

# A guide to the Thurrock Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan process.

Version 4

## Stage 1 (Weeks 0-4)

Is an EHC Needs Assessment required?

This is the first step in the process. The child/young person will already be supported by agencies and have a support plan in place.

The school/educational setting, parents or professionals working with the child/young person make a request for an EHC Needs Assessment to SEN Services.

- An EHCP **Coordinator** (SEN Caseworker) will contact the family to ensure they understand what will happen next. Most families will have submitted information about their views and aspirations at the point of request through meetings. However, if the family or EHCP coordinator feels that further support is required to gather this information, the coordinator will suggest the involvement of a **facilitator** e.g. Senco, Health Professional, Social worker, Independent Supporter at this point.
- The information received from the family, school/educational setting and other professionals (including information relating to preparation for adulthood post 14) is then shared with an **EHCP Panel** who use this information to decide whether an EHC assessment should be carried out.
- If the decision is **yes**, the EHCP Panel explores all of the information from parents and professionals to decide what further information or assessments are required to inform the plan. For young people post 14 further advice or information gathered from professionals should include a focus upon what is required to prepare the young person for adulthood. A facilitator or independent support worker will be agreed if it is felt that further support is required to assist the family through the process and ensure that their views are represented.

### What happens in stage 1 for the child/young person and the family?

- As part of the process, parents should have had discussions with their child/young person's setting and the professionals working with the child/young person before making a request for an EHC Needs Assessment.
- Once a request has been received, the EHCP Coordinator will contact the family to explain what will happen and gain more information if needed. They will support the family to ensure that their voice is clear in the information that will be used at the decision making panel. The EHCP coordinator will ensure that the family are happy with the information that will be shared.
- The EHCP Coordinator contacts the family to discuss the decision and how it was reached. If an assessment is **not agreed**, the family will be offered a follow up meeting to consider the support that has been suggested or arranged.
- If the family are unhappy with the decision not to assess they have the right to appeal to a tribunal. The EHCP Coordinator will explain how to do this. •

### What happens in stage 1 for the professionals?

- Before a request for an EHC Needs Assessment is made, the child/young person will normally have in place support plans that show how agencies have worked together to identify and support the child/young person's needs. For young people post 14 this should include preparation for adulthood.
- Professionals have a duty to ensure that all relevant information is included in a request for an assessment. Where the request is made directly by a parent, professionals should be aware but key services will also be alerted by the EHCP Coordinator. Professionals have a duty to ensure that the EHCP Coordinator and facilitator are provided with information that may help to make the decision.
- Designated professionals (Health, Social Care & Education) will be notified whether an EHC Needs Assessment has been agreed.
- If assessment is not appropriate the professional representation at the decision making panel will inform appropriate staff of any follow up or further support required.

A **coordinator (SEN Caseworker)** ensures the smooth running of the EHC Needs Assessment and planning process

A **EHCP Panel** is a decision making group made up of professionals from education, health and social care

A **facilitator** (Senco, Health Professional, Social Worker or independent supporter) can support the family in expressing their views and aspirations

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## Stage 2 (week 4 – 12) The Planning Stage

- The EHCP Coordinator will contact the family to discuss what will happen next and confirm the name of their facilitator/independent support worker if applicable. They will also ask the facilitator to indicate possible date(s) for the EHC planning meeting. By week 6 the facilitator will notify the EHC Coordinator the date of the planning meeting. They will ask the family if they are happy to share their information that has been gathered so far with those agencies contributing to the assessment so that they only have to 'tell their story once'.
- The EHCP Coordinator makes sure that all of the agencies know about any assessments that need to take place and will provide the agencies with the child/young person's information that has been gathered so far if this is agreed by the family.
- The EHCP Coordinator will be available to talk to the family and/or their facilitator/independent supporter as the assessment progresses to share information and plan next steps.
- The EHCP facilitator pre-populates the potential EHCP based upon the information that the family and professionals have provided. The EHCP facilitator will share this plan with the family before the EHC planning meeting. The EHCP will be shared with other professionals for their input before the meeting.
- The meeting is attended by the family, facilitator/independent support worker and usually the school/setting. Other professionals can be invited if required or requested by parents. The meeting will take a person centred planning approach and will focus on objectives and outcomes. For young people post 14 these objectives and outcomes should increasingly reflect a focus on preparation for adulthood.

