
SUPPORTING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:

Guidance for Social Care, Health, and Other Professionals

January 2019

Context

The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) set out revised duties, policies and procedures for supporting Special Educational Needs (SEN). Following the publication of this Act, the statutory [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#) was then written to reflect the content and ambition of the Children and Families Act, and has resulted in the following key changes and core values:

Key Changes:

The Code requires that:

- Support is provided to children and young people (CYP) from birth up to the age of 25
- Local Authorities publish a [Local Offer](#) outlining support available to CYP with SEN and disabilities
- A graduated approach to identifying and supporting pupils and students with SEN is adopted, with a category of 'SEN Support' replacing School Action and School Action Plus categories of need
- Services work together closely to plan and commission services relating to education, health and social care.

Core Values:

The Code requires that:

- The views of CYP and their families are at the heart of decision making processes
- CYP and their families are provided with the information and support necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- CYP and their families are supported in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood
- SMART, aspirational outcomes are set for CYP, with a focus being placed on ensuring SEN support enables CYP to achieve their long term goals.

Additionally, behaviour is understood as a communication of an underlying need, not a need in itself.

Areas of Need

Special Educational Needs (SEN) are generally thought of in the following four broad areas of need:

Communication and Interaction:

CYP with **speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)** have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty:

- Saying what they want to
- Understanding what is being said to them
- Understanding or using social rules of communication.

CYP with an **Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)**, including **Asperger's Syndrome** and **Autism**, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Cognition and Learning:

Support for learning difficulties may be required when CYP learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including:

- **Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)**
- **Severe learning difficulties (SLD)**: Where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication,
- **Profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD)**: Where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH):

SEMH difficulties may include:

- Underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained
- Disorders such as attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD)
- Attachment difficulties
- Low self-esteem or low sense of self-worth.

SEMH difficulties can manifest in many ways, including behavioural difficulties, social withdrawal and isolation. CYP do not require a label (e.g. ADHD, anxiety disorder) to be identified as having SEMH needs.

Sensory and/or Physical Needs:

Some CYP require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Sensory and/or physical needs include:

- **Vision impairment (VI)**
- **Hearing impairment (HI)**
- **Multi-sensory impairment (MSI):** A combination of vision and hearing difficulties
- **Physical disability (PD)**
- **Sensory Processing Difficulties:** Difficulties in processing sensory information.

Determining Level of Need

City of York Council's [banding documents](#) are used by Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinators (SENDCos) and City of York Council SEN professionals, in collaboration with CYP and their families. There are seven documents, each relating to different SEN, and within each document there are six 'bands' of need:

- **Band 0:** The child or young person experiences needs which are managed well in a mainstream pre-school/class with appropriate differentiation of task and teaching style
- **Band 1:** The child or young person has identified needs which are highlighted to all staff with advice on support strategies provided and monitored by the SENDCo/Manager. This level of need was formally referred to as School Action
- **Band 2:** The child or young person has identified needs which require additional specific provision and/or advice which might include a detailed time limited programme, intervention, personalised timetable and/or resources. This level of need was formally referred to as School Action Plus
- **Band 3:** The child or young person has significant primary needs which impact on progress requiring long term involvement of educational and non-educational professionals as part of statutory assessment/EHC plan
- **Band 4:** The child or young person will experience significant, complex persistent and enduring difficulties. The child or young person present with a range of issues and an accumulation of layered needs
- **Band 5:** The child or young person experiences significant lifelong learning difficulties for which specialist provision is appropriate. These may be compounded by other co-existing needs, and require intensive specialist provision
- **Band 6:** In addition to the above, the child or young person has such complex needs that their needs cannot be met in a school within York, i.e. they attend a non-maintained educational or residential placement (Out of Area). This may also include support for health and social care issues.

Each SEN banding document also includes information about strategies, intervention and resources that may be appropriate in supporting CYP at each band of need. CYP may fluctuate in terms of their level, type and complexity of SEN over time, so their banding level and area of need may also change. All practitioners supporting children who have/may have SEN use the [assess, plan, do, review model](#) to determine level of need, formulate and implement a plan and evaluate the effectiveness of support and its impact on the child's progress.

