



What is an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan?

RANi Need to Know Guides | EHCP Advisory sheet 1

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A comprehensive guide for parents, carers, and young people on understanding what an Education, Health and Care needs plan is.

What is an EHC Plan?

An **Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan** is a legal document for children and young people aged 0 to 25 who have **special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)** that cannot be met through support provided by a school or setting on its own.

It brings together **education**, **health**, and **social care** support into one plan. It sets out:

- The child or young person's **needs**,
- What **support** must be provided,
- What **outcomes** (goals) that support should help them achieve.

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The plan is **legally binding**. The local authority must make sure the support in the EHC plan is provided.

Who can get an EHC Plan?

EHC plans are for:

- Children and young people aged 0–25 years,
- Who have **special educational needs**,
- And need **more support than a mainstream school, nursery or college can normally provide**.

A child or young person **does not need a diagnosis** to qualify – what matters is the level of need and support required.

How do I get an EHC Plan?

To get an EHC Plan, you need to go through an **EHC needs assessment**. This can be requested by:

- A parent or carer,
- A young person over the age of 16, or
- The nursery, school, or college.

The local authority must decide within **6 weeks** whether to carry out the assessment. If they agree, they will gather advice from professionals such as:

- Educational psychologist,
- School or setting,

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- Health professionals (e.g. paediatrician or therapist),
- Social care (if relevant),
- The parents and young person themselves.

If they go ahead, the **whole process must take no more than 20 weeks** from the request to issuing the final EHC Plan.

What does an EHC Plan include?

An EHC Plan has 12 sections (labelled A to K). The most important sections are:

- **Section A:** Views, interests and aspirations of the child or young person and their family.
- **Section B:** A clear description of the child's **special educational needs** (SEN).
- **Section C:** Health needs related to SEN or disability.
- **Section D:** Social care needs related to SEN or disability.
- **Section E:** Outcomes – what the plan aims to help them achieve.
- **Section F:** **Specific special educational provision** to meet the needs in Section B.
- **Section G:** Health provision (e.g. therapies).
- **Section H:** Social care provision.
- **Section I:** The school, college or other setting named in the plan.
- **Section J:** Details of any personal budget (if agreed).

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- **Section K:** Advice and information gathered during the assessment.

Section F is the most important for education. The support listed here is legally binding.

What makes a good EHC Plan?

A strong EHC plan should:

- Clearly describe your child's **needs** in detail,
 - Include **specific and quantified** support (e.g. not just “regular support” but “3 x 30-minute speech therapy sessions per week”),
 - Be **person-centred** – reflecting your child's personality, strengths, and goals, Set out **clear outcomes**, and have input from all relevant professionals.
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What happens after an EHC Plan is issued?

Once a final EHC Plan is issued:

- The local authority must **secure** (arrange and fund) the special educational provision in Section F.
- The named school or college in Section I must **admit** the child or young person.

The plan is reviewed **every year** in an **Annual Review** to check if it's still working or needs changing.

If your child is changing school (e.g. moving to secondary or college), there are **special rules** to make sure plans are updated in time – this is called a **phase transfer**.

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What are my rights?

You have the right to:

- **Request an EHC needs assessment,**
- Be **involved** in the assessment process,
- Ask for a **particular school or college** to be named in the plan,
- **Request a personal budget,** and
- **Appeal** to the SEND Tribunal if you disagree with certain decisions.

You can appeal if the local authority:

- Refuses to assess your child,
- Refuses to issue an EHC plan,
- Issues a plan you disagree with,
- Refuses to amend the plan after a review,
- Decides to cease (end) the plan.

You can also ask for **mediation** if you want to try resolving things without a formal appeal.

What if my child is under 5?

The same process applies to children in the early years. An EHC plan can help secure more intensive support in a nursery or childcare setting. Children under 5 may also qualify for additional funded hours or 1:1 support through their plan.

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When does an EHC Plan end?

An EHC plan can remain in place until the young person:

- Leaves education or training (this does not include employment alone),
- No longer needs special educational provision, or
- Reaches the age of **25**.

The local authority must go through a proper process before ending a plan – and you can appeal if you disagree.

Key Things to Remember

- EHC Plans are about **needs, not diagnoses**.
 - It's a **legal document** – once issued, the local authority must deliver the support.
 - You have the **right to be involved** every step of the way.
 - Annual Reviews help make sure the plan stays relevant.
 - You can **challenge decisions** if things go wrong.
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Support and Resources

You can get further support from:

- **RANi** – Help with advice, support and impartial information
 - **Local Offer** - Help with advice, support and impartial information
 - **SENDIASS** – Local impartial information and advice service for parents and young people www.iasmanchester.org
 - **IPSEA** – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice: www.ipsea.org.uk
 - **Contact** – A national charity supporting families with disabled children: www.contact.org.uk
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Remember:

Always keep a copy of all correspondence you send, along with proof of postage or delivery. If you send documents by post, we recommend using a **signed-for** service. If sending by email, request a **read receipt** if possible.

Get in Touch

If you need more information or have a question, we're here to help.

Email us: info@rani.org.uk

Please include:

- Your name
- Your child's name
- Your child's date of birth
- Your query
- Or, if you prefer, you can fill out our online **contact form** and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

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