

Script for Video: What is the Purpose and Threshold of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment?

Title slide

This video will explain the purpose and threshold of an Education, Health and Care, or EHC, needs assessment and when it might be helpful to request one.

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Most children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) will have their needs met in learning settings through SEN support.

And we have separate videos for parents and young people which explain how this works and how you and your child are involved.

There will be some children and young people who may need more help, which goes beyond the resources available to learning settings to provide SEN support.

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An EHC needs assessment helps identify the education, health and care needs which are making it difficult for a child or young person to learn.


This information gathering process will also make clear what kind of support may be required to meet these needs and help the child or young person to reach their goals or aspirations.

It is the first step in the process of getting an Education, health and care or EHC plan.

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The law says that:

‘A local authority must secure (or do) an EHC needs assessment if it considers that the child or young person has, or may have, special educational needs and it may be necessary for special educational provision (or support) to be made in accordance with an EHC plan.’



(Section 36 (8) Children and Families Act 2014)

In other words, if there is a possibility that a child has a special educational need which may need support which goes beyond the resources available to learning settings to provide SEN support.

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When the local authority receives a request for an EHC needs assessment, how will they know:

- if your child has, or may have, SEN
- which may need support which goes beyond the resources and advice available to the setting?

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The SEND Code of Practice states that when a local authority receives a request for an EHC needs assessment they should consider:

Whether there is evidence that the child or young person has not made expected progress despite the learning setting taking relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet their special educational needs.

SEND Code of Practice 2015, paragraph 9.14

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The SEND Code recommends that the local authority or LA pay attention to evidence and information of:

- your child or young person's progress and attainment
- the nature, extent and context of their special educational needs
- the action already taken by the learning setting
- that where progress has been made it has been as a result of a lot of help, which is in addition to what is usually provided
- your child or young person's physical, emotional and social development and health needs, drawing on relevant evidence from health professionals and what **they** may have done to meet the child or young person's needs.

SEND Code of Practice, paragraph 9.14



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Parents often ask our service when they should request an EHC needs assessment.

The legal threshold asks just two questions:

Do you believe your child or young person has, or may have, a special educational need?

And,

Do you believe that they will need a lot of help which goes beyond the resources available to the learning setting to provide SEN support?

A parent or a young person, over 16 and under 25 years, can make a request at any time.

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Parents are often unsure if they should speak to the learning setting before making a request.

It is helpful to speak to the nursery, school or college about your worries before contacting the local authority.

You can speak to the relevant teacher, or the nursery or school SENCo (which means Special Educational Needs Coordinator) or the person at the college responsible for SEN support.

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Your child or young person does not need to have a diagnosed condition or have a disability for an EHC needs assessment to be requested.

It will depend solely on whether there is evidence that your child may have SEN which may need support which goes beyond the resources available to the learning setting for SEN support.

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Sometimes parents contact our service and share situations like this, where their child has missed a lot of schooling due to health needs and will need a lot of support to go back to learning, but they are past compulsory school age.

A young person up to the age of 25 years can request an EHC needs assessment, if they want to continue, or re-enter, education or training and they may have SEN which they believe need a lot of additional support.



This learning does not have to be in a formal learning environment like a further education college. The young person might want to do a traineeship or supported internship.

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If a child or young person has health or social care needs but no special educational needs, an EHC needs assessment will not be appropriate and will not be agreed because these assessments are concerned with barriers to learning.

However, a pupil with medical needs but no SEN can instead have an Individual Healthcare Plan (or IHP) which will set out how their medical needs can be supported in their learning setting.

And in this slide, we've included a picture of one of the pages in an IHP template to give you an idea of the information they might include.

This template can be found on this [Medical Conditions At School](#) webpage.

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There is more information on the [Health and social care](#) webpages of our SENDIASS website in Suffolk which you might find helpful.

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And we have further information and videos about SEND and EHC processes on our Suffolk SENDIASS website and YouTube channel.

[EHC needs assessments and plans](#)

[Education](#) (including information on SEN, equality, and inclusion)

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This video was made by Suffolk SENDIASS, but every county has an impartial and confidential SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.