SEN Plans

There are a range of frameworks used to record key information, generate a shared understanding of a child or young person's strengths and needs, and record progress. These frameworks include:

- **My Agreed Outcomes (MAO):** This is a short plan that can be used by SENDCos to support CYP with needs at band one to two
- **My Support Plan (MSP):** Co-ordinated SEN support provided by various professionals to CYP is delivered through an MSP. The MSP is a non-statutory document so the contents and the formats used are optional. However, if an Educational Health and Care needs assessment is requested a complete and reviewed MSP will be required. MSPs are typically used to support children at mid to high band two
- **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP):** This is a statutory working document which must follow the guidance and key principles of the SEN Code of Practice. CYP who have an EHCP have had their needs assessed as part of an Educational Health and Care needs assessment. EHCPs have now replaced Statements of SEN and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs).

N.B. MAOs and MSPs are documents used only by City of York Council, but other Local Authorities may have equivalent frameworks. EHCPs can look different from one Local Authority to another, but the statutory content will remain the same.

Cross-Border Arrangements

When a child or young person has an EHCP, the **home** Local Authority (where the pupil lives) maintain the EHCP, and provide Local Authority SEN services such as Educational Psychology and Specialist Teaching Team support.

However, for children in care who have an EHCP, the **host** Local Authority (where the pupil is placed/residing) take over responsibility for the EHCP. For pupils in residential schools, the **home** LA maintain the EHCP, as the pupil's legal 'normal residence' is still their family home. For children in care who are in

children's homes or with foster carers, the **host** Local Authority (where the pupil is placed/residing) maintain the EHCP.

For further information about cross-border arrangements, please contact SENDept@york.gov.uk.

Seeking Support for Children and Young People

If you feel that a child or young person has SEN, you could contact the SENDCo at the child's school to discuss your views. Some possible questions and considerations are documented below:

Your views:

- What evidence have you collected to support/refute your views? (e.g. observed behaviours)
- How do you feel the child's needs relate to the City of York Council [banding documents](#)?

The SENDCo's views:

- Does the SENDCo share your views?
- How does the SENDCo feel the child's needs relate to the City of York Council banding documents?
- What evidence does the SENDCo have available to assess the pupil's abilities/needs? Can they share this information with you?
- Has the child got a MAO, MSP, or EHCP? Can they share this with you?

Next steps:

- What are the most appropriate next steps (using the [assess, plan, do, review model](#) and recommended strategies, interventions and resources within the banding documents)?
- Who will collect the voice of the child or young person and parent or carer? How will this be collected and recorded?
- Who will share the outcome of your discussion with the child or young person and parent or carer? How can these views be shared sensitively?

Involvement from External Services

The table below (p. 8-9) provides information about services that often support CYP with SEN:

Service name	Key information	Who can refer?	How to refer
Specialist Early Years Support Team (SEYST)	A team of specialist practitioners including Portage, specialist teachers, and an educational psychologist, who provide specialist support to children from birth to school age.	Health, education, social care and families.	Criteria and referral form available on the SEYST website .
Educational Psychology	A service for CYP aged 0-25, which aims to improve the educational outcomes, emotional wellbeing and personal development of CYP through the use of psychology.	SENDCos, in negotiation with their school's educational psychologist.	SENDCos discuss cases and agree priorities through termly planning meetings with their school's educational psychologist.
Specialist Teaching Team	A service of specialist teachers who support CYP aged 0-25 with a range of SEN and disabilities.	SENDCos, parents/carers, headteachers/heads of service, specialist medical professionals.	Information available on the Specialist Teaching Team website .
Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)	SENDIASS (formerly known as York Parent Partnership Service) provides independent information, advice and support to parents, carers, CYP in relation to SEN and disability, and related health and social care issues.	Professionals, family members and CYP.	Via yorksendiass@york.gov.uk , 01904 554312, or 01904 555698. Information on common issues is also available on Yor-Ok for parents/carers and young people .
Learning and Work Advisers (LAWAs)	LAWAs identify and remove barriers to education, employment and training. They work with young people aged 13-18 who are referred to the Local Area Teams, have been signposted by schools, are in care or involved	Professionals, family members and CYP.	For young people aged 13-18, by telephoning 01904 551900 (select option 2), or emailing LAT@york.gov.uk .

