

A parent's guide to:

Reviewing your child's draft EHCP (Education Health and Care plan)



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If you are a parent or carer who has just received your child's first draft EHC plan, it may be the only EHCP you have ever seen and you may be asking yourself how you can judge whether it is a 'good' plan. This leaflet is intended to help you go through the plan carefully and in detail so that you can answer that question.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of practice 2015 paragraph 9.61 says: *"EHC plans should be clear, concise, understandable and accessible to parents, children, young people, providers and practitioners. They should be written so they can be understood by professionals in any local authority"*

So that's the place to start. It is not a quick job as you need to read not only the plan but all the reports that the plan is based on which are listed in Section K of the plan. There is a lot of paperwork to consider so if this is something you might find difficult, you can contact SENDIASS for help by completing this **form** or by calling **01865 810516**.

What are the different sections in the plan?

There is no national standard format for the EHC plan. However, it must have certain sections that are clearly labelled;

- A:** The views, interests and aspirations of you and your child.
- B:** Special educational needs (SEN).
- C:** Health needs related to SEN.
- D:** Social care needs related to SEN.
- E:** Outcomes - how the extra help will benefit your child.
- F:** Special educational provision (support).
- G:** Health provision.
- H:** Social care provision.
- I:** Placement - type and name of school or other institution (blank in the draft plan).
- J:** Personal budget arrangements.
- K:** Advice and information - a list of the information gathered during the EHC needs assessment.

Brief overview of what each section contains

Section A should provide a quick summary of your child's views, wishes and aspirations. It should be based on information given by you and your child or young person. Section A is not legally binding, so the main detail of the plan should not be in here.

Section B *must* describe **all** your child's special educational needs i.e. what your child has difficulty with. These may be put under four broad areas of SEN:

- Cognition and learning.
- Communication and interaction.
- Social emotional and mental health.
- Sensory and physical.

Section C contains any health care needs related to your child's condition or SEN. This can be physical or mental health difficulties, for example difficulties with eating, severe anxiety, or a medical condition such as epilepsy.

Section D contains any social care needs related to your child's special educational needs or disability. E.g. support to join in with activities outside home and school.

Section E contains the SMART 'outcomes' that you are hoping for your child, in other words what will the extra help they are getting through the EHCP enable them to do. *For more detail on deciding the outcomes you could read 'A parents' guide to outcomes'.*

Section F contains details of the help your child will get in their educational setting. This section must be 'specific' and 'quantified'. This means it should be very clear about what support is given, how often, for how long and who will give it. Therapies such as speech and language will normally be in section F. Anything that "trains or educates" your child/young person is to be provided by education and therefore will be in Section F. Think 'trains and educates'. If any therapy comes in this category, it should be in F.

Section G is the healthcare provision required, for example: medication, equipment such as a wheelchair, nursing support, monitoring seizures.

Section H is social care provision. This might be short breaks, out of school activities or support for the family at home.

Section I names the school or other setting your child will attend to receive the provision set out in the plan.

In a draft EHC plan, Section I must always be left blank, because this is your opportunity to let your local authority know what school you want your child to go to.

Section J If you have requested a personal budget, Section J will contain information about this. A personal budget is not extra money but a more flexible way of using the funding allocated to your child. There is information on personal budgets [here](#).

Section K contains all the reports gathered as part of the assessment process including any information you have sent in as a parent.

Getting started

Make sure you have both the plan and all the reports listed in Section K, a pen and some different coloured highlighters and allow a good amount of distraction free time.

Now read through the plan.

Check the details – are your child's name and address and date of birth correct?

Are your name and contact details correct?

Section A – sometimes called the 'all about me': *Questions to ask yourself:*

- Do you recognise your child from what is written?
- Does it say everything that you or they would want people to know about them? E.g. their strengths, things that matter to them, things they find difficult including how that impacts on their self-esteem, their interests, their hopes for the future, their SEND?
- Does it state clearly what will best support their learning and development to help them make progress?

If you're not sure, ask others who know your child or contributed to plan to read it too.

- Does it show clearly which were your child's views in their own words, how those views were obtained and what were your views as their parent?
- Does it clearly show your child's hopes for their future as this thread of 'aspirations' should run through the whole plan?

If you think anything is missing, jot it down. Your views or your child's views in Section A should be just as you wrote them. You can add to it at this draft stage.

Section B – Questions to ask yourself as you read this section:

- Does it accurately describe your child's difficulties? For example, at 10 years old Sally has a reading age of 6 years old.
- Does it include **all** their difficulties?

Section C – Questions to ask yourself as you read this section:

- Does it include all the medical needs which impact on your child's learning?
- Is there medical jargon that needs explaining for non-medical professionals?

Section D – Questions to ask yourself as you read this section:

- Have any social care needs which relate to your child's SEND been identified? E.g. how your child's SEND impacts their home life and getting out and about locally.

