

**Practice Guidance**

**Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

**Social Care Advice Process**

1. **Introduction**

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) are used to make special educational provision for children and young people. Effective EHC Plans help to achieve the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care, and help prepare them for adult life. Most pupils with SEND will have their needs met from the resources available in mainstream schools, however a small but significant proportion (just over 3% of the pupil population) will require provision to be made through an EHCP.

For many children and young people, support with their social care needs is provided by people within their family network - friends, family, universal services and community groups, coordinated via an early help assessment and plan if needed. Sometimes when children and young people’s support needs are at complex/significant level support may have to be provided through services delivered or commissioned by the Trust, for example Short Breaks, which would be accessed through a social work assessment.

1. **Aim**

This document provides practice guidance for Family Support Workers, Social Workers and other colleagues in the Trust involved with providing information for statutory Education Health and Care Needs Assessments.

The focus of this practice guidance is the provision of social care information and advice as part of the Education Health and Care Assessment and Planning arrangements. There is a detailed process map at Appendix One which shows the overall process for undertaking Education Health and Care Assessments (EHC Assessment) and developing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP). The process is led by the Birmingham City Council SENAR (SEN Assessment and Review) Service.

1. **Requests for EHC Assessment**

The process for EHC Assessment begins with a request to consider assessment. This will often be made by the child/ young person’s educational setting but can be requested by parents, foster carers, young person over 16 and under 25, or anyone else (with the knowledge of the young person), including professionals involved with a child. This can be School SENCO (Education), Education Psychologist (LA Education Psychology Service), Community Paediatrician, Health Visitor, Nursery, Social Care etc.

The Local Authority must decide whether an EHC assessment is required and give their decision within **6 weeks**.

A SENAR principal officer collates initial information, and a panel decision is made about whether to proceed to an EHC Assessment.

1. **Requests from SENAR for information**

Requests for information from social care will be at two stages of the EHCP process:

* **Stage One** – when information is being gathered to inform a decision about whether or not an EHCA is appropriate. CASS is not involved at this stage.

* **Stage Two** – when a decision has been taken to complete an EHC Assessment. A Social Care Advice form needs to be completed identifying any social care involvement, any social care needs identified and provision that may be required to meet them. This information must be provided to SENAR within six weeks.
	1. **Requests regarding children and young people who already have an allocated Family Support Worker or Social Worker**

Requests are sent by SENAR to the Children with Disabilities Service Business Support team by email. The business support officer should forward the requests to the practitioner involved with the child/ young person, plus the team manager Children with Disabilities Service Early Help and Guidance Team, who will allocate an EHCP Officer to track and support the completion of the Social Care Advice (SCA) Form, and agree timescales for completion. The EHCP officer will make contact with the allocated worker in the wider Trust to again confirm the timescales, support them to complete the form appropriately and remind them if the SCA form becomes overdue.

If you are already working with a child or young person and you receive a request for advice you may not need to complete any additional work with the family as you are likely to be aware of the child/ young person’s current circumstances.

Information should be returned to the EHCP Team within the timescale given when the information is requested – the timescale will usually be two weeks before their six-week deadline for returning information to SENAR. EHCP officers will send out reminders when the deadline for return of information to them is approaching. Once completed and returned to EHCP Team, the allocated EHCP officer will check the information provided and speak with the relevant social worker or other workers in the Trust if amendments need to be made. If there are no amendments then the EHCP officer will forward the Social Care Advice Form to their team manager to review before they are sent back to business support (SENSocialWorkAdvice@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk ) who will send through to SENAR. Should any amendments be made such as typo’s, the final version which is sent to SENAR will also sent back to the other worker in the Trust for their records.

Please make sure that you include a summary of social care involvement , including summary information about social care needs from most recent assessments, Child in Need plans, child protection plans or child in care reviews.

If the Trust is no longer providing services to the child/ young person but involvement ended within the last three months the requests will still come to you and you should complete your social care advice based on the work with the child/ young person while you were working with them. If you are unable to provide sufficient information or have little knowledge about the child, you should inform the EHCP officer who can then make contact with the family to check for accuracy and gather updated information.

Completed SCA forms and details of conversations with parents should be recorded on the child/ young person’s social care or early help record.

