

Education, Health & Care (EHC) Needs Assessments and EHC Plans

Guidance for Parents and Carers

This leaflet is for parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) living in Nottingham City.

The Local Offer

Nottingham City's Local Offer is the central place to access all information about services and support available to children and young people with SEND and their families. It includes information about education, leisure, social care and health services from birth to 25, to help children and young people and their families to make informed choices.

Nottingham City's Local Offer can be found at: [Special Education Needs & Disabilities Local Offer | Ask Lion - Nottingham City Directory](#)

Getting the Right Support

Education

Nottingham City uses a graduated approach to services and support, and most children and young people with SEND will have their needs met within the resources available to schools and colleges without the need for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

Funding for High Level Needs support is already included in schools' and colleges' budgets, but additional funding is available to top this up for individual children and young people with the most complex support needs.

There is a teacher in every school called a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). They are responsible for planning the provision for children and young people with SEND in their school. If you are concerned that your child may not be receiving the support they need, you should first discuss your concerns with the class teacher or SENCO as they have the most frequent contact with your child. You can also raise queries or concerns with the Head Teacher and the school's governing body. Working closely with school staff will often help address issues swiftly and successfully.

Getting the Right Support

Health

Disabled children often have very complex health needs. NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) works with disabled children and their families to provide the very best healthcare. The aim is to make sure that disabled children and young people grow up to be happy and healthy.

If you have any questions about your child's health, talk to your health visitor, school nurse or family doctor. As well as providing you with help and advice about staying healthy, they can put you in touch with other specialist health and social care services.

Your health visitor, school nurse or family doctor will be able to help you with a wide range of health issues, such as your child's growth and development, sleeping, mobility, continence, behaviour, diet and eating, immunisations and common infections. They will also be able to help you access more specialist support if you need it.

Getting the Right Support

Social Care

Disabled children and their families often need some additional support from social care teams. This can include short breaks and respite care, holiday play schemes, care in the home, and equipment and adaptations.

As a parent, you have the right to ask for your child's needs to be assessed by social care services. You also have the right to ask for a carer's assessment for yourself.

An assessment could lead to services being put in place for your disabled child, or to help you as their carer. Alternatively, the Whole Life Disability Service may direct you to other services if they are more appropriate to meet your family's needs.

If you think that you or your child would benefit from the help of social care services, you can contact the Whole Life Disability Service using the following contact details:

Email: disabledchildren.team@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Telephone: (0115) 88 38266

Multi-Agency Planning and Support

In a very small number of cases, it may become clear that the child or young person's needs are not being met by the current support available and a more detailed multi-agency approach is required. In this case, a multi-agency meeting would be the best way to draw together all the professionals working with the family. This should identify the child or young person's needs and support requirements and provide them with a co-ordinated multi-agency support plan to meet those needs within universal, targeted and, if appropriate, specialist services. Schools may want to consider including staff from support services, such as Educational Psychology, the Autism Team etc., as well as wider services, like the Youth Justice Service, Speech and Language Therapy Service etc.

Education, Health & Care Plans

An Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan brings a child's education, health and social care needs into a single legal document. It describes what outcomes the child/young person will work towards, what support they require to meet their needs and who will provide the support.

An EHC Plan can cover the age range from birth up to the time of leaving education, which may be up to the age of 25 if necessary.

There could be opportunities for parents/carers to have more choice and control about how their child receives support through the Personal Budget element of the plan.

If it is felt an EHC Plan is required, an EHC needs assessment can be requested. See below.

Requesting an Assessment

The following people have a specific right to request an EHC needs assessment:

- The child's parent
- A young person over the age of 16 but under the age of 25
- Children and young people aged 10-18 in youth custodial institutions
- A person acting on behalf of a school or post-16 institution.

In addition, anyone else can bring a child or young person who has (or may have) SEND to the attention of the local authority. This could include:

- Foster carers
- Health and social care professionals
- Early years practitioners
- Educational psychologists
- Youth offending teams, probation services and those responsible for education in custody

Where possible, this should be done with your knowledge and agreement.

Parents, carers and young people over 16 can request an assessment by contacting the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service for an application form, either by phone on 0115 876 4300, by email at special.needs@nottinghamcity.gov.uk or by writing to: the SEN Service, Building 5, Woolsthorpe Depot, Woolsthorpe Close, Bilborough, Nottingham NG8 3JP. An assessment request form is also available online at:

[Special Educational Needs Service - Nottingham City Council](#)

The form needs to be filled in by you (and/or your child if he/she is over 16) AND your child's education setting.

Once a Request for Assessment is Received

If you request an EHC needs assessment, the SEN Service will contact you to introduce themselves and talk through what will happen next and clarify any details if required.

The SEN Service will collect supporting information from educational professionals that work, or have worked, with your child recently.

