



Department
for Education

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

www.education.gov.uk

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To: SEND Lead Officers
EHC plan writers and co-ordinators

Review of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans: feedback and top tips

During the summer DfE conducted a review of EHC plans and templates from around half of local authorities. This was in order to understand the progress that has been made locally in developing EHC plans (both templates and completed EHC plans); and to identify good practice and learning points.

Overall, there is evidence of significant good practice emerging in the development of EHC plans in both pathfinder and non-pathfinder areas, and also areas for improvement. The majority of the EHC plan templates we reviewed were judged likely to meet the requirements in the SEND Code of Practice (see para 9.62 onwards). Where changes were needed, this was often due to inaccurate labelling of the required sections.

Below are a number of observations/pointers which may help you when reviewing your authority's template and completed EHC plans. More detailed guidance is available in paras 9.62-9.76 of the SEND Code of Practice, and in the attached slide pack developed by André Imich, SEND adviser.

- Sections A-K of the EHC plan template must be **separately labelled** from each other. A common issue was combining sections H1 and H2 into a single section – they **must** be separately identified.
- Good plans made a strong link between **aspirations, needs, outcomes and provision**, so it is clear how provision from each of the three agencies actually meets identified needs and outcomes. One way of doing this is to present the information in a tabular format, with each section clearly labelled. The Council for Disabled Children has developed a useful tool - available in Appendix 6 of the Information Pack at: www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/infopacks/ap/
- The **first person tense** can be helpful, particularly in section A when expressing the views of the child or young person, but care should be taken to avoid appearing inauthentic through inappropriate use of the first person tense.
- Good plans ensure that the education, health and social care **needs** are detailed and specific across sections B, C and D, and linked to the

assessment evidence in section K.

- **Outcomes** in section E should be 'Smart' (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**imebound), they should set out expected progress, steps towards meeting the outcomes and how they will be measured/reviewed. Some plans that we saw described provision in this section; others lacked a clear idea of timescale (when the outcomes could be expected to be achieved).
- The **provision** sections (F, G, H1 and H2) should state clearly what is to be delivered, by whom, and with what frequency. Special educational provision (section F) **must** be detailed and specific and should normally be quantified. Terms such as "regular", "access to"; and "opportunities for" are vague and should usually be avoided.
- It was encouraging to see that many EHC plans included **speech and language therapy** in section F – addressing speech and language impairment should normally be recorded as special educational provision unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so (see para 9.74 of the SEND Code of Practice).
- Section J should set out arrangements for any **personal budget or direct payment** which have been agreed with the child's parent or young person, rather than simply explaining funding arrangements. The special educational needs and outcomes that are to be met by any direct payment **must** be specified in section J.

Examples of completed EHC plans that meet the requirements in the Code have been published on the pathfinder website - available at www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/infopacks/ap/. We intend to continue to publish examples.

We have been feeding back to individual local authorities on their EHC plans. If your local authority was not part of the initial review, your SEND adviser will be in touch shortly to offer you the opportunity for a review of your authority's EHC plan or template.

We are also aware that several regions are organising training events on writing quality EHC plans through their pathfinder champions. It is important to take these opportunities as you shape up your authority's approach to this key area of the SEND reforms, which is coming under considerable external scrutiny.

Yours,

Stephen Kingdom and Caroline Bicknell
Deputy Directors
0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disability Unit
Department for Education