	in the Youth Justice system. They also work with young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or leaving a provision.		For young people who are NEET or leaving provision, call 01904 555400 for 1-1 appointments and drop-in times.
Specialist Careers Advisers	A team of careers advisers who support young people aged 13-25 with an EHCP, who are in education or training.	Professionals, family members and CYP.	Via sendsca@york.gov.uk , or 01904 552086.
Children's Rights and Advocacy Service	A rights and advocacy service for CYP who are looked after by the City of York Council.	Professionals, family members and CYP.	Via the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service website .
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	Mental health support for CYP up to age 18.	Professionals, family members and CYP.	Via the Single Point of Access number: 01904 615345. Further information available here .
Children's Therapy Service	A service for CYP aged 0-18, which includes Dietetics, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Occupational Therapy.	Health visitors, school nurses, paediatricians and general practitioners.	Information is available on the Children's Therapy Service website .

Requesting an EHC Needs Assessment

The majority of CYP with SEN or disabilities will have their needs met within local mainstream early years settings, schools or colleges, through delegated funding. Schools and settings decide how to use their resources to meet children's special educational needs. Some CYP may require an EHC needs assessment in order for the Local Authority to decide whether it is necessary for it to make provision in accordance with an EHCP.

The following people have a specific right to ask a Local Authority to conduct an education, health and care needs assessment for a child or young person aged between 0 and 25:

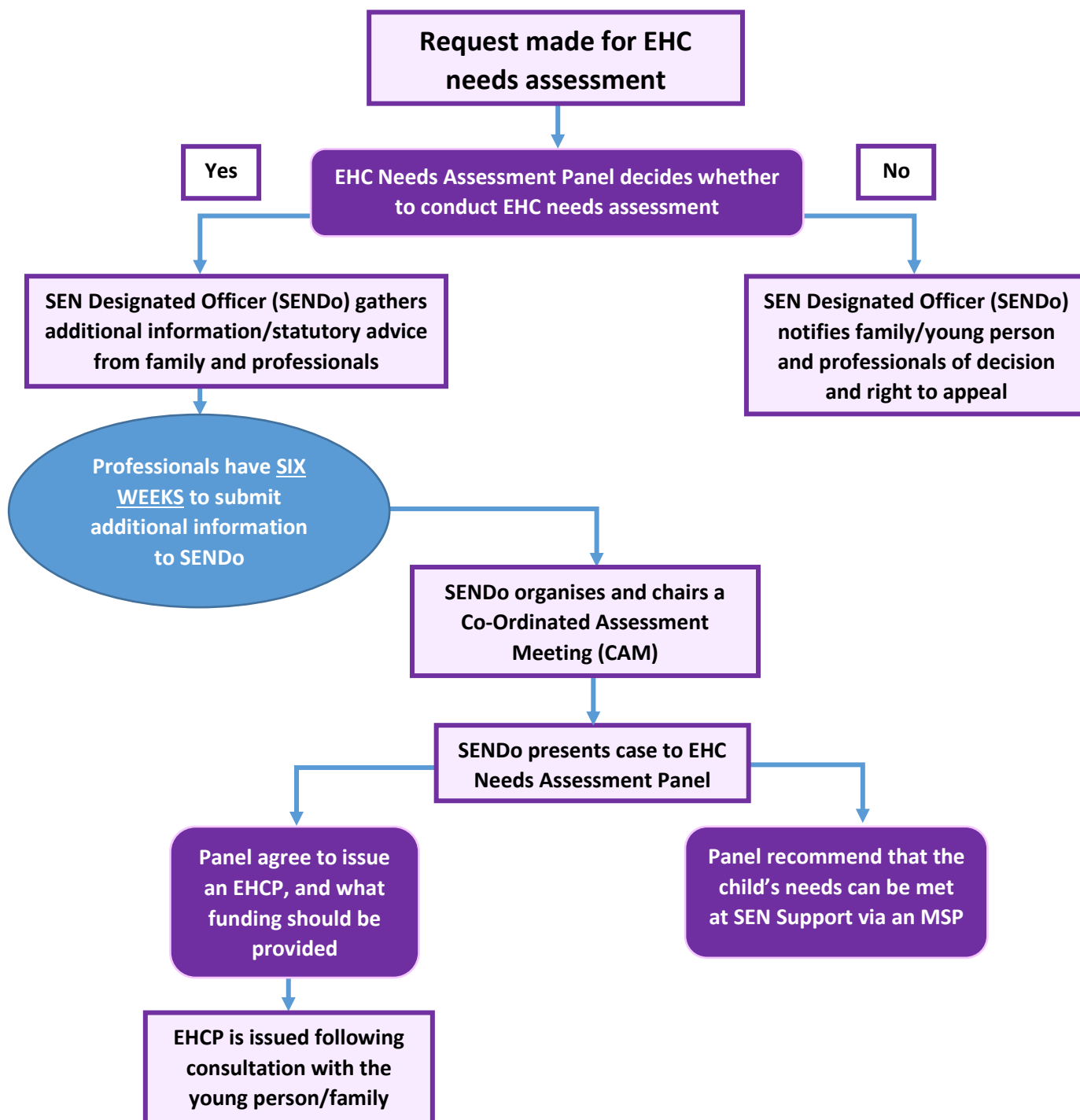
- The child's parent
- A young person over the age of 16 but under the age of 25
- A person acting on behalf of a school or post-16 institution (this should ideally be with the knowledge and agreement of the parent or young person where possible).

