

Frequently Asked Questions

SEND updates 20/21

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EHC plans

Question: What is happening about Section 1 - this is not available anymore so how would parents initiate their own request? Has this been replaced by Section A?

Answer: Parents can initiate their own request by emailing, writing to or calling their Area SEN Office. There is advice for parents regarding requesting an EHC needs assessment on the Local Offer and this can be found by clicking [here](#).

Question: Is the new EHCP template in place now? Will the old format be accepted?

Answer: All new EHCPs will be issued on the new template.

Question: Are other appendices going to change too?

Answer: We will work with stakeholders to continually improve the suite of documents that professionals use to provide advice and information during the EHC needs assessment process.

Question: Is Section A always completed by officers as it was blank on a brand new EHC plan released recently?

Answer: The views of children, their parents and young people are gathered during the EHC needs assessment and, if a plan is issued, written in to Section A of the EHC plan

Question: Will all the appendices be sent automatically to schools with the EHCP?

Answer: Yes, all Appendices will be sent with the EHC plan each time. If this does not happen, please contact the Officer to request that they are provided. The appendices should be read in conjunction with the plan and provide useful additional information and advice.

Question: Will priority need type be shared?

Answer: The provision required to support a CYP with SEN to make progress towards achieving their identified outcomes are set out in the EHC plan, so identifying priority need in relation to provision to meet need is not required. However, we are aware that the removal of the

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identification of Priority need from EHC plans has led to discussions relating to High Needs Funding. Currently, please continue to use your professional judgement to identify priority need when applying for HNF. The HNF Officer will contact you if they require additional information.

Question: Are Section B, E, F ordered by which need type has the most impact?

Answer: No

Question: Will OT advice be included in the appendices?

Answer: Any OT advice and information provided as part of the EHC needs assessment and used to write the plan will be included in the appendices. In most instances, OT provision is written into Section F.

Question: Will the EHCP's be updated by the LA after each annual review, or only when there are significant changes?

Answer: EHC plans will be updated when an amendment has been requested and it is agreed that this change is so significant that the EHC plan should be amended and re-issued. EHC plans will also be updated at Phase transfer.

Question: Will key medical diagnoses letters also be included in packs to schools with the EHCP?

Answer: Any report or letter that has been used to provide information and advice as part of the EHC needs assessment will be included in the Appendices. It is important to note that medical diagnoses are only included in EHC plans where we have direct evidence of this from a letter or diagnostic report.

Question: Will section F outline provision outside MCS?

Answer: Section F sets out provision that is quantified and specified; this includes what the provision is, how often it will be delivered and for how long (session length and sometimes number of weeks it will be delivered for) and by whom. Many of the interventions and approaches set out in the MCS could appear in Section F.

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Question: Will section B and F include targets for each of the four need types?

Answer: No, only the needs that have been identified and the provision required.

Question: Are time scales improving for the issue of plans and new plans following annual reviews?

Answer: Yes, we are improving our compliance with the statutory 20 week timescale for Statutory Assessment. We are starting work to improve our performance around the completion of Annual reviews.

Question: Is there an expectation of SENCOs to rewrite the existing EHCPs into this format?

Answer: No, SENCOs do not write EHC plans and will not be asked or expected to transfer existing EHC plans on to the new template.

Question: Is there still an appendix 2? Or is it just the family views form?

Answer: Yes, advice and information from schools (and other education providers) is an essential part of the EHC needs assessment.

Question: Will there be an example placed on KELSI?

Answer: SENCOs are not required to write EHC plans so there would be no requirement for an exemplar for schools. Schools see a range of EHC plans for their pupils and at consultation.

Question: Will there be a review of the timings for the key transition points?

Answer: The statutory deadlines for phase transfers will remain the same until or unless there is a change in legislation (15th Feb for transfers in to or between schools and 31st March for Post - 16 transfer). However, we are reviewing the advice we give to schools and other providers regarding how we gather parent/ YP views about the next phase of education.

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Question: Considering the huge backlog, was this the right time to change the whole EHCP document and not just amend it? For SENCOS its already really confusing and time consuming chasing and then reviewing the old documents sent and explaining this to parents.

Answer: The previous EHC plan template was not compliant with the SEND Code of practice 2015 or the SEND regulations, so introducing a new template could not be delayed. We understand that having two templates in the system could be confusing for CYP and their parents, and schools. Gradually, over time, the EHC plans on the previous template will disappear from the system.