Once all this information is gathered, professionals will consider if it is necessary to carry out an EHC needs assessment.

Decision Not to Proceed with an Assessment

If the decision is made not to proceed with an assessment, the SEN Service will write to you, outlining the reasons and giving recommendations of next steps to help meet your child's needs. Your child's education setting will also receive a copy of this letter.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss the decision further, you may find it helpful to meet with an Officer from the SEN Service to discuss any concerns. You may also wish to request mediation services to help resolve any disagreements. You will also have the right of appeal to the first tier of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

Carrying Out the Assessment

If the decision is made to carry out an assessment, you will be sent a letter telling you this and outlining the assessment process and timelines.

The SEN Service will then gather further information and advice from professionals involved with your child, to add to the information already provided. It will write to your child's educational setting, an educational psychologist, Health services, Social Care and other specialist services involved.

Once all reports are received, a panel of professionals will consider if it is necessary to issue an EHC Plan.

Deciding If an EHC Plan is Needed

The SEN Service will contact you to let you know if an EHC plan is required. It will aim to do this within 16 weeks of the date it received your request for assessment and let you know if there are delays.

If an EHC Plan is not required: you will be given the reasons why and the opportunity to discuss any queries or concerns with an Officer from the SEN Service. You may also wish to request mediation services to help resolve any disagreements. You will also have the right of appeal to the first tier of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. You will be given details of how to request mediation and how to appeal.

If an EHC Plan is required: a draft EHC plan will be sent for you to consider. The sections about educational placement and personal budget will be left blank. You will be asked which school or college placement you would like to be named in the EHC Plan. This will be the placement your child will attend. Where relevant, there will also be discussion about whether you wish to have a personal budget.

Issuing the Final EHC Plan

Once you receive the draft EHC Plan, you will have 15 days to tell the SEN Service what you think about its content and to give your views about the educational setting you would like your child to attend. This may be the school or college they already attend. If required, you will have the opportunity to talk with an Officer before the plan is finalised.

You should receive the final version of the EHC Plan within 20 weeks of the SEN Service receiving your request for assessment.

The EHC Plan will be reviewed at least annually and your views and those of your child will be central to this process.

The EHC Assessment Timeline: the process takes a maximum of 20 weeks:

BY THE END OF WEEK 6:

An EHC assessment request form, completed and signed by both the parent (and young person if over 16) and educational setting, is received by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service.

The SEN Service contacts the parent/young person to explain what will happen next.

The SEN Service collects supporting information from education professionals that work, or have worked, with the child/young person recently.

Professionals consider the request form and supporting information and decide whether to assess:

If the decision is *not* to assess: the SEN Service writes to the parent/young person (copying in the education setting) outlining the reasons for the decision and giving recommendations to help meet the child's/young person's needs.

If the decision is to assess: the SEN Service inform the parent/young person of the decision. It requests reports from the educational setting, an educational psychologist, Health services, Social Care and other specialist services involved with the child/young person.

BY THE END OF WEEK 14

The people asked to provide information write their reports and send them to the SEN Service.

A range of professionals consider the reports and decide whether to issue an EHC Plan.

If the decision is *not* to issue an EHC Plan: the assessment reports are sent to the parent/young person, along with a letter (copied to the education setting) explaining why a Plan is not required. Information about mediation, rights of appeal and how to arrange a 'next steps' meeting with the SEN Service and education setting is also sent.

If the decision is to issue an EHC Plan: the draft Plan is written and sent (along with the assessment reports) to the parent/young person and the professionals that wrote the reports.

BY THE END OF WEEK 20

The parent/young person are invited to comment on the content of the EHC Plan and state which educational setting they would like naming in Section I of the EHC Plan.

The SEN Service considers the parent/young person's responses. It will consult with educational settings and consider their responses alongside the parent/young person's views. A placement is then identified and named in the Plan.

The final EHC Plan is issued to the parent/young person and all relevant professionals/services, along with details of mediation and rights of appeal etc.

Further Support and Advice

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Information, Advice & Support Services (IASS)

Website: www.askusnotts.org.uk

Email: enquiries@askusnotts.org.uk

Tel: 0800 121 7772

Nottingham City Families Information Service

Email: fis@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Tel: 0800 458 4114

Rainbow Parent Carer Forum

Website: www.rainbowpcf.org.uk

Email: admin@rainbowpcf.org.uk

Tel: 07837 278 981 and 0115 786 0211

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service

Email: special.needs@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Tel: 0115 87 64300

Whole Life Disability Service (WLDS)

Email: disabledchildren.team@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Tel: 0115 88 38266

Personal Budgets and Direct Payments

Email: direct.payments@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Tel:

0115 87 63500 (direct payments for children)

0115 87 63682 (direct payments for adults)