* 1. **Requests regarding children who are not currently being supported by social care, and haven’t had an allocated worker within the past three months**

The requests are sent by SENAR to the Children with Disabilities Service Business Support team by email. The business support officer should forward the requests to the EHCP Officers’ team manager. They will allocate the child/ young person to an EHCP Officer, who should contact the family, gather information and provide advice. Where parents are living separately, the absent parent, including fathers, should be contacted for information and views during this process. If attempts to contact the father/ absent parent are unsuccessful this should be recorded on the child’s file.

The EHCP Officer should contact the family by telephone to obtain social care information from them which would go into a social care advice form. If safeguarding concerns are identified during the call, EHCP officers should discuss with their manager whether to make a referral through CASS.

If you have difficulty contacting parents please refer to the information at Appendix Two.

When gathering the information from parents/carers for the social care advice form, they should be told about the local SEND offer and any other voluntary organisations which are appropriate.

The general advice that can be provided is:-

* *As a parent carer of a child/young person with SEND needs you may find it helpful to be in touch with the Carers Hub which is run by Carers Forward (details* [*here*](https://carersforward.org.uk/)*). This offers support and advice and guidance to parent carers about caring issues. It also hosts the Disabled Children’s Register and information and support is available through the Carers Hub.*
* *If you have siblings who provide some support for child/young person you may wish to refer them to a Young Carers organisation (details* [*here*](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20065/support_for_carers/1288/young_carers)*)*
* *This information is provided as part of the SEND provisions and is intended to confirm that we have discussed with you some social care advice. This relates to the systems and support in the community which may be available either now or in the future should your child have social care needs. We advise that you look at the Birmingham SEND local offer (*[*details here*](https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/)*) and the BCT social care website (*[*details here*](https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/)*).*
* *You should be receiving assistance from your child’s school/nursery/college, please link up with the school if you are having difficulties with the teacher/ SENCO. Should you need access to services in the future, please refer to the SEND local offer for information about a range of services.*
* *From our experience with young people, enablement and social inclusion through sport, play and leisure is a very effective way of helping children with SEND to join in with leisure activities in the community, which we know helps to regulate and stimulate children and provide interest and wellbeing.*

After you have spoken with the family this should be followed up with a letter confirming the outcome of the discussion and containing any additional information which would be helpful for them. Appendix Three contains a standard template that can be used and amended as applicable. Letters and conversations with parents should be stored on the child’s record on eclipse.

If it appears that the child/ young person’ has significant or complex needs, or If at any point there appear to be safeguarding concerns, this should be discussed with your line manager and if appropriate a referral made through CASS.

If the family are saying they would like a Family Assessment to be able to access resources such as short breaks or home support, CASS should consult with the Children with Disabilities Service Duty Team to see whether it meets their threshold for an assessment. If it does, then it can be referred in the usual way, if not then CASS should pass this to Early Help or ASTI to consider allocation to their teams for an assessment.

Once you have spoken with the family you should complete the Social Care Advice Form and return to SENAR.

1. **Completing the Social Care Advice Form**

The template for social care advice should be completed succinctly but with enough information to contribute towards a decision regarding whether or not an EHCP is required.

Clearly there will be more comprehensive information available for those children and young people who you are working with or have recently supported. Having an established working relationship with them will enable you to gather their views and aspirations directly from them.

For children and young people who have not been involved with the Trust, information about their views is likely to be more limited, especially if there are few or no social care needs. In those situations, it expected that their parents will provide that information during the telephone conversation.

Appendix Four contains some examples questions you could use to guide the conversation with parents to obtain the information needed for the social care advice information for the assessment.

Where parents are living separately, the absent parent, including fathers, should be contacted for information and views during this process. If attempts to contact the father/ absent parent are unsuccessful this should be recorded on the child’s file.

* **Section 1** **– Child/ young person’s information**
* **Section 2 - Background**
	+ If the child/ young person was not previously known to the Trust, include a sentence with this information.
	+ One paragraph to include either the reasons for our involvement; current issues and actions planned going forward
	+ **Section 3 – Views, interests and aspirations of the child and their parent/s**
	+ One paragraph, including what is identified as important to the child/young person and their parent/s. This could include access to cultural and social activities outside of home and school; friends; pursuit of hobbies or interests.
	+ As advised in the previous section, for children and young people who are not currently involved with services this information is likely to come from parents. This is also relevant where a child/ young person has a disability or is unable to verbally communicate their wishes and feelings for this part of the process. Where children and young people are able to express their views, their wishes and feelings should be gathered direct from them.
	+ **Section 4 - Care Needs (this is what goes into Section D)**