Question: Are there implications for SRP funding given the change?

Answer: There will be no changes to SRP funding as result of the new EHC plan template.

Question: Are there still pre and post 16 versions for student voice?

Answer: No

Question: How does SRP funding link to the description in Section I?

Answer: Where a plan describes a mainstream school with support provided by the SRP, this means a funded SRP place

Question: Is there a link where parents can upload the pupil voice section?

Answer: Not currently – this can be emailed.

Question: Will there be training to support new SENCOS's in the key statutory processes? E.g. writing appendices

Answer: We will provide training around the completion of the updated Appendix 2

Question: Is the provision plan template changing? This has resources/strategy sections still which used to be copied over from the EHCP.

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Answer: The template on KELSI is a suggested format. We will be working with SENCOs to develop a new and updated suggested provision plan template.

Question: Are there any planned changes for contacting professionals/ agencies who have worked with the child, for example SLT.

Answer: No

Question: Can training on writing App 2 be part of NASENCo qualification

Answer: The content of the NASENCo qualification is agreed by University Examining Boards.

Question: How can we support parents to fill in their appendix as there are fewer questions and they are not as specific. I have had some parents find this hard to fill in - i.e. what should they mention?

Answer: Parents should be supported to complete the document in line with the questions asked as well as including additional information they may wish to share that doesn't seem to fit in a particular box.

Question: Would Edukey templates be acceptable to SEN and to HNF processes?

Answer: Yes

Question: Is there a mechanism for parents to be advised that speaking to their child's school as part of their EHC plan request is the most appropriate process?

Answer: The Local Authority must consider whether to carry out an EHC needs assessment if parents or the school request this. When parents make this request, we will always ask the school for information about the child. Once the request has been made the 20 week process starts. If we are aware that a parent is considering making a request for an EHC needs assessment, or parents ask for support from IASK, they are advised to discuss their wish to make the request with their child's school or education provider.

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Question: How long are EHCP taking currently?

Answer: We are not meeting the 20 week statutory timescale for the majority of assessments, although this is improving (in Feb 48% of all EHC plans issued were issued within 20 weeks of the request for assessment). Completing the assessments that are beyond 20 weeks is also a focus of our work.

Question: Has the number of parental requests gone up since providing an on-line request for parents?

Answer. In the months directly following the full re-opening of schools after lockdown, the number of parental requests has increased. We are making sure that parents and young people are provided with information about the Graduated Approach (including the MCS), the importance of discussion with SENCos/post-16 providers before they reach the link to request an EHC needs assessment.

Question: As a local area does you take account of private educational psychology reports if parents or the school agree to fund them?

Answer: Yes - if the report is less than 2 years old. The report will be reviewed by Kent Educational Psychology to explore whether further information or advice from an EP would be useful.

Question: In Kent, can SENCOs request a statutory assessment, and what is the process?

Answer: Schools can make requests directly to KCC SEN Service. Here are the details for the district contacts:

North Kent

Joynes House, New Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 0AT
Tel: 03000 41 93 45 or email: SENNorth@kent.gov.uk

South Kent

Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8XU
Tel: 03000 42 08 89 or email: SENSouth@kent.gov.uk

East Kent

Brook House, Reeves Way, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 3SS
Tel: 03000 42 11 60 or email: SENEast@kent.gov.uk

West Kent

Worrall House, 30 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4AE
Tel: 03000 42 09 97 or email: SENWest@kent.gov.uk

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Question: I wonder if we have considered why there is an increase of parental requests in our area? Given I see multiple suggestions from Health and local supportive SEN charities I wonder if this needs to be addressed?

Answer: We are working with all stakeholders to ensure that they are aware of how schools work to support CYP with SEND and that an EHC plan is required for a small number of CYP with SEND. The publication of the MCS is supporting these conversations.

Question: I'm still relatively new to post so making appeals is new to me. Is there somewhere you can direct me to for all the advice I need on supporting parents?

Answer: Parents have the right to appeal some of the decisions made as part of the EHC needs assessment and some sections of a Final EHC plan. Details on how to appeal to SENDIST are included in our communication with parents at all decision points (add a link here). We would always encourage parents to contact us to discuss any concerns they have. If this communication does not resolve the situation, mediation is available. Parents can seek support and advice from the [IASK website](#) about any aspect of the EHC needs assessment process, including appeals to SENDIST. There is also information on the Local Offer.

