



South Tyneside Council

A Parent's Guide

Coordinated Assessment & Education, Health and Care Plans.

Introduction: A new approach to special educational needs and disabilities

The government is introducing a new approach to the way children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families are supported. The reforms, which become law in September 2014, will create a real change in the way that education, health and social care professionals work with families and young people.

What is an Education, Health and Care Plan?

The Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is an exciting new way of working that puts you – children, young people and families – at the very centre of the assessment and planning process, to make sure that your views are not only heard but also understood. This is called person centred planning and is all about increasing your choice and control.

This new process focuses on what is important for children and young people – what they and you want to achieve now and in the future. Parents have helped to design the plan with the aim of making families feel more listened to and more involved in decision-making, in ways that make sense to them.

Who is it for?

The EHC plan is for children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities and where an assessment of education, health and social care needs has been agreed by a multi-agency group of professionals. It is available from birth to age 25. You can talk to your child's or the young person's educational setting (nursery, school, college) about eligibility for an assessment. For example, the school's special educational needs coordinator will be able to offer advice.

What's different about an Education, Health and Care assessment?

An Education, Health and Care assessment looks at life beyond education and brings the different services together. The local authority is responsible for ensuring that assessments are effectively co-ordinated. It is planned that in future the EHC assessment and plan will replace the statutory assessment and statement of special educational needs (SEN) process but it is not law yet, so you can still choose to use the old system if you prefer. However, work done so far suggests that families feel more in control and listened to when using the new EHC process.

The EHC assessment and planning process needs to be completed in 20 weeks, whereas the statutory assessment (which may lead to a statement of SEN) needs to be completed in 26 weeks.

What are our statutory rights?

Your rights do not change and you will still have the right to appeal in line with current statutory arrangements. Impartial support and advice is available throughout the process from the Parent Partnership Service. Please see the 'useful contacts' section at the end of this leaflet for their details.

How might this affect the support my child or young person receives?

The EHC assessment and planning process is designed to focus on agreeing individual outcomes and the support to achieve these will be tailored to each child or young person's range of needs. This could include helping families to make best use of support available – from the services available in the local offer, from the local community, or provided by statutory services where applicable.

How does it work?

At the start of the assessment, you and your child or the young person will have the opportunity to say what's working, what's not working and what you think needs to change. An assessment coordinator will help you with this.

At the same time the coordinator will gather information from the other people involved and arrange a meeting for you all to agree the outcomes and how you think they can best be met. Remember that this is all about a partnership between you and the professionals involved to make the right decisions for you as a family.

The whole process lasts for 20 weeks. Near the end of this period, a multi-agency person centred planning meeting will be held to confirm the EHC plan and agree outcomes and the provision needed to meet them. The plan will be clear about how much things cost and will have agreed timescales to make sure that it is updated and

reviewed regularly, for example annually. The plan will go with your child or the young person as they change services, change schools and also when they leave school and go on to college, work-related training or employment.

Introducing personal budgets

A personal budget is one of the ways of giving you more choice and control about the way your child is supported. Sometimes the money being spent on services can be freed up and used in different, more creative ways to meet the outcomes. It may mean that you can organise your own services and be given the money to do that.

The way your personal budget is spent will be agreed with you and set out in the EHC plan. Anything you use it for must meet the child or young person's assessed health, education and social care needs. Some people may use their personal budget to buy the same service; others may use it on different support or other services. If you have an EHC plan, your assessment coordinator will discuss this with you so that you can agree what is best.

Useful contacts:

You can speak to your child's educational setting (nursery, school, college).

South Tyneside Parent Partnership Service

Parent Partnership is an impartial service funded by South Tyneside Council. It offers a personalised, confidential service to help you understand how special educational needs are assessed and managed, so that you can make informed decisions about your child or young person's education.

Tel: 0191 424 6345

Email: parentpartnership@southtyneside.gov.uk

Other useful websites

www.sendpathfinder.co.uk

Read about what's happening nationally and how the changes are making a difference across the country.

www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send

Read about why the government want to make changes to SEND services.