

# Education, Health & Care Needs Assessment

Otherwise known as an EHCNA

## What is an EHCNA and when is it necessary?

An EHC needs assessment is to see if your child needs support to be made through an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan).

The Local authority (LA) is responsible for carrying out EHC needs assessments under the Children and Families Act 2014. In West Sussex, the SEN and Assessment Team (SENAT) is the LA department who does this.

Most children with SEN who need support at school, in their early years setting, or with their post 16 provider can receive this through 'SEN Support'. This means that the setting makes additional or different provision to meet their needs.

However, some children need more intensive and specialist help. If your child does not make progress despite 'SEN Support', or their needs are very significant or complex, an EHC needs assessment might be the next step.

### The SEND Code of Practice 2015 (9.3) says:

"A local authority must conduct an assessment of education, health and care needs when it considers that it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made for the child or young person in accordance with an EHC plan"

## Who can ask for an EHC Needs Assessment?

Usually the school, early-years setting or post-16 provider will ask the LA to do an EHCNA.

However, parent carers and young people themselves may make the request instead. It is recommended that you talk to your child / young person's setting first. For more information on how to make a request please see our other factsheet 'Requesting an EHCNA': <https://bit.ly/3tB74Yq>

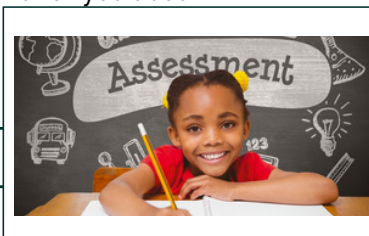
## What happens when the local authority gets a request for an EHCNA?

As soon as the LA gets a request for an EHC needs assessment they must contact you.

The local authority has up to 6 weeks to decide whether they are going to do a needs assessment. During this time, it will ask you, the school and other professionals for information. It must then tell you whether it has decided to start the EHC needs assessment OR that an EHC needs assessment is not necessary.

If the LA decides that an EHCNA is not needed, then it must tell you why. It must also tell you about:

- your right of appeal
- independent disagreement resolution and mediation
- how to get further information, advice or support



## What happens if the EHC needs assessment goes ahead?

Your views and those of your child or young person are really important.

The local authority will continue to gather information about your child or young person. This will be from yourself, your child or young person and a number of other people. This is called 'advice' and it should include information about:

- your child's education, health and care needs
- the desired outcomes for your child
- the special educational, health and care provision that might be required to meet their needs and achieve the desired outcomes.

You will have the chance to discuss your child with everyone involved in the needs assessment and you will receive a copy of all the reports when the needs assessment is finished.

## What happens at the end of the EHC needs assessment?

Once the LA has all the information and advice it must decide whether your child or young person needs support to be made through an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) or can be provided by 'SEN Support'. The LA should notify you of its decision by week 16.

## How long does the whole process take? \*

**Start date** - LA receives an EHCNA request

**By week 6 of the start date** - the LA decides whether an EHCNA is needed or not. EHCNA takes place OR if not, you are given the right to appeal against a Refusal to Assess (RTA)

**By week 16 of the start date** - LA decides to issue a Draft EHC Plan or not. You either receive the draft OR are given the right to appeal against a refusal to issue an EHCP.

*If draft is received - you have at least 15 days to respond with any changes wanted and to submit placement preference and request for personal budget. LA then consults with setting(s) who have 15 days to respond.*

**Within 20 weeks of the start date** - LA must issue a Final EHC plan. If you do not agree with the contents of the final EHC Plan, you will be given the right to appeal.

\* The timescale may differ in exceptional circumstances ([SEND CoP 9.42](#))

## What if I disagree with a Local Authority Decision?

At any stage you can ask to talk to your Planning Co-ordinator in SENAT. You also have a right in most circumstances to consider mediation or go to appeal. You may also want to read our factsheet on 'Lodging an Appeal with the SEN & Disability Tribunal': <https://bit.ly/3tB74Yq>

## For Further Information

You can read about Education, Health and Care needs assessments in the [SEND Code of Practice 2015, Chapter 9](#).

The Local Offer includes more information on EHCNAs, EHCPs and the local arrangements for EHC needs assessments: [www.local-offer.org](http://www.local-offer.org)

West Sussex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS) have a website with several resources: <https://westsussexsendias.org>, including related factsheets: <https://bit.ly/3tB74Yq>



*You can also contact SENDIAS if you want to discuss your particular situation, including the options available to you.*

## Service Statement

The role of the SENDIAS service is to ensure all parents, children and young people have access to impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions related to their situation. Any information that is shared with the service is in confidence unless permission has been obtained to share this with any individuals, services and agencies that may be able to help in the circumstances.

To view our policies, and privacy notice, please go to our website and choose the 'About Us' button, and 'How We Work' from the drop-down list.

## How To Contact Us

**Helpline:** 0330 222 8555

**Email address:**

send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk (parents/professionals)  
cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk (age up to 25 yrs)

**Website:** [www.westsussexsendias.org](http://www.westsussexsendias.org)

**SENDIAS Blog:** <https://westsussexsendias.org/blog>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WSENDIAS>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/wsxiias>

**SEND:** Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

**To view all SENDIAS factsheets online:** <https://bit.ly/3tB74Yq>

or scan QR code:

