



## Giving your parent carer views for the Education, Health and Care needs assessment

If the local authority (LA) agree that your child or young person might need an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan), they will conduct an EHC needs assessment. You are the expert on your child and know them better than anyone, so you will be asked to contribute detailed information about your child and your wishes for their future. Your child/young person may also present very differently at home, and information you give will provide a much fuller picture of them and their special educational needs. Input from young people will also be requested.

If an EHC plan is issued, there will be an annual review to check on the impact it is having. The annual review is another point where you may wish give your views.

Although we will refer to your “child” in this guide, we are talking about children and young people up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday

### **What the law says**

According to section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014, when supporting children with SEND, the local authority must have regard to:-

*(a) the views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parent, or the young person*

*(b) the importance of the child and his or her parent, or the young person, participating as fully as possible in decisions relating to the exercise of the function concerned*

*(c) the importance of the child and his or her parent, or the young person, being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions*

*(d) the need to support the child and his or her parent, or the young person, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help him or her achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes*



Your Assessment and Planning Officer (APO) in East Sussex or Casework Officer (CWO) in Brighton & Hove will expect you to send in your views in writing but you should talk to them if you are not confident about writing. They will send you a form to complete but you can provide more pages if necessary.

## **Giving your contribution**

Your Assessment and Planning Office (APO) in East Sussex or Casework Office (CWO) in Brighton & Hove will place the information you provide about your child in Section A of the EHC plan (the views, interests and aspirations of the child and their parents, or the young person). Although the content of your contribution will remain in this section, it should also inform every part of the plan. You will have a chance to review the information they use, and challenge the content, if necessary, before the final EHC plan is issued.

You will be expected to provide your views in writing but, if you are not confident about writing, you should speak to your APO or CWO.

Give as much information as you feel you need to but try to keep it concise. If your contribution is very lengthy, then your APO or CWO may need to discuss editing it with you. Try to make it up-to-date, relevant and avoid writing a biography on your child from birth. Provide information that is useful to anyone who will be reading the EHCp. You do not need to quote chunks from professional reports as your APO or CWO already has them. Those reports will inform the rest of the EHC plan and will be listed as appendices.

### **The Change Programme**

*Brighton & Hove and East Sussex are part of the government's Change Programme, looking at ways to standardise the EHC needs assessment nationally. You will have been told if your child's assessment will use the proposed new template for EHC plans. Section A of the new template has a strict word count, so you should check with your APO/CWO about the amount you can write.*

The form that you are sent by your APO/CWO contains questions and prompts to help you to provide the correct information. We have provided some ideas below about information that you may wish to include.



There are key things that you should include in your contribution, which reflects the fact that you are the expert on your child, and that professionals may only capture a snapshot of them. Do not just focus on education – aim to give as full a picture as possible, such as how they are at home and in other settings.

It can be challenging to write about your child. Think about the information a stranger would need to understand your child's needs, to support them to have a good day, to recognise the great things about them and to understand their hopes for the future.

The information below will help you think about what to include, but please use this as a prompt and not as a definitive guide. You should share what you think is important.

**What I like and admire about my child.** It is important that the EHC plan presents a rounded picture of your child including all the positive information which may not be contained in professional reports. You may wish to include things such as their sense of humour, their passion for swimming, kindness to animals, how much they love painting, their resilience etc.

**What is important to the child?** What would your child say they like doing and what make them feel happy and safe? Examples could include “playing computer games”, “football”, “going swimming with her brother”.

**What is important for the child?** What strategies do you put in place to enable your child to do the things they enjoy or need to do? For example, you might have to follow the same routine each day or prompt your child to go to the toilet, or they might need access to a quiet space when they become anxious. What support works best for them? Is there anything that doesn't help?

**What would you want professionals to know?** E.g. “if she becomes quiet it can be a sign that she does not understand what is happening in the class. She will need some one-to-one support to re-engage.” “When he gets home from school he often has a meltdown. He bottles up all his anxiety during the day if his TA doesn't take him for sensory breaks during the school day”.

**Who are the important people in the child's life?** Who does your child spend time with regularly? Are there people outside the immediate family they are close to? Do they have particular friends? These may be friends in school they see regularly or even friends online. This list could include professionals, such as a favourite teaching assistant.



**How does the child communicate?** Do they use speech or other methods to express themselves or make their needs known? Do they use other means of communication e.g. gestures, voice activated technology, eye gaze equipment etc.? How well do they interact in a one-to-one or a group setting? Do they understand body language or tone of voice? What support do they need with communication? How long can they concentrate for, and are they easily distracted? Are there things that you notice that alert you to how they are feeling?