*This advice is made as a result of the C&F Act 2014, SEND provisions.*

* Strengths – what is going well for the child/ young person and their family? What support do they currently receive from extended family, friends, community members and professionals?
* Social care needs – Does the child/ young person have any unmet needs which are having a negative impact on their outcomes? Are their parent/s receiving help and support in their caring role?Does the family know how to access the Local Offer and Family Information Services?
* Standard general social care advice to be included in this section (draft wording, to be amended as needed) –
	+ - *We have contacted the family and have provided advice to them directly around some social care needs, we have included how to contact us in future should this ever be necessary. We have advised families to look at the SEND local offer for early advice and to raise requests for assistance around SEND issues with the school, college or nursery. Generally, we promote young people engaging in sport, play and leisure to help improve their interest and emotional wellbeing. We encourage all professionals and families to promote activity with their children.*
* **Section 5 – Outcomes for the child/ young person**
	+ This should link with the child/ young person’s aspirations identified by themselves or their parents. What does the child/ young person want their future to look like? What would they like to do socially that they don’t already do? What do their parents think will help their child have a fulfilling life?
	+ **Section 6 – H1 – Any social care provision that must be made for a child under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person’s Act 1970 (CSDPA) – *See Appendix Five for examples of the different needs***

*What forms of extra support does the child/ young person require with personal care, mobility, communication, keeping safe and other practical daily living activities due to their disability/chronic health impairment?*

**This includes:**

* Support at home such as personal care and any equipment and/ or adaptations
	+ Non-residential short breaks such as holiday clubs and leisure activities etc. on the basis that the child/ young person will benefit from the break as well as their parent/s
	+ Travel assistance in the community and support to take part in community and leisure activities
	+ Any provision identified to support the child/ young person’s parent/s
	+ **Section 7 – H2 - Social care provision reasonably required as a result of the child/ young person having special educational needs *– See Appendix Five for examples of the different needs falling under Sections H1 and H2***

*What support is provided or could be provided through social care services which are delivered or commissioned by the local authority; including early help and statutory services and which are not provided under s2 of CSDPA?*

**This includes:**

* + Any social care provision which is not provided under s2 of CSDPA, which could be identified through e.g. Early Help, Child in Need and Safeguarding assessments
	+ For children and young people under 18 this includes residential short breaks and services provided to children arising from their SEN but unrelated to a disability
	+ This should include any provision secured through a social care direct payment
	+ Adult social care provision for young people aged over 18 under the Care Act 2014

***It is important to be able to make the distinction between services that are planned or being provided under H1 and H2 above as they will be identified separately in the statutory Education Health and Care Assessment and resulting plan.***

1. **Following completion of the Social Care Advice Form**

The completed form must be returned to SENAR within **six weeks** of receiving the request. EHCP Officers completing the information should send it to their team manager for review within the timescale agreed on allocation before sending it to the following inbox:

**SENSocialWorkAdvice@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**

Business support will then send back to SENAR.

Once all the information is received by SENAR Service, a decision will be taken about whether an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is required. If they decide an EHCP is required they will input the information gathered from ourselves and other professionals and put this into a draft EHCP, which should be developed within **14 weeks** of the request for the EHC Assessment.

The team will receive a copy of the draft EHCP and will be asked to review the social care information that has been pulled out of the social care advice and ensure this is correct and applicable to the child.

A final EHCP should be completed by SENAR within **20 weeks** of the original request for EHC Assessment.

If the Trust is currently working with the child/ young person we will be involved in annual EHCP reviews.

**Appendix One**

**EHCP Advice Process**

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**Appendix Two**

**Process to follow if there is any difficulty**

**in making contact with parents**

1. Firstly, try all the contact numbers that have been listed on the SCA request.
2. If no answer from any of the telephone numbers after 1 x attempt, send out a letter to parents, using the Template attached to request a call back from parents and add this date/time into your diary.
3. If you require alternative contact numbers or an email addresses, do not send to individual case officers, but use the central inbox SENAR@birmingham.gov.uk with the heading in the subject box ‘Parent Contact Details Required by Social Care’.
4. Once alternative numbers or email addresses have been provided, contact the families straight away to prevent any delays.

[**Template to use for letters (available for download on Trix)**](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/16384/ehcp-advice-contact-request-letter-to-parents-v10-august-2022.docx)**:**

Dear Parent/Carer/Guardians:

As part of your child’s Education, Health, Care request for assessment, Birmingham Children’s Trust is required by SENAR to gather information for Section …. which relate/s to your child’s social care needs.