In addition, anyone else can bring a child or young person who has (or may have) SEN to the attention of the Local Authority, particularly where they think an EHC needs assessment may be necessary. This could include, for example, foster carers, health and social care professionals, early years practitioners, youth offending teams or probation services, those responsible for education in custody, school or college staff or a family friend. Bringing a child or young person to the attention of the Local Authority will be undertaken on an individual basis where there are specific concerns. **This should be done with the knowledge and, where possible, agreement of the child's parent or the young person.**

Requests can be made by contacting the SEN Department on SENDept@york.gov.uk. In York, **there is an expectation that CYP have an MSP, and that this MSP has been reviewed on at least two occasions before a request for an EHC needs assessment is made.** In the absence of an MSP, the requester should provide as much information as possible about a child or young person's strengths, SEN, rate of progress (across all areas of need), current setting, and evidence of support/interventions already in place (including an evaluation of their impact).

The EHC Needs Assessment Process

Once a request for an EHC needs assessment has been made, City of York Council follows the process outlined below:



There should be no longer than 20 weeks between the initial request and an EHCP being issued. For further information about this process, please refer to the [City of York Council guidance on applying for an EHCP](#).

Writing Statutory Advice

If a local authority decides to carry out an EHC needs assessment, **it must gather advice from relevant professionals** about the child or young person's education, health and care needs, desired outcomes and provision that may be required to meet identified needs and achieve desired outcomes. **Advice provided by social care must include**, if appropriate:

- Children in need or child protection assessments
- Information from a care plan for a child in care
- Adult social care assessments
- Early Help Assessments.

Advice provided by all professionals should:

- Be **clear, accessible and specific**
- **Provide advice about outcomes** relevant for the child or young person's age and phase of education and strategies for their achievement (further information about writing outcomes is provided below)
- Be **limited to the area in which the professional has expertise**.

City of York Council provides **templates on which professionals should write their advice**. These templates are shared by the SENDo (a member of staff from the SEN Department who coordinates EHC needs assessments as part of their role) when they make a request for advice from a professional.