**Is there any important information about behaviour?** Are there any triggers for distressed behaviours and what strategies do you use to manage the triggers? Does behaviour differ at home or in other settings? Do unexpected changes cause them to behave differently? Does your child manage to take turns and share belongings? What strategies do you use to promote positive behaviour?

**Does your child have any sensory issues?** How do they cope with loud or sudden noises, temperature changes, smells or crowded places? Does their behaviour change on public transport or in a supermarket? How do they respond to touch or the feel of different fabrics?

**Emotions.** How do they feel about themselves? What makes them happy, sad, anxious, calm or happy? How do their emotions impact on their behaviour, learning and interaction with others? Do they understand other people's emotional responses?

**Health** You may wish to comment on health issues related to your child's special educational needs or disability, but this is also an opportunity to discuss general health, diet, physical development, sleep patterns, medication etc. Do they have any specialist appointments?

**Safety** Does your child have road sense or understand risks around the home or in public? Are they more vulnerable to strangers or do they need additional supervision when out in the community?

**Personal care.** What support do they need with toileting, washing, dressing and feeding? Do they need prompts to go to the toilet? How do they express when they are thirsty or hungry – is there a change in their behaviour that professionals could look out for?

**The future.** It is important to record any plans or hopes you have for your child's future. These may be for the next year or two or longer term.

For young people over 14, there is an increased focus in the EHC plan on their preparation for adulthood, and you may wish to elaborate on your wishes around employment, learning and development, being healthy, independent living and inclusion in the community. You are not expected to identify where they will be living as an adult, for example, but you may wish to discuss topics such as the support they may need to manage their money so that they can live independently in the future.

**What is working or not working for you?** This is an opportunity for you to say how satisfied you are with the education, health and social care services your child is accessing and the support that you receive as a family. Is the quality good? Do you have enough support?

You should think about your child with special educational needs and also the impact that caring responsibilities are having on the whole family. Think about the emotional, physical and financial demands of having a child with special educational needs or a disability. Do you manage to take holidays, have time to yourself, have opportunities for your child to engage in social activities? How are your child's siblings impacted? What would help you to make things better?

**Aspirations.** What do you want for your child's future? These can be short term aspirations e.g. "to have a smooth transition into secondary school" or longer term and more general "I want them to get a job" "I want my child to be happy". You can include as many aspirations as you like.

**Outcomes.** These are an important part of the EHC plan and help you to think about what you want for your child in the next year or two. Outcomes are based on your child's needs and your aspirations for them.

The professional reports used to inform the EHC needs assessment should have clear outcomes that could be used in an EHC plan. When writing your parental views, you should also use the opportunity to think about the outcomes you want for your child. What would you like your child to be able to do in a couple of years that they are not able to do now? You don't need to write about the provision that will be needed – just focus on the outcome.

For example, "by the end of Year 5 Taylor will go to the library, choose a book and read it." Or, "by the end of Year 3 Bertie will ask to leave the classroom when he needs the bathroom and will be able to use the toilet independently at school."

You will have an opportunity to negotiate these outcomes with your APO or CWO.



## Your child's or young person's views

Remember that you are writing your views as a parent carer. Children and young people will also be asked to provide their own views. It is extremely important that children and young people can take part in the EHC needs assessment and that the EHC plan is informed by their participation.

They can do this alone or with support, but it is important to record their views even if you don't agree with them. It may be difficult for them to truly express their views to you or to school staff so think about who would be best to talk to them to capture their honest opinions. Amaze has a fact sheet about Involving Young People, which you can download from the <https://amazesussex.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets>

A child/young person's view should be expressed in their preferred communication style. They do not have to be verbal or be able to write and drawing, videos or other media may be used.

## Making changes to your views

If you want to add any more views during the EHC needs assessment, you should contact your APO/CWO. After the assessment, if the LA decide that your child needs an EHC plan, they will send you a draft version of the plan. You then have a formal opportunity to ask for changes to any part of the plan before the final version is issued. If changes are being made to the EHC plan following an annual review, you will also have this opportunity.

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Amaze SENDIASS is the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support service for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. We offer impartial and confidential support with anything to do with special educational needs and disabilities for 0-25 year olds.

Please contact us on 01273 772289 or by email on [sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk](mailto:sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk) if you would like further advice and support