

## **Script for Video: Who can request an EHC needs assessment and how?**

### **Title slide**

This short recording will look at who can request an Education, Health and Care (or EHC needs assessment) and how a request can be made in our county of Suffolk.

### **Slide 2**

The following people have a legal right to request an EHC needs assessment:

A child's parent or a person with parental responsibility

A young person between the ages of 16 and 25 years

And the educational setting

(reference at base of slide: **Children and Families Act 2014, Section 36 (1)**)

### **Slide 3**

However, the SEND Code of Practice says that:

'In addition, anyone else can bring a child or young person who has (or may have) special educational needs to the attention of the local authority, particularly where they think an EHC needs assessment may be necessary.'

(SEND Code of Practice section 9.9)

So, for example, a GP or a foster carer or an Early Years practitioner or a Family Support Worker or a physiotherapist or a scouts leader can contact the local authority and say why they think an EHC needs assessment would be helpful for a child or young person they know.

In Suffolk, the [Family Services team](#) are responsible for EHC needs assessments and if they receive this kind of notification, they may contact the family as a next step to get their views on this.

## **Slide 4**

If your child is past the end of the academic year in which they turn 16, the right to request an EHC needs assessment switches to them.

The SEND code says that local authorities and practitioners should normally communicate directly with the young person at this point.

But the SEND Code is also clear that the young person's family and parents should continue to be involved in discussions. The young person may also ask for the help of their parents throughout the process.

(SEND Code of Practice sections 8.15 and 8.16)

## **Slide 5**

Many parents ask us about situations like this where their child has missed a lot of schooling, for example, due to health needs, and they will need a lot of support to 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 special educational needs which may need a lot of extra help.

This learning does not have to be in a formal learning environment like a further education college. They might want to do an apprenticeship, a traineeship or a supported internship to help them develop the skills they need for the workplace. Or they may want to develop their independence and life skills through a post 16 programme via an alternative provision provider like Lapwing.

## **Slide 6**

It is helpful to speak to the nursery, school or college about your concerns about your child's learning before contacting the local authority. When a request is made for an EHC needs assessment the local authority will need to contact the setting to get some more information.

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

EHC needs assessments requests are often made by the learning setting but as we said earlier, a young person or parent or someone with parental responsibility can make a request too.

So how can a request be made in our county of Suffolk?

## **Slide 7**

An EHC needs assessment request can be made through an online portal on the Suffolk local authority website.

## **Slide 8**

We have a lot of EHC information on our impartial [SENDIASS website](#). We provide a link to the local authority EHC portal, midway down our webpage for '[Requesting an EHC needs assessment](#).'

(Click here for the [Suffolk local authority EHC portal](#).)

## **Slide 9**

This is a screenshot of the local authority EHC portal. Midway down this webpage there is a green button for starting an EHC needs assessment request and registering for a portal account.

## **Slide 10**

The local authority has produced some helpful guidance for families for registering with the portal and then using the online form.

We would recommend you look at this guidance first.

## **Slide 11**


This guidance for families includes a series of short videos explaining how to access and use the portal which you might find helpful.

## **Slide 12**

If you would struggle to access the online portal you can make a request to the [SEND Family Services team](#) by telephone, email or in writing, using the contact details given on screen. These details are also on the portal webpage.

## **Slide 13**

It's helpful to do some preparation before you begin your request, as the form will ask you for information.



This will include some basic details – your personal details and your child’s, your contact information, your child’s school if they attend one, and also who has parental responsibility.

Then you will be asked for your views about your child’s needs, and their strengths and interests, what support has helped them so far and what you would like to see change.

### **Slide 14**

We have information on our website to help you fill in this part of the request form. Each of the blue bars refers to a question on the form and if you click on a bar it opens a drop down with tips and suggestions for what to consider which you may find helpful.

### **Slide 15**

Your child or young person’s views are a really important part of the request form as this process is all about them.

The form asks about your child’s worries about school and their learning and what they find tricky. It asks what they are good at and they enjoy, what their hopes are for the future and what needs to happen to help them achieve their goals.

### **Slide 16**

We know that some children and young people struggle to share their thoughts and feelings. Some may find it easier to record their views, for example, using their mobile phone.

A recording can be emailed separately to the [SEND Family Services team](#).

You will be given an email address once your request for an EHC needs assessment has been lodged.

You will need to say on the form that your child would like to send in a voice recording later.

### **Slide 17**

We have links to a number of person-centred resources on our [SENDIASS website](#) which may help a child or young person to share their views. These could also be sent in separately.

## Slide 18

In addition, you can email the Family Services team copies of any relevant information which may support your case.

For example:

- School behaviour support plans or reports
- Exclusion or suspension letters
- Letters of diagnosis or other professional reports
- Or perhaps a statement from a person who has helped your child to learn a skill outside of school.

Remember an EHC needs assessment is all about unpicking the barriers to learning and there may be other people in the community who have been supporting your child to learn a skill.

Once your request has been lodged, you will be given an email address which you can use to send in additional information.

## Slide 19

So what happens next, once your request has been lodged?

## Slide 20

This chart shows the twenty-week timeframe for the whole EHC needs assessment process as set out by the Children and Families Act of 2014.

When you make a request for an EHC needs assessment, you trigger the first stage in this process.


(Here is the [EHC timeline](#) shown on screen.)

## Slide 21

This slide shows this first stage.

Week one starts when the local authority receives a request for an EHC needs assessment. There then follows a six-week period when the local authority gathers the views of you, your child or young person and the views of the educational setting, to help them decide whether an EHC needs assessment is appropriate.

(The slide refers to the first stage of this [EHC timeline](#))



They must tell you by the end of week 6 if they are going to do an EHC needs assessment or not. If they refuse, they must give their reasons and you will have the right to go to mediation and to appeal if you are unhappy with their decision.

## **Slide 22**

We have more information and videos around the EHC process and SEND support and inclusion on our Suffolk SENDIASS website and YouTube channel which may help you.

[\(EHC needs assessments and plans](#)

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

## **Slide 23**

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