



Education health and care plan assessments; guidance for social care staff

Introduction

Children with special educational needs or disability (SEND) can apply to Camden for extra support with their education under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice if:

- they are of compulsory school age **and**:
- they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age **or**:
- they have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream educational provision.

Extra resources can be made available to a child through a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a multi-agency package of care and support specially designed to meet all the child's needs and support their educational attainment.

Full details of the EHCP process can be found in the joint SEN policy. [sen-policy.pdf](#) (camden.gov.uk)

Purpose and scope of this guidance

This guidance has been developed to support social care professionals such as Family Support Workers, Social Workers, Short Breaks Practitioners and Youth service social care staff in Children's Family Help and Safeguarding to provide advice and information and to help them complete a social care assessment if this is required as part of an Education, Health and Care (EHCP) assessment process.

The guidance sets out the steps to be taken when social care professionals are requested to provide information on the child's social care needs along with timescales for completing actions.

Overview and timescales

EHCP process must comply with a strict timetable; the table below gives outline details of the various steps and the times in which these steps must be completed.



Action	Timescale
A request for an EHCP is made by the parent, school or professional on behalf of the child and received by the SEND service; the timescale begins at this point	Day 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEN case co-ordinator sends a written request for information from the MASH in Childrens Family Help and Safeguarding (via the Contact Service) to establish if the child is known and a summary of service involvement with the family. • The relevant team confirms what their involvement is with child(with confirmation sent by the MASH to SEND by email currently). The generic SEN email is SEN-Seniors@camden.gov.uk • If child is not known/ has not been known to services within Childrens Family Help and Safeguarding, the SEN Case co-ordinator will be notified by the MASH officer accordingly. 	Within 2 weeks
<p>The case is presented <u>for the first time</u> at the EHCP Panel for a decision on whether to carry out an EHC assessment.</p> <p><i>SEND have a statutory deadline to make a decision to assess, or not, AND inform parents, by 6 weeks (Day 42).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the decision to undertake an EHC needs assessment has been made, the SEN case co-ordinator will contact the social care professional in MASH in Childrens Family Help and Safeguarding to request the social and care needs advice and information. • Contact will be created by MASH to Early Help if the child is not previously known to social care. • Should an EHC assessment be required, advice and information, and/ or assessment will be carried out by the Early Help Front Door service in the first instance. • MASH will pass the request on to the allocated social care professional or to the Early Help Front door if the child does not have an allocated to a social care professional: 	Within 6 weeks (or no more than 10 weeks in some cases)



- A. The allocated social care professional will consider the information in the child’s current plan and their engagement with the family. The family will need to agree for the information to be provided. In addition to the child’s social care professional sometimes there are several professionals working with a family who are also social care staff, for example, adoption or fostering social workers whose role is primarily with the parent /carer but who will also know the child or young person well. There may also be an Independent Reviewing Officer if the child is looked after, or a youth offending worker who knows the child well.

In these circumstances the child’s social care professional is responsible for ensuring that all the relevant information from the different professional perspectives about the child’s social care needs is included in the information and advice provided.

The needs of the parent carers should also be considered, and sometimes parents may want a separate parent carer conversation/ assessment.

Young people who are over 18, and not supported by Childrens Family Help and Safeguarding will be referred to the MASH Adult Social Care front door.

The relevant social care professional should respond to the request using *Appendix E* to record the advice and information.

- B. Where a child under 18 does not have an allocated social care professional, the MASH will request the Early Help front door service to establish if there are any needs that require support.

This is undertaken immediately when the requests received. The Early Help officers will contact the family and complete an enquiry (i.e Engagement and Exploration assessment) to establish whether the child’s care and social needs are being, or can be met, via local area universal services and the SEND local offer. **The needs of the parent carers should also be considered, and sometimes parents may want a separate parent carer conversation/ assessment.**



The Early Help service will provide advice and information to the family about how to access further support in the future, for example the SEND local offer website and the MASH, if further assessment is not required :

- If no targeted support is to be provided at this time, the family have access to Camden's universal offer.
- If in the future the family have worries or concerns, they are able to self-refer to Camden Early Help.

The Early Help offer:

- Free support service for families with children aged 0 to 19 in Camden
- Practical and emotional support with a range of life issues
- Working with you and your family to help make changes
- Helping you and your family to feel connected in your community. Phone 020 7974 3317 (9am to 5pm - ask for Early Help) Email LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk

In addition, Camden offers a range of support for eligible disabled children and their families, including Short Breaks. The Local Offer self-assessment tool for short breaks: <http://cindex.camden.gov.uk/kb5/camden/cd/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=4-3>

If a social care assessment is required:

- this will be completed by Early Help officers,
- if there are welfare and safeguarding concerns this will be completed by CIN Service, and,
- if child functioning due to disability is severe, profound and there may also be welfare and safeguarding concerns, this will be completed by the Children and Young People's Disability service in Camden.

This cannot be a "not known situation".

The child, young person and family must agree to the content of the advice and information/assessment being provided to SEND for the purpose of the EHC assessment.