Question: I have also had several moving forward plans from Early Help which ask the school to apply for an EHCP. What is the best way to manage these expectations?

Answer: We will inform colleagues in Integrated Children's Services know that this is happening and work closely with their teams to provide further information about the EHC needs assessment process

Question: It is difficult when parents choose to request, and school do not agree with parent however it is not SENCO'S position to decide. Is there any advice around this? E.g., I would always complete an appendix 2 at the time of request for those that I feel is needed.

Answer: It may be helpful to involve the SEND Provision Evaluation Officer in your discussions with parents where parents are anxious or concerned about the provision in place for their child and/or the progress they are making. If no, or very little additional SEN provision is required to effectively support the child, and this info is provided by the school, this will inform our decision about whether to carry out an EHC needs assessment.

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Question: Do we have to go through the LIFT process to request a child for an EHCP Assessment? As a new SENCo, I have been led to believe this is the case; however, in some cases I've now been waiting for engagement/support from the STLS for over 14 months. This has then led to parents requesting their own EHCP Assessment.

Answer: No, you do not need to seek permission or approval via LIFT to request a an EHC needs assessment. Some SENCos do like to discuss with the group prior to submitting a request but this is not a requirement. In most cases, CYP will have been discussed at LIFT as part of the Graduated Approach.

Question: Does the 20 weeks start from when you receive the application or from when you make the decision to assess?

Answer: We must complete the assessment within 20 weeks of the request for assessment.

Mainstream Core Standards (MCS)

Question: Do the Mainstream Core Standards have any legal standing?

Answer: The Mainstream Core Standards were co-produced by parents, CYP, SENCo's, STLS, Health practitioners and KCC. They set out the expectations of the Local Area; they are not a Statutory document but reflect best practice that the local area has identified and expects schools to be able to provide for their pupils from their own resources or using those available in their locality. It is expected that schools will sometimes need to seek support in areas where they have less experience.

Transition and Transfer

Question: Will pupils transferring to secondary school get an updated EP report to reflect the transition?

Answer: No, not unless this is indicated through an Annual review.

Annual review

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Question: Will the annual review documents be revised to match the format of the new EHCP? For example, Section A

Answer: The Annual review documents will be reviewed, in collaboration with stakeholders

Question: If not using Kent template for provision plans does this mean we don't have to submit with annual review paperwork? Or would we submit our own ones to show the regular reviews with parents?

Answer: Please do submit reviewed provision plans

Question: What is the timeframe for replies to annual review request for changes to be made?

Answer: The SEND Code of Practice 2015 states that the local authority must decide whether it proposes to keep the EHC plan as it is, amend or cease the plan within four weeks of the Annual Review meeting. If the plan is to be amended, it must issue the amended EHC plan within eight weeks of the amendment notice. This means that where changes have been requested and agreed, the amended plan must be issued within 12 weeks of the annual review meeting. In the majority of cases, we are not meeting this timescale. We are developing and will be implementing a plan to address the current situation as a matter of urgency.

High Needs Funding

Question: Section I is key to be clear for SRP or HNF Funding. There needs to be a closer link between SEN / EHCP and the HNF process. They seem to operate so independently. Does Section F should generate the HNF automatically?

Answer: We are reviewing how HNF is provided to schools for CYP with EHC plans and receiving SEN Support.

Question: Will priority need/ second need question be taken off HNF application now then?

Answer: Not at the moment as this is needed to calculate the amount of funding provided. Please see previous question and response

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Health

Question: Referral forms for ASD and ADHD are online. This has been difficult for some of our parents who do not have digital resources. Will paper copies be provided?

Answer: This has certainly been recognised and digital poverty is currently a county priority. There are schemes for families to obtain devices and data. The care navigators are supporting parents at a primary care level too. If there are individual issues, always speak directly to the organisation requesting the information as they should make reasonable adjustments, within East Kent there are plans in place to have an online portal on the website where schools can refer children.

Question: Can you put the link for ASD awareness for parents?

