribunal appeal. In Leeds in order to ensure that all our parents/young people feel empowered and supported to enact their right to appeal, we have created our "9 Tribunal Pledges" which outlines the ways in which we will work and the commitments we make to ensuring a fair and transparent appeal process. This can be found on our web pages or by contacting us directly.