Section E – Questions to ask yourself as you read this section:

- Do the outcomes tie in with what your child hopes for their future as written in Section A including things that will help them to make progress towards their aspirations?
- Can you imagine your child or young person saying those words?
- Are they relevant?
- Do they reflect the things that will be the building blocks towards the future they are hoping for?
- They need to be age related especially as your child gets older and prepares for adulthood. From the age of 16, the young person becomes the 'owner' of the plan, i.e if they are able to, they are the ones who voice their views and wishes for the future and it needs to be forward thinking e.g. looking at steps that help the young person be ready for FE college or an apprenticeship. It should not only focus on education like being able to reach a certain level but could have things about life skills, independent travel, completing application forms, getting in touch with career guidance etc.

Section F – Questions to ask yourself as you read this section:

- Is there provision which matches all your child's needs that were identified in Section B?
- Is there enough detail about the help your child will get?

IMPORTANT – the Code of Practice clearly states:

(F) The special educational provision required by the child or the young person

- **Provision must be detailed and specific and should normally be quantified, for example, in terms of the type, hours and frequency of support and level of expertise, including where this support is secured through a Personal Budget**
- **Provision must be specified for each and every need specified in section B. It should be clear how the provision will support achievement of the outcomes**

SEND Tribunal Case law states that the provision set out in Section F must be “*So specific and so clear as to leave no room for doubt as to what has been decided is necessary in the individual case.*” This means that words and phrases like “as appropriate”, “as required”, “regular”, “periodic”, “opportunities for”, “subject to review”, “ should not be used.

IMPORTANT – Where health or social care provision educates or trains a child or young person, it must appear in this section (see paragraph 9.73 of the SEND Code of practice).

So therapies which educate or train a child/young person must be specified in this section rather than in the health care provision or social care provision sections.

Ask yourself: if this provision was not delivered would your child or young person still be able to receive education and/or training on a par with those without SEND?

This might include -speech & language therapy; physiotherapy; occupational therapy; CAMHS services (child and adolescent mental health services) e.g. CBT, delivered by a trained therapist, at school to train a pupil with anxiety disorder to give them strategies to deal with anxiety that arises suddenly in setting.

IMPORTANT If your child is in or beyond Year 9 (broadly speaking, 14 years old or older) Section F must also set out the provision required to help prepare them for adulthood and independent living, e.g. support for finding employment, housing or for participation in society.

The Council for Disabled Children has **some good practice examples of plans** for young people in year 9 and beyond.

Section G – Questions to ask yourself as you read this section:

- Is it clear and jargon free so that a non-medical professional can understand what support is necessary and how it will be provided?
- Does it cover mental health as well as physical if needed?
- Does it clearly link to your child’s aspirations and outcomes?
- Does it cover the necessary Specialist services and support, such as therapies and medical treatments, equipment and nursing support
- As provision in this section is secured by the relevant health body, is it clear who is going to provide this, how often, what skills they need?

Section H – Questions to ask yourself as you read this section:

- Does it outline short breaks or respite care that your child has been assessed as needing?
- Does it outline enabling support or support with personal care and independence?

Section I – Questions to ask yourself as you decide which school to put here:

Part I will be blank- don’t panic, this doesn’t mean they will have to change school. If the school your child is attending is able to provide the support detailed in the plan, then most parents will ask that school be named in the plan.

- Do I want my child to remain in their current setting? (many parents do)

If you want an alternative school, it is a good idea to visit a range of schools to help you make the decision, so that you can give clear reasons as to why you believe this school rather than any other school is most appropriate for your child. ‘**A Parents’ guide to choosing a school**’ or **How to find a special school appropriate for your child’s SEND** might be

helpful or using <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/> to help identify an appropriate school.

Section J – This section will probably be blank unless you have specifically asked for a personal budget. You might do this if you believe that some of the provision your child needs would not be available in school from a commissioned budget.

When you return the draft plan, you'll be asked whether you would like a personal budget. If you say yes and the LA and school agree, you would then later be able to see detail about the amount of money available to deliver the personalised parts of your child's EHC plan in this section.

Section K – *Questions to ask yourself as you read this section:*

- Are there any missing reports? Are all the reports that the plan was based on included?
The EHCP can only be written based on the information contained in these reports.

Now read the reports

Use one coloured highlighter to pick out any of your child's needs or difficulties that the report writer identifies in the report and a different colour to pick out the support that the professional who wrote the report suggests needs to be put in place.

You may remember seeing these points already in section B or section F of the plan but if you notice anything that describes a need or suggests support you don't remember seeing, put a mark by it. It's a good idea to jot down what page of which report it's on then go back to the plan and see if you can find it. These are the sorts of changes you might ask the SEN officer to make to the draft.

EHC draft plan timescales

You have **at least 15 days** from the date the draft was sent to respond. During this time you can:

- Tell the LA about any changes you want made to the plan. Be as specific as possible about the changes you want made by suggesting alternative wording. Back up your requests by referring to the reports in section K.
- Express your preference of school to be named in section I of the plan.
- Ask the LA to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the draft plan.

If time is very tight, e.g. if you need some help to check the plan, ask the LA for an extension. Most will agree to this - the exact wording of the regulations is at least 15 days.