Answer: <https://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/services/child-health/community-child-health/children-with-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/>

You may also find support on the local offer see link below:

[KCC SEND information hub \(Local Offer\)](#)

Question: Can the new mental health navigators be available for schools to contact?

Answer: The Care Navigators will be invited to attend health coordinators will attend the next SENCO forum to speak to everyone.

Question: There is an increasing number of Health issues that are consistently being pushed back to schools. This often comes with advice from those professionals to apply for an EHC plan and high needs funding. Is this something that is being addressed collaboratively by Health and SEND?

Answer: Thank you for raising this, we will - share communications relating to requests for EHC needs assessments and how the Local Authority provides High Needs Funding to schools. We are aware that when Health practitioners, including GPs, make recommendations or suggestions to parents relating to their child's education provision, this causes parents anxiety and can reduce their confidence in the SEN provision put in place by their child's school. We are working with other agencies and providers to ensure that they are aware of how mainstream Early Years settings, schools and Post 16 providers meet the needs of CYP with SEN and are familiar with the MCS. If your school receives a clinic letter or report that

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recommends that an EHC needs assessment be requested/ the CYP requires an EHC plan/requires a special school placement, please seek parental permission to share this information with your SEND Area Manager who will pass this information to the SEND Head of Service and DCO for follow up.

Question: When doing OT referrals for children in SRP's it really is necessary for OT's to come and observe as they do not fit the usual interventions, but we are in desperate need of help. How do we encourage this please?

Answer: The reason we now always start with a virtual appointment is because we know that, as a starting point we will need to spend time talking to parents/ young family/ school and this can be done virtually. After this meeting, the therapist will decide next steps

Question: If the child is on the assessment pathway for ASD or ADHD which has a 2-year delay, does this impact on the decision to carry out statutory assessment negatively as there is no diagnosis as yet?

Answer: A particular medical diagnosis is not required in order for the LA to agree to carry out an EHC needs assessment We look at the needs that have been identified (e.g. social communication difficulties, anxiety), what has been done so far to identify needs and the provision in place for the CYP.

Question: Is there a clear communication to medical practitioners that it is very unhelpful to document in their reports that a pupil needs an EHCP?

Answer: Yes, this is regularly communicated to health practitioners.

Question: Would someone be able to clarify how a child is diagnosed with dyspraxia? Is this OT or paediatrician?

Answer: Both professionals are involved - the Paediatrician's role is rule out any other underlying condition.

Provision Evaluation Officers (PEOs)

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Question: How do you see the role of the PEO and STLS working together?

Answer: The roles are different; SEND PEOs do not work directly with CYP. They advise on provision (based on professional recommendations rather than direct work), progress towards outcomes, SEN provision development, statutory processes, HNF etc. PEOs work closely with their colleagues in STLS who do work directly with CYP, both through regular district meetings and in relation to the provision in place for CYP where STLS may be supporting.

Question: Will the new PEO's get in contact with schools to introduce themselves?

Answer: Yes, although please do make contact if you would like to meet with them before you hear from them. You can contact the team by emailing Tania Lawrence, Administrative Officer. Tania.Lawrence@kent.gov.uk

Inclusivity and support

Question: What is the LA offering for nurture, will there for example be any funding offered for this?

Answer: The Local Authority is currently commissioning a county wide approach to nurture, which will be fully funded.

Question: How is the training going to be differentiated so it is not repetitive for schools who already have a highly inclusive approach with a focus on nurture?

Answer: The directory will categorise the training by impact expected and level of prior knowledge required. whilst not finalised yet the plan is to have agreed levels so there is progression through staff development

SEND Information Hub – Kent's Local offer

Question: I have googled SEND Information Hub but I can't find it. Is it up and running now?

Answer: Please see the local offer/ information hub see link below:

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[KCC SEND information hub \(Local Offer\)](#)

Additional questions

Question: Why do parent's not tend to take up the personal budget?

Answer: The majority of parents choose that all SEN provision for their child is delivered by their child's setting, school or Post-16 provider.

Question: Is there a certificate for the last AEN update and this one?

Answer: No there are not currently certificates for the SEN updates. This is something that can be considered

Question: What capacity is being built in the team, to improve communication? Schools wait weeks for a response and have EHC outcomes that are still unresolved after a year?

Answer: The increase in the number of Assessment and Placement officers is improving the standard of our communication with parents, YP and professionals.