<p>There is a 6-week window to receive reports back to SEND (and back by week 12 / day 84 at the latest) to assist in the decision to issue, or not, which must be made, AND parents informed, by the statutory deadline of week 16 (Day 112).</p>	
<p>The SEN coordinator gathers information on the child's social care needs from the relevant social care professional for completion of the EHCP assessment.</p>	<p>Within 16 weeks</p>
<p>The case is presented <u>for the second time</u> to the EHCP Panel for a decision on whether to issue an EHC plan</p> <p>A coproduction meeting should take place, working through the proposed draft document, around Week 16. Professionals will be invited including a SEND Officer together with parents and the school. The SEND service will take a lead on this, and particularly if it is a complex case social care will be asked to attend.</p>	<p>Within 16 weeks</p>
<p>The case coordinator completes the final EHC plan to be put in place</p>	<p>By week 20</p>



Further guidance on dealing with requests withing 2 weeks

Within 2 weeks information about social care involvement must be provided to enable the EHCP Panel to make a decision on whether an assessment should be carried out.

All requests for information in relation to an EHCP will be to the MASH where screening officers will check to see if the child is known.

- Where the case is open or has been open in the previous 3 months, the request will be sent to the allocated social care professional /service that holds/ last held the case to provide brief details of service involvement with the family, including the type of intervention/plan, duration of work etc.
- Where the child has never been known to social care, MASH will inform SEND accordingly.

Further guidance on providing social and care needs advice and information for the EHC assessment – within 6 weeks

If the Panel agree that an EHCP assessment should be carried out, the SEN coordinator will contact the relevant social care professional to obtain information needed for the social care element of the assessment.

- Where a case is allocated (or was allocated in the previous 3 months) the information will be provided by the allocated social care professional.
- Where the case is not allocated or the child unknown the information will be provided by the Early Help Service and the Early Help manager in the Front Door Contact Service will pass requests on as follows:
 - Requests involving children under 5 will be passed to the Early Years Service and specialist health visitors to carry out an assessment of the child's needs.
 - Requests involving children of school age will be allocated to a Early Help Family Support Worker in the most appropriate team for initial contact (EE assessment).

Appendix E is completed at this stage. When contacting parent for the first time, please use attached script.



Further guidance on carrying out assessments

- Information for the social care assessment for EHC plans should consider the child's social care needs arising from their special educational needs or disability and should be recorded on Appendix E (see appendix).
- Practitioners should use information taken from any recent child and family assessment or early help assessment that has already been carried out. Where the child was previously unknown, an Early Help assessment can be carried out if requested by parents.
- Where carrying out an assessment where the child is not previously known, practitioners should contact the parent/carer to gather the information needed for Appendix E.
- If an assessment was carried out more than 12 months, an updated assessment should be carried out to refresh the information on the child's social care needs.
- Practitioners must also ensure that assessments consider needs and support under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (providing support and assistance to those with disabilities) and the Children Act 2004 and Care Act 2014 (the needs of parents and carers). These assessments can be carried out separately or as part of a Child and Family Assessment or Early Help assessment.

Moderating assessments

All Appendix E assessments and any support required in cases where the child was not previously known will be moderated by EHCP Panel.

All social care advice should be shared with parents prior to being shared with SEND and quality assured by a manager prior to being sent to the SEND service and included in the EHC assessment.

Consent

Consent from parents and young person is obtained by the SEND service at point of first contact when parents make the request for an EHC assessment. This includes consent to contact MASH, Early Help or other relevant Childrens and Adults services.

The child, young person and family must agree to the content of the advice and information/ assessment being provided.

The generic SEN email is SEN-Seniors@camden.gov.uk



Response Prompts

Below are questions that may be a useful guide to consider and that will formulate most (if not all) social care advice as part of your response. The questions will help to have supportive conversations with families and ascertain how their social care needs are currently being met and where there might be a need for additional support.

The questions will also help social workers and practitioners to filter through the evidence provided with a focus on what areas they need to be looking at. **Note that these are suggestions and responses should not be restricted to these areas.**

- What is important to the child?
- What does the child do outside of school? Do they see friends, attend groups, clubs or activities? What are their hobbies or interests? Where do they go to do these things? Do they face any challenges or barriers accessing these activities?
- In their day to day lives, what is going well for the child and their family?
- What current support do they receive from family, friends, community members and other professionals?
- What does the child and family find difficult, challenging or stressful? What is not working well currently?
- Is the child safe at home and in the community? Do they feel safe?
- Any concerns about social inclusion?
- Has the family had any previous social care assessments or involvements?
- Does the family know how to access the Local Offer and Family Information Services?
- Any transport, equipment, adaptations currently provided and by whom?
- Any direct payments provided for social care activities, respite/ short breaks?
- Any concerns about safeguarding or carers ability/ capacity to meet the child's needs?

Where a child's needs can be met through family, universal providers and the Local Offer, the following template wording for EHC plans can be used:

No targeted support at this time, however the family have access to Camden's universal offer. If in the future the family have worries or concerns, they are able to self-refer to Camden Early Help. Early Help offer:

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Young people and adults aged 18 to 25

- Where the young person is a care leaver, the personal advisor will provide the advice and information.
- If there is an allocated social care professional, they will provide the advice and information.
- A Care Act assessment and support plan may have already been completed or be in the process of being completed. These will be considered in the advice and information shared.
- The young person must agree to the content of the advice being provided.
- Where the young person or adult is known and are in receipt of services, the SEND will request the social care information and advice from the respective service.
- Where a young person is not currently or previously known to adult social care, the SEND service will refer to Adult Social Care MASH contact centre for the adult social care duty worker to provide the advice and information. If an assessment from Adult social care is declined by the young person, then formal advice will need to be sought from those who know the young person well.