Professionals must provide their advice within six weeks of being requested to do so by the local authority.

Writing Outcomes:

What are SMART Outcomes?:

Outcomes are the benefit or difference made to an individual as a result of a service, specific piece of support, or intervention. They:

- Are **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART)**
- Provide an outline of what needs to be achieved by end of a year group, age, phase (e.g. by the end of Key Stage 1) or stage (e.g. by the end of early years/primary school/secondary school/college)

- Are person-centred and written to reflect this (e.g. ‘Alex will...’)
- Should relate to a child or young person’s aspirations and specific areas of need
- Should move towards preparation for adulthood (particularly when the young person is in Year 9 or above)
- Should demonstrate clear links to ‘the golden thread’ of aspirations, needs, outcomes and provision.

Examples of SMART outcomes related to aspirations, SEN, and appropriate recommendations for provision are provided within the table below*:

Aspiration	SEN	Outcome	Provision
Hannah would like to live as independently as possible.	Hannah is unable to make appropriate nutrition choices and prepare food for herself.	By the age of 20 (i.e. in 12 months), Hannah will independently choose and prepare a healthy breakfast to eat every morning.	Hannah should have a personal assistant for three hours a week, to teach her how to prepare breakfast using a visual timetable.
Ismail would like to feel safe and happy.	Ismail experiences episodes of low mood and suicidal thoughts.	Within six weeks, Ismail will be able to challenge and manage his automatic negative thoughts.	Ismail will have access to six one-to-one CBT sessions delivered once per week at CAMHS.
Jamie would like to have more friends.	Jamie finds it difficult to make and maintain friendships and instigate social interaction, meaning that he can be socially isolated within the community.	By the end of the year (8 months), Jamie will initiate a conversation with a peer at least once during each youth club without any adult prompts.	Jamie should have access to a keyworker for 15 minutes during each youth group session, to remind Jamie of strategies for instigating social interaction and to support Jamie to instigate conversation.
Sasha would like to understand and regulate her anger.	Sasha has difficulty regulating her anger, which has resulted in her instigating a fight that has led to a criminal charge of common assault.	By the end of her referral order (July 2020), Sasha will be able to recognise her anger in its initial stages, consider her choices, and then make a legal, useful decision about how to manage this anger (e.g. to walk away).	Sasha will have access to (and complete) the ‘Think First’ intervention facilitated by York Youth Offending Team.

*Examples are anonymised and based on outcomes contained within York EHCPs/statutory advice.

What are not SMART Outcomes?:

Outcomes need to be SMART to allow professionals, family members and CYP to establish whether the outcome has been met, and thus whether the current level/type of provision is appropriate in meeting the child or young person's needs. Examples of outcomes that are **not** SMART, and thus could not be measured, and SMART alternatives include:

Example 1:

Non SMART Outcome: 'Joe will increase his independence'

This outcome is not SMART because it does not include a time frame for completing the outcome or a description of the specific skill to be acquired.



SMART Alternative: An example of an outcome for Joe that **would** be SMART could be:

'By his 16th birthday (10 months), Joe will be able to go to the local shops on his own to buy some bread when given the correct money'

Example 2:

Non SMART Outcome: 'Sarah will access short breaks'

This is not a SMART outcome because it is a description of provision, not an outcome.



SMART Alternative: An example of a SMART outcome for Sarah could be:

'By the end of the year (9 months), Sarah will be able to independently instigate and play a game of her choice with two other children for fifteen minutes, whilst at the Glen provision'

Further Information

Local Services and Information:

- The [SEN section](#) of City of York Council's website
- York's [Local Offer](#) for support available to CYP with SEN and disabilities.

National Information:

- [SEND: Guide for Social Care Professionals](#). A guide for social care professionals on the support system for CYP with SEN and disability
- [The role of Independent Reviewing Officers in Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments and Plans](#). A guide for independent reviewing officers for supporting children in care with SEN
- [Young People in Youth Custody: A Practice Guide](#). A practice guide aimed at those working to improve outcomes for young offenders who have or may have special educational needs.