

# Understanding the EHCP: A Guide for Parent Carers



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# What is an EHCP?



An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is a legally binding document for children and young people aged 0 to 25 who have significant special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

It outlines their specific needs, the support they require, and the intended outcomes across education, health, and social care.

# SECTION A – The Child or Young Person's Voice



This section captures the views, interests and aspirations of the child or young person (CYP) and their family. There's no right or wrong way— this is their story.

- Aspirations must come from the CYP themselves
- Covers play, friendships, schooling, independence, health, employment goals
- Describes how they communicate and how to involve them in decisions
- Can include their history and important preferences

If written in the first person, it must be clear if it is the CYP speaking or someone on their behalf.



# SECTION B – Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All special educational needs must be clearly listed. This section is legally binding.

Key categories include:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs

From Year 9 onwards, additional categories address preparation for adulthood:

- Education, Employment and Training
- Community Inclusion
- Independent Living
- Health and Wellbeing

# SECTION C – Health Needs

Lists any health conditions linked to the CYP's  
SEND, e.g.:

- Medication
- Speech & language therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Medical appointments

These needs must be supported by  
professional reports (listed in Section K).

## SECTION D – Social Care Needs

Includes support required due to disability or SEND, such as:

- Early Help
- Family support
- Child in Need (CIN) assessments
- Support under Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

## SECTION E – Outcomes

This section outlines the goals for the child or young person. These should be:

- SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound
- Based on CYP aspirations
- Directly linked to needs in Section B and provision in Section F
- Supportive of progress in education, wellbeing, and independence

# SECTION F – Special Educational Provision



This legally binding section details the exact support the CYP must receive to meet the needs outlined in Section B.

Provision must be:

- Specific – Who will deliver it, what, when and how
- Quantified – Frequency, duration, setting
- Needs-led – Not based on available resources

Avoid vague terms like:

“should have”, “regular support”, “access to”,  
“will benefit from”.



## Health Provision

Details the actual health services or therapy needed to meet Section C needs (e.g. CAMHS support, medication monitoring, equipment).

## Social Care Provision

Sets out services the LA must provide, including respite care, personal care, or other support services.

## SECTION I – Educational Placement

Parents and young people have the right to request a:

- Maintained school (mainstream or special)
- Academy
- FE college
- Non-maintained special school
- Section 41 school

The LA can only refuse if:

- The setting is unsuitable for the CYP's needs
- It affects the efficient education of others
- It's an inefficient use of resources

## SECTION J – Personal Budget

Outlines any personal budget agreed and how it will be used to meet provision (usually in Sections F, G or H). It includes:

- What the budget is for
- How it will be used
- Any direct payments agreed

# SECTION K – Index of Reports

All professional advice used to inform the EHCP must be listed here, including:

- Educational Psychologist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Paediatrician
- School staff
- Social Care and more

You should receive copies with the EHCP draft.

# Final Checklist

## Timelines You Should Know

- 16 weeks: LA must respond to a request for assessment
- 20 weeks: A final EHCP must be issued if agreed

## Important Questions to Consider

- Do you and your child or young person (CYP) fully understand the EHCP?
- Is the plan written in clear, accessible language?
- Have all relevant professionals provided input?
- Are the outcomes and provisions specific, achievable, and realistic?
- Is there enough detail to hold services accountable?

# In Summary

The EHCP must be:

- Grounded in a clear and accurate understanding of the child's or young person's needs
- Clearly written, detailed, and legally enforceable
- Focused on the voice, views, and aspirations of the child or young person
- A practical and purposeful roadmap to support their success in education and beyond