

Chat Summary- Discussions Of Note- Parental Requests for an EHCNA

- KCC Social Workers and Early Help workers are still regularly advising parents that children need an EHCP.
- Pupils have to have an EHCP to access SALT in our area (other than assessment)- Two SENCOs from Swale and Dover and two other SENCOs from the Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks districts state this to be the case. This is further backed up by another SENCO from another Swale school, who stated that without an EHCP they get no support from NHS teams at all.
- Paediatricians and GPs are also recommending parents apply for an ECHP for their children, as without it, they are told that children will not be able to access the high-level SALT support that they have identified as being appropriate.
- In some cases where other KCC Professionals (Early Help/Social Worker Teams) are recommending to parents to get an EHCNA, an EHCP is being granted when schools are already supporting the pupil well with QFT.
- 'We have recently had 2 children given EHCPs that LIFT have said didn't need them, but parent applications were successful.'
- A large number of parental requests for EHCNAs relate to the transition into secondary school and a lack of confidence that parents have to get the right kind of support for their child when they move into year 7. Cited by a large number of SENCOs from across all of Kent. A point to note here is that although this is a reason that parents may request an EHCNA, the idea to do this is often suggested by other professionals.
- 'Requesting an EHCP seems to be a standard line for parents in Early Help moving forward plans. It would be useful if EH workers/social workers had knowledge of the graduated approach and APDR and also the MCS.'
- 'We have at least 3 children with EHCPs whose needs could have been met with HNF all were instigated by family GP.'
- 'It (having an EHCP) is often also a standard line in ASC/ADHD assessment reports from health professionals.'
- CAMHS professionals have also instigated the request for EHCNAs via the parental route.
- 'I was told a LAC needed an EHCP by a social worker, just because they were in care.'

- 'I think that parents become distressed when they are getting different information from health/social care and education and then they feel that schools cannot meet need without an EHCP and their child should have one which is not the case.'
- 'It would be really useful if other professionals such as GPs rang to have a chat with us in schools so we could explain where we are in the process of supporting the children so the suggestions they make are appropriate. We often do not get this opportunity to talk to them about how we are already supporting these children.'
- 'I think it would be helpful to have a clear definition for parents of the purpose of an EHCP. We had a moving forward meeting with county with a parent and it was really useful.'
- '...we have parents who believe we won't back the EHCP application because it will come from our budget. They are confused as to why we won't support when they've been told by EH/SW/Paediatrician to apply.'
- 'I add the reason for a parent application in my appendix 2 but this does not appear to be picked up on by the SEN officer.'
- 'There is huge frustration from parents about how long it takes to get children assessed for eg, ASD/ADHD. We-as many schools do-provide support for presenting need, but we are often the front-line dealing with parent's frustrations. They are not able to speak to other professionals. They are also often disappointed that once diagnosis is made, they often have one meeting, one report and an offer of a parenting course. It is then back to the parent and school to meet ongoing need.'
- 'From our dealings with SENCOs and schools there is concern raised by parents when they visit secondary schools and talk to secondary schools and state the support that their child receives at primary school (sometimes through HNF/1:1 or high level of support) and the secondary school saying that they will not be able to provide that level of support. Parents then panic and often think that an EHCP is the way to ensure that provision their child current accesses is received at secondary school. I think there is some work to do with secondary schools about how their support for SEN is communicated to parents.' - This is just one example of what has been noted by primary SENCOs as a real issue with the messaging and language used by secondary schools with regards to levels of support available to children transitioning into year 7.
- There are parent to parent support groups (often via social media) where tips and help is given to help each other apply for an EHCP.

- There are issues around the length of the waiting list for ASD assessments and so parents are going the route of applying for an EHCP instead to try and speed things up.
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- 'It's very frustrating when Parental requests for EHCPs are taking priority over school requests. I have an EHCP request for a pupil, who is really struggling, that was agreed for assessment back in August 2021 and we still have not heard a thing. Whereas, I have another child whose parents requested an EHCP at the end of September 2021 who has had his EHCP agreed at the end of December 2021.'

Other Discussions Worth Noting-

- Can I ask how long schools are waiting for an updated/ amended EHCP following an annual review?- Question asked by one of the SENCOs in the chat...answers from other SENCOs below...
 - o 'A long time, sometimes I don't even get one.'
 - o 'I waited 4 months for annual review and only got response because I queried it!!'
 - o 'I have been waiting over a year for changes from an annual review, we have now had another annual review in November and still awaiting a response. Parents are now bringing a Judicial review.'
 - o 'We never get updated EHCPs until the transition is due end of year 5 or start of year 6'
 - o 'I still haven't had some back from term 6. It is also tricky when the SEN officer changes and we are not informed.'
 - o 'I'm at 17 weeks and no one is responding to my emails.'
 - o 'Not sure what happens to the Annual Review forms at KCC, a parent was recently advised by a SEN officer that they are just filed and not looked at unless chased.'
 - o 'I got all of my EHCPs back after Annual Review..... maybe different case workers?'
 - o 'I usually get a letter if no changes need to be made but if there are significant changes to B and F, we get nothing, despite chasing and chasing.'
- HNF- If it didn't have to be reapplied for until year 8, would this help? – Alison Farmer asked this question of the SENCOs.
 - o All who answered gave a resounding, 'Yes!'
 - o Other SENCOs added, 'Yes Alison...just like if it (HNF) followed a child from Infant school to Junior school it would make a big difference.'
 - o 'We have a single Infant feeder school and have to re-apply for every child who had high needs funding at the Infants. We have to assure the parents the support will be in place, with no guarantee we will get the funding until the September. Same child, same need, except even more vulnerable because they are transitioning. The same is

then true when they go to Secondary. I provide all the information I can to help the Secondary school apply.'