

Requesting an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) Assessment

Information pack

Contents

What is an EHCP? 1

Who can ask for an EHCP assessment? 1

When can I ask for an assessment? 1

What does the law say? 1

How do I request an assessment? 2

How long does it take? 3

EHCP request checklist 3

For further information and support: 3

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What is an EHCP?

An EHCP is a legal document that helps children or young people (aged 0–25) who have extra learning needs or disabilities. It says:

- What support they need
- What help they should get at school, college, or in training
- What health and care support is needed

Who can ask for an EHCP assessment?

- Parents or carers
- Young people aged 16–25
- Schools or nurseries, with your knowledge
- Other professionals like doctors or social workers can also suggest one

When can I ask for an assessment?

Most children with extra needs can get help at school without an EHCP.

Schools/settings must check what help your child needs, give them support, and see how they are doing. This is called SEN support. You can find out more about SEN support here: [LINK UP SEN SUPPORT PACK](#)

If your child still struggles even with this help, you can request an EHCP.

If your child has not started or attended a school you can still request an assessment.

What does the law say?

If a parent, young person, school, or college asks for an EHC needs assessment, the Local Authority (LA) must decide:

- Does the child or young person have (or might have) special educational needs (SEN)?
- Might they need special support through an EHC plan?

If the answer to both is yes, the LA must do the assessment.

This rule is in the Children and Families Act 2014, section 36(8).

The law also tells LAs to follow the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2015.

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In paragraph 9.14, it says the LA should check:

- Has the school or setting already tried to help?
- Has the child or young person still not made enough progress, even with help?

The LA should think about:

- How well the child is doing in school (or developing, if they're younger).
- What kind of needs they have, and how big those needs are.
- What support the school has already given.
- If the child has improved, was it only because they got a lot more help than others their age?
- How the child is doing with their health, feelings, and social life — including any reports from doc-tors or other professionals

How do I request an assessment?

Write a letter to the Local Authority (LA) to ask for an EHC needs assessment.

Keep a copy of the letter for your records.

In your letter, explain:

- Why you think your child has or might have special educational needs (SEN) which may include things like:
 - Learning and thinking: **What do they find hard or need help with in school.**
 - Talking and understanding: **Can they speak clearly? Understand others?**
 - Feelings and behaviour: **How are their emotions? Do they struggle with friends, rules, or confidence?**
 - Senses and movement: **Are they sensitive to noise, light, or touch? Any physical needs?**
 - Other needs: **Support with toileting, eating, being outside the home, or staying safe**
- Why you think they may need special help through an EHC plan.

You can use IPSEA's free template letter to make your request: [Template letter 1: asking for an EHC needs assessment.](#)

Some LAs use online systems or forms (sometimes called "hubs").

The law says there is no special form or system you have to use. The LA cannot say your request is invalid just because you didn't use their form or website.

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How long does it take?

The whole process should take no more than 20 weeks if an assessment is agreed.

- Week 0–6: Request submitted. LA decides whether to assess.
- Week 7–12: LA gathers professional and parental advice.
- Week 13–16: LA decides whether to issue an EHCP.
- Week 17–20: Final plan issued, support starts.

EHCP request checklist

1. Gather evidence

- Obtain school reports detailing difficulties and support provided.
- Request assessments from teachers, SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator), and other school staff.
- Collect medical reports (if applicable) from GPs, paediatricians, or therapists (e.g., speech and language, occupational therapy).
- Keep records of any external specialist reports (e.g., educational psychologist, CAMHS, autism assessments).
- Document communication with the school regarding concerns and support.

2. Write the EHCP request

- Include the child's full name, date of birth, and school.
- If your child is not in school, clearly explain why and detail any previous school placements. Clearly describe your child's needs, challenges, and current support.
- Explain why additional support is required beyond what the school provides.
- What SEN support has been put in place already?

3. Submit the request

- Send the letter via email for proof of submission.
- Address it to the local authority's SEND team.

For further information and support:

- [Find your local IAS service](#)
- [Asking for an EHC needs assessment | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)