The team have attempted to contact you on the telephone numbers provided with no success. Therefore, could you please return the call on (DATE) and (TIME) so we can gather the information for the Social Care Advice.

If this date and time is not convenient, please contact me to make an alternative appointment.

Yours sincerely

EHCP Officer

Birmingham Children’s Trust

**Appendix Three**

**Template letter to parents**

[**A template letter is available on Trix**](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/16383/ehcp-advice-feedback-letter-to-parents-v10-august-2022.docx)

Dear

Thank you for speaking with me on (date) about (child’s name) (or amend if this is to the young person). As discussed, we have been asked to provide information about xxx’s social care needs as part of an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment under the SEND provisions of the Children & Families Act 2014.

During our discussion we spoke about what is going well for xxxxx, what their aspirations are, what help xxxx is currently receiving and whether xxxx has any unmet needs relating to social care. I’ve summarised my understanding of our conversation below

I’ve summarised below what I understood from our conversation to be your family strengths and aspirations, and any social care needs which were identified when we spoke. I’ve also included some additional information about services which you may find helpful.

**Strengths**

* Identify things the family think are positive about the child
* Identify things that the young person likes to do

**Social Care Needs**

*PROMPT – think about the needs that may be identified to include (this list is not exhaustive):*

* Difficulties to engage in social care activities
* Difficulties to read social interaction or cues
* Being isolated outside of the school structure
* Difficulties with self-care skills
* Difficulties using public transport
* Challenging behaviour in the home and/or in the community
* Lack of awareness of danger in the home requiring constant supervision
* Extremely limited mobility
* Complex health care needs

*Where unmet needs have been identified, provide information about any relevant provision which may be available within the SEND local offer that can meet that need. e.g. difficulties to read social interaction or cues – we would recommend that you contact Autism West Midlands (or an alternative available via the local offer) in relation to potential support which may meet that need and enable (Child’s name) to be able to develop confidence and self-regulation in social settings.*

From our experience with young people enablement and social inclusion through sport, play and leisure is a very effective way of helping children with SEND to join in with leisure activities in the community which we know helps to regulate and stimulate children and provide interest and wellbeing.

*General advice would be:*

You can find lots of help, advice and information about services available for yourself and your child/ young person on [Birmingham’s SEND Local Offer Website](https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk)

**Birmingham Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)** is a free, confidential service that offers impartial information, advice and support to families of children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, and young people themselves (aged 16+). You can call them on 0121 303 5004 (8:45am to 5pm, Monday to Friday), or email them at sendiass@birmingham.gov.uk

As a parent carer of a child/young person with SEND needs you may find it helpful to be in touch with the [Birmingham Carers Hub](https://birminghamcarershub.org.uk/). This offers support and advice and guidance to parent carers about caring issues. It also hosts the Disabled Children’s Register and information and support is available through the carers hub.

**The** [Birmingham Parent Carer Forum](https://www.birminghampcf.org/) **is a voluntary group** whose purpose is to become the bridge between services and families and a collective voice representing all members and all disabilities.

If you have siblings who provide some support for child/young person you may wish to contact [Birmingham Young Carers](http://spurgeonsyc.org/birmingham/), who provide support for young carers up to the age of 18.

You can find information about children’s social care services on the [Birmingham Children’s Trust website](https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/)

For any issues specific to your child/ young person’s nursery, school or college please contact them direct to discuss any queries or concerns.

If you have any questions about the Education Health and Care Assessment or Planning process please contact xxxxxxx

Yours sincerely

**Name**

Job Title

**Appendix Four**

**Examples of questions**

The following are examples of questions you could use to guide the conversation with parents to obtain the social care advice details:

* What is important to the child?
* Do they have access to leisure activities outside of home/ school – for example meeting with friends, going to social groups or clubs, have they any hobbies or interests? What challenges/barriers do they face in accessing activities?
* What help and support do you have with (child’s name) at the moment? (prompt from extended-family, friends, community members and professionals)
* Do you know how to access the Local Offer and Family Information Services?
* Are you receiving any help from agencies or organisations within the Local Offer? Is it helpful to you?
* What is going well for your child?
* What do you or (child’s name) find difficult doing, challenging or stressful?
* Is there anything that is not going well? For example, do you have any worries about (child’s name’s) safety at home, school or in the community? Is there anywhere they feel unsafe? (**If safeguarding concerns arise from this question, discuss with the Team Manager or Senior Practitioner to see if an Early Help Assessment if required. Do not offer the assessment directly to the family until discussed with Manager or Senior Social Worker**)
* What are (child’s name) hopes and wishes for their future? What do you want their future to look like?
* Apart from when your child/young person is at school, do you ever have the opportunity to have a break from your caring role?

