EHCP AND ASSESSMENTS | ENGLAND

# EHC Needs Assessment Request Pack

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This pack helps you prepare a parent or carer request for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment in England. It includes an explanation of the legal starting point, an evidence checklist, space for your views, and a model letter you can adapt.

It is a starting point, not an official form. Sending a request does not guarantee that an assessment will be agreed. Check current official guidance before you send anything, and keep a dated copy of what you send.

**Who this is for**

Parents, carers or young people in England who are considering asking the local authority for an EHC needs assessment. You do not need a diagnosis or the school's permission to make a request.

**What is inside**

- A plain-English explanation of the request and usual timescales in England
- An evidence checklist and space to describe needs, support already tried, and impact
- A model request letter you can adapt in your own words
- A record of what you sent and when

**Please read this first**

This is a free starting-point resource from My SEND Friend. It is general information, not legal, medical or benefits advice, and it is not an official or government form. It does not guarantee an assessment, plan, adjustment, payment or any other outcome. Check current official guidance (for example GOV.UK) and get individual advice from SENDIASS, IPSEA or a suitably qualified adviser when you need it.

# What this pack is for

A parent, a young person, or a school can request an EHC needs assessment under section 36 of the Children and Families Act 2014. You do not need a diagnosis, and you do not need the school's permission, to make a request.

In broad terms, the local authority must consider whether the child or young person has or may have special educational needs, and whether it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with an EHC plan. This pack does not apply that test for you.

EHCP processes described here apply in England, under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015). Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have different systems. Always check the current official position and any deadline on letters you receive.

> **Usual timescale for the first decision**
> A local authority in England must usually notify you of its decision whether to carry out an EHC needs assessment within six weeks of receiving the request, under regulation 5 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, subject to any exceptions that may apply. Check the date your request was received and the date on any decision letter.

Where an assessment goes ahead, the usual overall timescale in England from request to a final EHC plan is 20 weeks, subject to the Regulations and any exceptions. This pack does not calculate your deadline.

## How to use the pack

- Gather what you already have. You do not need a perfect folder before you can write.
- Complete the views and evidence pages in short, factual examples. Two or three clear examples are often more useful than a long general statement.
- Adapt the model letter so it sounds like you. Remove anything that is not true for your child.
- Send the request to the SEND team at the local authority where your child lives. Email is useful because it creates a dated record. Keep a copy.
- Put the expected decision date in your calendar, then check it against any acknowledgement and official rules.

## About you and your child

**Your name**

**Your role**

Parent, carer, or young person writing for myself

**Child or young person's full name**

**Date of birth**

**Address**

**School, nursery or college (if applicable)**

**Year group (optional)**

**Local authority SEND team you are writing to**

**Date of this request**

## Evidence you already have

Tick what you can enclose or send separately. You do not need every item. Only include documents you are happy to share, and remove other children's personal details.

- [ ] SEN Support plan, IEP, or similar school plan
- [ ] School or setting reports, including the most recent
- [ ] Attendance records, if relevant
- [ ] Emails or meeting notes about support that was agreed or not delivered
- [ ] A professional report (for example speech and language, occupational therapy, educational psychology, paediatrician, CAMHS) — only if relevant
- [ ] Your own dated observations or a short diary
- [ ] The child's or young person's views, in their own words or another form that works for them
- [ ] Any previous request or decision letter, if this is a further request

**Anything you still need to obtain, and how you will do that**

# Needs and daily impact

Describe what is actually happening. Specific examples, with how often and what support is needed, are more useful than labels alone.

### Communication and interaction

Understanding, expressing, social interaction, or needing support to be understood.

### Cognition and learning

Accessing learning, memory, processing, literacy, numeracy, or keeping up with the class.

### Social, emotional and mental health

Anxiety, regulation, relationships, distress, or the impact on being able to learn.

### Sensory and/or physical needs

Noise, light, movement, motor skills, personal care, or the physical environment.

# Support already tried, and what remains difficult

### What support is currently in place, or has been tried

Include what school, home or others have done, even if it was informal.

### What has helped, even a little

### What remains difficult despite that support

This is often the most important part. Be factual about the impact on education and daily life.

### Why you believe an EHC needs assessment may be necessary

# Model request letter

**How to use this letter**
Replace anything in [square brackets] with your own details. Delete lines that do not apply. Keep the letter factual and in your own words. This is a starting point, not a required form of words, and sending it does not guarantee a particular outcome.

Model wording (adapt this):

To: [Name of local authority SEND team]

From: [Your full name] Address: [Your address] Email: [Your email] Date: [Date]

Subject: Formal request for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment for [child's full name], date of birth [DD/MM/YYYY]

Dear SEND Team,

I am the parent / person with parental responsibility for [child's name], who lives at [address] and currently attends [school, nursery or college, if applicable]. I am writing to formally request an Education, Health and Care needs assessment under section 36 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

I believe [child's name] has or may have special educational needs and that it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made through an EHC plan.

My child's needs: [Explain the difficulties, with specific examples of the impact on education, communication, sensory processing, emotional regulation, physical access or other relevant areas.]

Support and remaining difficulties: [Describe the support currently offered or attempted, what has helped, and what remains unmet. If support has not been provided, say so. You do not need to prove that a school has spent a particular amount of money.]

Why an assessment may be necessary: [Explain why you believe provision may need to be identified and secured through an EHC plan, including any specialist input or coordinated support you think should be assessed.]

I enclose [list any relevant evidence, such as SEN Support plans, school reports, attendance records, professional reports, or your own dated observations]. Please consider this information as part of the decision.

Please acknowledge receipt of this request, confirm the date it was received, and notify me of your decision within six weeks of receiving it, in accordance with regulation 5 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014. If you decide not to carry out an assessment, please provide the decision and reasons in writing, together with information about my appeal rights and available advice and mediation services.

Yours faithfully, [Your full name] [Contact details]

## Notes for adapting the letter, or a list of the evidence you will attach

# Record of sending

**Date sent**

**How it was sent**

Email, online portal, post — keep proof if you can

**Email address or postal address used**

**Date acknowledged (if you receive an acknowledgement)**

**Date you will chase if you have not heard (optional)**

**Decision due date, as you currently understand it**

Check against official rules and any acknowledgement

**Decision received, date, and first notes (for later)**

# Useful next steps and sources

Use what helped in this pack and leave the rest. You can come back to it when you need to. Live tools on mysendfriend.co.uk remain free, including Help Me Now, the SEND Letter Builder, the Reasonable Adjustments Builder, the DLA and PIP Claim Planners, and the free resources hub. Saving work to My SEND Plan is optional.

## Where to check official or independent information

Guidance and benefit rules can change. Check the current official position, and get individual advice when you need it.

- GOV.UK: Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- GOV.UK: SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)
- Children and Families Act 2014, and the SEND Regulations 2014
- Your local SENDIASS service (free and impartial)
- IPSEA, for legally based information about SEND law in England

**A reminder about this free pack**

This is a free starting-point resource from My SEND Friend. It is general information, not legal, medical or benefits advice, and it is not an official or government form. Using it does not start a statutory process or guarantee a particular outcome. Adapt every page to your situation.

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