

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: www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/localoffer

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. Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) 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, you, the school, or professionals working with your family may feel that your child's needs are not being met by the current support available, and that a more detailed multi-agency plan is required. In this case, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process would be the best way to draw together all the professionals working with your family. The CAF should identify, at the earliest opportunity, your child's needs and support requirements and provide a co-ordinated multi-agency support plan to meet those needs within universal, targeted and, if appropriate, specialist services.

If it becomes clear that the extent of your child's needs have not been fully identified, or that, despite receiving appropriate support, your child is not making good progress, you, the school, or professionals working with your family can request an EHC needs assessment.

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. An EHC plan describes what outcomes the child will work towards, what support is required to meet the child's 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 a family to have more choice and control about how their child receives support through the Personal Budget element of the plan.

Requesting an EHC Needs 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

This should be done with the young person's and parent/carers' knowledge and, where possible, agreement. You can apply for an EHC needs assessment via the following website:

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/education-and-schools/special-educational-needs-service/

Once a Request for Assessment is Received

If you request an EHC needs assessment, the SEN Service will contact you with further information. In addition, the SEN Service will collect supporting information from educational professionals that work, or have worked, with your child within the last 2 years.

Once all this information is gathered, professionals will consider if it is necessary to carry out an EHC needs assessment. The SEN Service will notify you with the decision within six weeks of receiving the assessment request.

Decision Not to Proceed with an Assessment

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

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 notified and the the assessment process and time-lines outlined.

The SEN Service will then gather further information and advice from professionals involved with your child, to add to the information already provided. They 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

Within eight weeks, the SEN Service will notify you to let you know whether it considers that an EHC plan is required. If a plan is required, a draft EHC plan will be available for you to view and consider. If an EHC Plan is not issued, 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.

If a draft EHC plan is issued, the sections about educational placement and personal budget will be left blank. You will be asked to identify which school or college placement you would like to be named for your child to attend. Where relevant, there will also be discussion about whether you wish to have a personal budget.

Issuing the Final EHC Plan

Once you have access to 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 to or meet an Officer before the plan is finalised.

You will have access to the final version of the EHC plan 6 weeks after the issue of the draft EHC plan. The EHC plan will be reviewed annually and your views and those of your child will be central to this process.

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

An EHC assessment request is received by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service.

WITHIN 6 WEEKS OF THE REQUEST BEING RECEIVED:

The SEN Service contacts the parent/young person to give them further information.

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

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

If the decision is *not* to assess: the SEN Service notifies the parent / young person 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 parent/young person are notified 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.

UP TO 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 parent/young person is notified 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 made available.

If the decision is to issue an EHC plan: the draft plan is written and made available to the parent/young person and the professionals that wrote the reports.

UP TO THE END OF WEEK 20:

The parent/young person has 15 days 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: askus@futuresforyou.com

Tel: 0800 121 7772

Ask Iris (an information service for parents and children)

Website: www.askusnotts.org.uk

Email: communications@futuresforyou.com

Tel: 0800 85 85 20

Children's Centre Information Service at the City Hospital

Email: infoservicescdc@nottshc.nhs.uk

Tel: (0115) 883 1157 and 883 1158

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)