**Appendix Five**

**Examples of Needs under Section H1 and H2[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Section H1** - **Social care provision which must be made for a child or young person under 18 resulting from section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (CSDPA)**

Jack (10 years old) will have a place reserved at the local specialist holiday scheme for young children with autistic spectrum disorder. He will be able to attend for six halfday sessions of his parents choosing during each school holiday period. This is funded by the Children with Disabilities team.

Anna (16 years old) will receive two hours per day help at home from a personal assistant to support feeding and dressing/ undressing. This time will be split across the morning and afternoon and will be available seven days a week.

Amir (12 years old) will have his home adapted to provide a lift from the ground floor to first floor and for a walk in shower. This will be provided from the Disabled Facilities Grants budget.

Mike (10 years old), Mike’s family and his early help worker will plan an individual activity programme for Mike which will give him access to a range of leisure activities and outings outside the home. These activities will be delivered by the local junior activities provider. lanning will be completed by the last week of the summer term. The activity programme will be made up of:

* one activity per week for a length of two hours delivered on an individual basis;
* one activity a month in a group of three primary aged children with similar needs for half a day.

**Section H2 - Any other social care provision reasonably required by the learning difficulties or disabilities which result in the child or young person having SEN**

Tatra (13 years old) will have a block of seven consecutive nights at the local residential short breaks provider to allow her parents to have a holiday. These short breaks will be available twice in this calendar year, and should be taken approximately six months apart. This provision will be reviewed in 12 months’ time.

John (19 years old) will work with the Access for All team to help him identify two community activities per week that he wants to take part in when he is not at college. The team will provide a support worker and transport to take John to and from these activities twice a week.

Alan (20 years old) will have his accommodation adapted to give him:

* a self-contained bedroom with walk in shower; and
* storage space for the equipment he uses on a daily basis.

This will be commissioned by the Adults Independent Living Team and is based on

the quote provided.

**Appendix Six**

**SEND Advice Request**

**SEND ADVICE Request - For the attention of the SW/FSW and Team Manager**

A request has been received from SENAR for Social Care Advice to support an EHC Needs Assessment for (NAME).

The child/YP is allocated to you as a Social Care Worker.  There is a statutory duty to respond within 6 weeks of the date of the request.

Please see the attached Social Care Advice Template. You need to fill this in, save onto Eclipse and return to the email below.

There is advice and guidance on what to do on the Practice Guidance on Tri-x  on [***https://birminghamcs.proceduresonline.com/local\_resources.html#***](https://birminghamcs.proceduresonline.com/local_resources.html)

***The section is :Children with Disabilities; the sub section Special Needs***

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| --- | --- |
| [EHCP Draft Advice Letter to Family](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/4301/3019-cb-sw-v-10-final-09-12-19-ehcp-draft-advice-letter-to-family-170120.doc) | January 2020 |
| [EHCP Social Care Advice Guidance for Family Support Workers](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/4304/3018-cb-sw-v-10-final-09-12-19-ehcp-guidance-for-family-support-17012020.doc) | January 2020 |
| [Local Offer - Early Help](https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/?highlight=WyJlYXJseSIsImhlbHAiLCJlYXJseSBoZWxwIl0=) | January 2021 |
| [SEND Tribunal: Single Route of Redress National Guidance](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/2758/send_tribunal-single_route_of_redress_national_trial_guidance-ct-110518.pdf) | June 2018 |
| [SEND EHCP Advice Process](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/4302/send-ehcp-advice-process-updated-04-11-2019-170120.pdf) | January 2020 |
| [Social Care Advice Template](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/4303/social-care-advice-template.docx) | January 2020 |

**Once the Social Care Advice has been completed it needs to be returned to** **SENSocialWorkAdvice@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk** **by (DEADLINE).**

If you need some advice and guidance, please call ( Name)

1. From Council for Disabled Children [*Education Health and Care Plans – examples of good practice*](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/EHCP%20Exemplar%20Guide%202017.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)