### What happens in stage 2 for the child/young person and the family?

- The EHCP Coordinator or facilitator/independent supporter speaks with the family to confirm or add to their views. This can be via a face to face meeting if preferred.
- The views of the family will be populated directly on to the plan and will include information about aspirations. For young people post 14, what the family feel is needed to prepare the young person for adulthood will be included in the plan.
- The EHCP Coordinator will give the family information about personal budgets and talk briefly about how they could be used.
- The EHCP facilitator/independent supporter (if involved) and the setting will meet the family to agree the content of the EHC plan. The EHCP facilitator will invite professionals who have contributed to the assessment to the meeting if this is requested by the family. The family and professionals involved should agree how the child/young person will be involved in the meeting.

### What happens in stage 2 for the professionals?

- Where further information or assessments are required to inform the plan professionals will clarify what the needs/outcomes are in their area of expertise and what the best strategies would be to meet the needs. Professionals will be mindful of the outcomes sought by parents in writing their contribution. For young people post 14 professionals should also reflect what may be required to prepare the young person for adulthood.
- Professionals and school/education settings should respond to the requests to attend the EHC planning meeting. If unable to attend they should provide prompt clarification of any issues to help them inform the draft plan.
- The EHCP facilitator will use information from the family and other professionals to prepopulate the plan.

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## Stage 3 (week 12 – 17) Producing an EHC Plan or providing feedback

- Most EHC Needs Assessments will result in an EHC Plan. When the EHCP Coordinator receives the potential EHCP the plan will be presented to the EHCP Panel for consideration. The views of the panel will be shared with the family by the EHCP Coordinator.
- If an EHCP is not required, all of the information that has been gathered and used at the EHC planning meeting will be provided in the form of a 'coordinated plan' as feedback. A meeting will be offered to the family to explain how the actions and outcomes set out in the feedback will be delivered. This will involve parents, a representative from SEN services, the education setting and the facilitator.
- Where an EHCP is agreed, parents will be sent a copy of the plan in draft version (by week 14) and will be asked by the EHCP Coordinator to name the school, college or other education setting they would prefer.
- The EHCP Coordinator will explain to parents/young people the process for considering their choice of educational setting and make arrangements to consult with the settings about placement.

### What happens in stage 3 for the child/young person and the family?

- If a plan is agreed, the EHCP Coordinator will send a copy of the EHC plan in draft form to the family. The family can make any final comment on the plan and say what educational setting they would like. The family have 15 days to do this.
- If an EHC plan has been agreed the family will be asked by the EHCP Coordinator to confirm whether they would like a personal budget to be drawn up.
- If an EHC plan has not been agreed, a coordinated plan (feedback) will be sent to the family. The EHCP Coordinator will offer to arrange a meeting with the family to explain why the decision not to produce an EHC plan has been made. This meeting will also agree how the outcomes identified in feedback will be achieved. The family can ask for other professionals to attend this meeting to assist with this discussion. The EHCP Coordinator will explain the parents' right of appeal against the decision and where they can go for more advice.

### What happens in stage 3 for the professionals?

- If an EHC plan is not needed, professionals may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss how everyone involved will work together to achieve the outcomes identified for the child/young person.
- The professionals will be responsible for ensuring that the actions/support outlined in the coordinated plan is taken forward.
- If an EHC plan is not produced, the coordinator will send the coordinated plan to the professionals who have contributed to the assessment.

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## Stage 4 (week 17 – 20)

Finalising the EHC Plan

- The coordinator will work with the family to agree the final EHC plan.
- A final EHC plan will be issued.
- The EHC plan must be reviewed annually but parts of the plan can be reviewed more frequently if required.

### What happens in stage 4 for the child/young person and the family?

- Child/young person and parents will receive a copy of the final EHC plan.
- At this stage, if the young person or parent remains concerned about the provision they may:
  - Talk to their facilitator/independent supporter, coordinator or other agencies (e.g. Parent Partnership)
  - Ask their education setting for a meeting to help implement the plan. They can also ask their facilitator/independent supporter to attend this meeting.
  - They can request that the education setting invite the professionals who have contributed to the assessment to the planning meeting.
  - Seek mediation/independent advice
  - Take up their right to appeal to tribunal.

### What happens in stage 4 for the professionals?

- The final EHC/coordinated plan will be sent to the governing body, proprietor or principal of any school, college or education provision named in the plan.
- A copy of the plan will be sent to all of the professionals who have contributed to the plan so that they are clear about what their service has agreed to deliver.
- A copy of the EHC/coordinated plan will also be sent to social care providers (if involved) and the contact identified by the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- The Local Authority must arrange the special education provision specified in the plan.
- The social care provision must be provided in line with responsibilities set out in the Children Act 1989 or for young people over 18, as set out in the Care Bill.
- The Clinical Commissioning Group must ensure that the specified health provision is made.