

Education, Health and Care Plans

- Does my child need one?



Please note: 'child' = 'child or young person'

An Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) is an assessment of a child's education, health and care needs. It is the first step to deciding if an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) should be issued. The assessment brings together information about what your child's strengths and weaknesses are and the special help (special educational provision) they need. This will decide if SEN Support is sufficient to meet these needs or if an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is needed instead (which may result in extra support and funding for the child).

When is an EHCNA necessary?

A school or early years setting can often give your child help through 'SEN Support'. This means that the setting puts in place extra or different provision from that provided to most other pupils, and this is all part of what is called the 'Graduated Approach' (sometimes referred to as the 'Graduated Response') to meeting additional needs. Sometimes other professionals will give advice to the setting as well, to help them support your child's learning.

Some children need more help than a setting can provide at 'SEN Support'. If your child does not make progress or has a barrier to learning, despite everything which has been tried, an EHCNA might be the next step. It is important to speak to your child's school if you believe this may be the case. However, for the majority of pupils, additional support through the 'SEN Support' stage is effective and appropriate to help them make educational progress.

If your child has SEN, they may need extra help in a range of areas, for example:

- **Cognition & Learning:** reading, writing, number work or understanding information.
- **Communication and Interaction:** expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying and/or relating to social interaction with others and understanding of the world around them.
- **Social, Emotional and Behavioural:** showing anxiety or frustration, problems with concentration or emotional regulation.
- **Sensory or Physical:** visual, hearing or physical impairments which may impact on their abilities in school.

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 says: "In considering whether an EHC needs assessment is necessary, the local authority should consider whether there is evidence that despite the early years provider, school or post-16 institution having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress".

As the Local Authority will want to see specific evidence to support the EHC needs assessment request, it is more common that your child's education setting would complete the request. However, parents/carers and young people (if aged over 16) can also request an assessment if they choose to do so. It would be advisable to at least let the school know if you are putting in the request, as they will still be approached by the Local Authority to submit their evidence for the assessment as well.

As part of the request, there needs to be evidence that your child needs more support for their special educational needs than a mainstream education setting can normally provide through their own SEN budget. It will want to see evidence of the following:

- What sort of special educational need your child has or may have. (Note that this does not require a medical diagnosis).
- The amount and type of help your child may need and why the school may not be able to provide this from their own resources.

It is common for parents to have made adjustments or invented their own approaches to help their child at home and/or outside of school, to support their child's needs without fully realising this. This is key information to share as well as school information, so do make sure you share these insights. Where age/needs appropriate to do so, your child's views, wishes and feelings should also be included.

Can I make a request if I am Home Educating?

Children and young people do not need to attend school or a post 16 setting in order to qualify or be eligible for a request to be made. This means that all parents/carers of children and young people are entitled to make a request for an EHC needs assessment, whether their child attends a school or not.

An EHC needs assessment may be helpful if you are planning a return to the state schooling system and need to firstly establish what your child's needs are and how they can be fully supported.

Further information:

SEN Support in Schools: <https://westsussexsendias.org/sen-support/>

The Graduated Approach/Response:
<https://westsussexsendias.org/graduated-approach/>

Funding for SEN in schools: <https://westsussexsendias.org/funding-for-sen-in-educational-settings/>



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. For more detail, view our [policies and privacy notice](#) on our website.

How to contact us: Tel: 0330 222 8555 / Email: send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk or cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk (up to age 25) / Website: www.westsussexsendias.org

To view factsheet online and access all links: <https://tinyurl.com/btwbxzep>

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