

Requesting an EHC Needs Assessment

Guidance for parents

Most children and young people with special educational needs will have their needs met through extra support provided by the nursery, school or college. This is known as SEN support.

However, some children and young people need more help than the nursery, school or college can provide. If your child or young person is not achieving to their full learning potential, despite the SEN support which is put in place for them, it might be appropriate to request an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment.

An EHC needs assessment is the first step to getting an EHC plan. It is a legal process carried out by the local authority (LA) and can result in additional support and funding for a child or young person with special educational needs. This guidance is to help you request an EHC needs assessment for your child or young person.

Who can request an EHC needs assessment?

The following people have a right to ask the LA to carry out an EHC needs assessment for a child or young person aged between 0 and 25:

- A child's parent.
- A young person themselves if over the age of 16.
- A nursery, school or college.

For a child under 16, the parent makes the request. This includes children from age 0 to 5, where a parent should make a request if they believe that their child will need extra help at nursery or when they start school.

In the case of a young person (over 16 and up to 25), they can make the request themselves. If the young person is not able to understand, remember or communicate decisions about the educational support they need, their parent can make the request on a young person's behalf.

When can I request an EHC needs assessment?

If a child or young person has a learning difficulty or a disability which is holding them back at school or college, and the parent of the child or young person (or the young person themselves) believes that the school or college is not able to provide the level of help and support which is needed, then a request should be made to the LA for an EHC needs assessment.

You can do this at any time, provided the LA has not carried out an EHC needs assessment for your child or young person during the previous six months, although the LA may choose to do so if it thinks it is appropriate.

When should a local authority carry out an EHC needs assessment?

If the LA is requested to carry out an EHC needs assessment by a parent, young person, nursery, school or college, they must consider:

- whether the child or young person **has or may have** special educational needs and
- whether they **may** need special educational provision to be made through an EHC plan.

If the answer to both of these questions is yes, the LA **must** carry out an EHC needs assessment.

In deciding whether an EHC needs assessment is necessary, the LA will need to consider a wide range of evidence from the child or young person; the parent; the nursery, school or college; and from other professionals already involved with the child or young person.

This evidence will include the child or young person's academic attainment (or developmental milestones in younger children) and rate of progress; information about the nature of the child or young person's special educational needs; information about the action already taken by the school or other setting; as well as information about the child or young person's physical, emotional and social development and health and social care needs.

What is the 'All About Me' form?

The 'All About Me' form helps you give your views, and those of your child or young person, as part of the information needed by the professionals who will make the decision about whether to carry out an EHC needs assessment for your child or young person. You can find the form on the Tameside Local Offer website under 'Our SEND story', then under 'Assessments for Education, Health and Care Plans', then by clicking on the 'Our Hopes and Aspirations' (All About Me) form.

Here's a quick link: <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/Education/Tameside-Local-Offer>

You can use our **guidance for parents** to help you complete the form.

How should I make a request for an EHC needs assessment?

To make a request, send a letter requesting an EHC needs assessment together with your completed 'All About Me' form and copies of any professional reports, by email or post to: senteam@tameside.gov.uk or Special Educational Needs Team, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, Hyde Town Hall, Market Street, Hyde SK14 1AL. If you have any specific queries about the process, you can contact the SEN Team directly on 0161 342 4433. You can use our **sample letter** as a template for your request.

When should I hear back?

Once the LA receives a request for an EHC needs assessment, a letter is sent to the parent or young person acknowledging receipt. Within 6 weeks of receiving the request, the LA must make a decision and tell you in writing whether or not they are going to assess your child. They should always reply to you as a parent or young person, even where the request was made by the nursery, school or college.

What will the LA's response say?

If the LA agrees to carry out an EHC needs assessment, it must ensure that you are fully included from the start. The LA must seek information and advice on the child or young person's needs; the provision required to meet those needs; and the outcomes expected to be achieved by the child or young person. This advice must come from a range of education, health and social care professionals.

If the LA refuses to carry out an assessment, it must give its reasons and you have the right to appeal against this decision. The letter should explain that there is a right to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and should contain details of a mediation service for you to contact.

How long does the EHC needs assessment process take?

The whole EHC needs assessment process, from when a request is made through to when a final EHC plan is issued, must take no more than 20 weeks.

Where can I get more information?

- The Tameside **Local Offer** website brings together a range of information on services, support and guidance for you and your child or young person with SEN. You can find it at www.tameside.gov.uk/Education/Tameside-Local-Offer
- Chapter 9 of the **SEND Code of Practice** covers statutory assessment and EHC plans. You can access the SEND Code of Practice online at www.gov.uk and search SEND Code of Practice.

An EHC needs assessment may not always lead to an EHC plan. The information gathered during an EHC needs assessment may indicate ways in which the nursery, school, college or other provider can meet your child's needs without an EHC plan.

For further information, please contact:

SENDIASS (Tameside Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service)

Tel: 0161 342 3383

Email: sendiass@tameside.gov.uk

Website: www.tameside.gov.uk/sendiass