



One minute guide

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

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What are Education, Health and Care Plans?

An EHCP is a legal document for an individual child or young person aged 0-25 years with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), which sets out a description of their educational, health and social care needs and the provision that must be implemented in order to help them achieve key life outcomes. It also includes information about the child or young person's aspirations, and for those in Year 9 or above, information about preparation for adulthood.

EHCPs bring together practitioners from different agencies to contribute to a single assessment and plan for the child or young person. In Leeds, the Special Educational Needs Statutory Assessment and Provision (SENSAP) team ([guide](#)) is responsible for overseeing all EHCPs and assessments.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) were introduced through the Children and Families Act of 2014 ([guide](#)) to replace the previous assessment process and Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN).

How are Education, Health and Care Plans initiated?

The majority of children and young people with SEND can have their needs met within their local mainstream school, early years setting or college through the setting's existing resources without the need for an EHCP.

If a school or setting has taken every possible action available to identify, assess and meet the child or young person's needs but they are still not making expected progress, it may be appropriate to consider requesting an EHC assessment. Schools and settings can do this through submitting an [EHC1 form](#) with details of the actions they have taken and support they have offered to the child or young person.

If parents would like to apply for an EHC assessment, SENSAP advise them to speak to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) at their child's school or setting first. SENCOs will be able to talk to parents about what the assessment involves, and offer support and guidance around decision making. If a parent or young person wishes to request an EHC assessment themselves, they can complete an [EHC2 form](#) (parents) or an [EHC3 form](#) (young people). SENSAP would then contact the child's school or setting to request additional information.

What does an EHC assessment involve?

EHC assessments take 20 weeks in total, and in Leeds there are four stages to the assessment process. The first leads up to a **Multi-Agency Panel (MAP)**, when SENSAP casework officers contact the family to discuss the assessment and their desired outcomes. A MAP, chaired by a casework officer and attended by practitioners including educational psychologists and social workers, is held within six weeks to discuss the request, to decide whether to proceed with an assessment. The MAP considers the support offered by the school or setting to date, whether the child has SEND, and whether they may require special educational provision to be outlined in an EHCP. If the decision is not to proceed with an assessment, the panel provides advice about how the child can otherwise be supported in meeting their needs. The child and their family are invited to attend MAP (subject to availability) to be a part of the discussion.

The second stage is the **assessment**, when SENSAP will gather information from practitioners involved with the child, young person and family, including an Educational Psychologist ([guide](#)). These practitioners have six weeks to undertake any assessments and submit their advice to the local authority. SENSAP officers will then decide whether or not an EHCP is required and, if so, begin to write a draft EHCP. If it is decided that an EHCP is not necessary, SENSAP will issue an Enhanced Support Plan, which provides a non-statutory summary of the recommendations made during the assessment.

The third stage is a **Next Steps meeting**, at approximately week 14-15. Once the draft EHC plan has been circulated, parents and young people have fifteen days to confirm whether they are happy with the plan. A Next Steps meeting is held, and everyone who has contributed to the plan, including the family, is invited and given the opportunity to give feedback and discuss any amendments or changes that need to be made.

The fourth stage is **finalising the EHC Plan**, which will take place by week 20. In most cases, following the Next Steps meeting, the local authority is able to finalise the EHC plan and send it to the family and the professionals involved fairly quickly. Sometimes, when changes are needed, there may be a period of negotiation regarding the content. As soon as the EHCP is made final, it becomes a legal document and must be upheld.

EHCPs are reviewed every twelve months, and at least six-monthly for children under statutory school age.

What support and further information is available?

Most parents and young people will receive the support they need from the SENCO at their school or setting. If additional support is required, they can contact:

[SENDIASS \(guide\)](#) can support parents and young people at any stage of SEN support, EHC assessment and reviews, including making an appeal; or

[Scope Independent Supporters](#), commissioned nationally to provide independent support and advice during (but not beyond) the assessment process; and

[Barnardo's Leeds Children's Rights Service](#) can advocate specifically on behalf of children and young people, including supporting them to attend MAP meetings and reviews and contribute to their plans, as well as providing information about children's rights.

For further information about EHCPs and the EHC assessment process, please see the Leeds City Council [website pages](#) and the [EHC Assessments Information Pack](#), or contact SENSAP at sensap@leeds.gov.uk or on 0113 3785 256.