As a result of your 'representations' i.e. the amendments you requested and the name of the school you want your child to attend, the LA may:

- Issue a final plan now with a school or setting named in Section I with all or some of the changes you want.
- Issue an unchanged final plan other than the name of a school or type of school or setting in Section I
- Make changes of their own if new information has become available. e.g. a new report that came in in the interim and reissue the plan in a draft form.

The local authority **must** issue a final plan **within 20 weeks** of the initial request for an EHC needs assessment.

Reviewing a draft EHC plan issued after an annual review

The EHC plan must be reviewed at least once a year to make sure it is up to date and still appropriate.

The EHC plan will remain in place until your child leaves education or the LA decides that your child no longer needs the plan to help them in their education.

At the end of the review process, after the LA have received the report from the Annual Review meeting, they can decide whether to make changes to the plan, cease to maintain it (in other words your child will no longer have an EHCP), or leave it unchanged. This should be discussed at the review meeting. Read more about **Annual Reviews here**.

Even though you may well now be familiar with what an EHC plan looks like, you need to check it has been properly updated after an annual review meeting to reflect any changes in your child's needs and the support they should have. Their hopes for the future might have changed as they have got older, some things that were difficult might not be as difficult, others might have got more difficult.

You should also receive any information that amendments were based on with your draft amended plan.

So read the draft that has been issued after the Annual Review meeting.

Anything new added will be shown in bold and anything removed will be struck through.

Ask yourself:

Has Section A been appropriately amended to show any change in views or aspirations of the child or young person or you as parents?

Has it been appropriately revised to reflect your child or young person's progress and changes in their SEND or the support they need?

Is the information up to date? A young person of 16 shouldn't still have information, e.g. he is obsessed with Thomas the Tank Engine, that was in their plan at 5, if that is no longer true.

As with your first draft plan, you have 15 days to ask your local authority to make changes. It is helpful if you can be as specific as possible

Note that the name of the school, college or other education setting in section I of the draft EHC plan will be left blank again. This does not assume you will ask for a change, it is just so you can say which school or college you want to be named in the final Amended Plan.

Sendiass Oxfordshire can offer all year round:

- A telephone helpline, 9.30-2.30 weekdays with answerphone outside these hours:
01865 810516
- Information, advice and support on matters to do with a young person's SEND
- Help with communication between you, the school and the Local Authority
- Trained volunteer Independent Parental Supporters and Independent Supporters
- Advice about preventing and resolving disagreements
- Training events for parents and groups – see SENDIASS website
- An informal Drop In SEN Advice session, 'Talking Points', – see website for dates

**Contact us on: 01865 810516 or
text 07786 524294
sendiass@oxfordshire.gov.uk
<https://sendiass-oxfordshire.org.uk/>**

Confidentiality Code:

Everything you tell us will be treated in strict confidence. We will not disclose our records to, or discuss the case with, a third party outside SENDIASS Oxfordshire without your consent, except if we suspect a child is at risk.



Are you interested in finding out the Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum, who they are, what they do and how to get involved.

See the back page.

Who are we?

We are a group of parents just like you. Our children have a wide range of needs, from mild to severe, including physical disabilities. Some have 'hidden' impairments, like mental health issues, ADHD or dyslexia, while others have behavioural problems, or no firm diagnosis.

What do we do?

As members of the National Network of Parent Carer Forum's we support the development of parent carer participation, a process in which parents work together with professionals to make improvements to local services.

We believe that 'Every Child Matters' and that all disabled children and young people in Oxfordshire, should have access to the same opportunities, experiences and information, as any other child.

Our Vision is to be a well informed, connected and empowered community of families of children with disabilities or additional needs.

We will offer support to each other and working in partnership with health, education and social care we will create quality services that meet the needs of all parent carers and their children/young people.

We will build links with as many informal and formal groups, both those of parents and professionals and use those links to promote communication between professionals and parent bodies.

We aim to provide reasoned feedback and support to professionals and ensure young people and their families are listened to.

How to get involved?

By joining us you can:

- receive information about opportunities for you to help shape local and national services.
- opportunities to meet like minded families.
- contact us at any time for information; sign posting; support groups or to tell us 'what is going well?' or 'what would be better if?'

Are you a parent; grand parent or carer?

Do you have parental responsibility for a child or young person with additional needs or a disability, who is aged between birth and 25 years old and lives in Oxfordshire?

Are you a friend of parent carers?

Are you a practitioner; provide services; provide resources; run a support group; provide parent courses; run articles?

Would you like to?:

- receive information relevant to changes.
- let us know about your service or resource so we can signpost families.
- provide information to our families.
- share dates of workshops, courses or events.
- receive our press releases.
- let families know about us.

Join us

Membership is free and does not commit you to anything.

To find out more and or to register an interest in joining the forum:

Tel: 07394 735666

Email: info@oxpcf.org.uk

Web: www.oxpcf.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/oxpcf/>

Twitter: @OxPCForum

Instagram: [ox_parentcarers_forum](https://www.instagram.com/ox_parentcarers_forum)