



# EHCP JOURNEYS

EDUCATION HEALTH & CARE PLANS FOR CHILDREN  
& YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEN AND DISABILITIES

## ASSESSING

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PRACTITIONERS?

#### Practical Steps to Help Families Through the Assessment Step

##### Questions to Ask?

##### Rating/Evidence of practice

#### Information

Are families provided with information to help them understand the needs assessment step of the EHC process?

- Is information provided in a variety of formats (written/verbal)?
- Is information provided appropriate to the families' needs/circumstances?
- Are parents clear that if they don't agree on any aspect of the assessment or planning process that they can ask to take part in disagreement resolution? Is routine information on disagreement resolution and mediation routinely provided?

#### Communication

Are families routinely provided with a named contact for questions and further information?

- Are there clear lines of communication, allocated roles and responsibilities for the EHC needs assessment process?

- Are families provided with written documentation outlining key roles and contact details e.g. for SEND Co-ordinator, Independent Supporter, Tribunals etc)?
- Is it clear where written assessments/reports should be sent and who to send them to?
- Are families regularly updated on progress and next steps?

### **Support**

Has the family been provided with information about Independent Supporters?

- Is information on Independent Support provided in different ways (written and verbal) to meet the differing needs of families?
- Are families signposted to Independent Support provided by an Independent Support agency and the local Information Advice and Support Service (IASS) in each local authority area?
- Do the Information, Advice and Support Service, and the Council for Disabled Children websites have accurate information on the independent support offer in the LA?

Are families offered wider forms of support to address needs arising from the EHC process?

- Are they given support to help them understand the implications of issues that may have (only just) come to light during the assessment process?
- Are they given support/advice to help them to make informed decisions about placement or personal budgets for example?
- Are parents given emotional support to manage stress, issues of diagnosis and child/young person's behaviour etc?

### **Involving the Child/Young Person and Family**

Is the assessment process effectively involving the child, young person and

family?

- Are approaches to gather the child's views, wishes and feelings effective?
- Do parents/carers feel included, listened to, involved? How do you know?
- Are practitioners assessing whether the practices employed to actively engage children, parents and young people are effective?
- Are parents given tailored guidance on completing My Story/All About Me?
- Are exemplar My Story/All About Me being offered?
- Do the profiles of children/young people celebrate their achievements as well as the obstacles faced?
- Do profiles of children/young people convey information so as to inform placement decisions and actions required?

• /young person

### **Observations, Assessments and Reports**

- Are observations and assessments undertaken in an appropriate environment or by someone who knows the child/young person well?
- If assessments take place in school are parents told when this will happen?
- Is there a clear policy on what forms of evidence and assessment reports are acceptable (including guidance on when a report may be considered out of date)?
- Are copies of reports sent to parents as they are produced? (They may want to follow this up with a discussion).

Do different professionals know what information is required and helpful in assessment reports?

- Do professional assessments and reports outline what is

needed in terms of educational provision?

- Is the timetable for assessment conducted in a timely manner that allows for external professional input?

### **Meetings**

Are meetings effectively timetabled, planned, chaired and followed-up?

- Are roles and responsibilities clear and appropriately allocated?
- Are written reports requested and received in advance?
- Do they involve a range of professionals, including health and social care?
- Are families provided with information and support pre- and post- important meetings to help them digest the information or to assess the implications?
- Are parents expected to take on board too much information at one meeting?

### **Joined-Up Working**

- Are all professionals who may be carrying out assessments informed of EHC processes locally?
- Are there clear protocols for how professionals should work together and feed into the assessment process?
- Is there a lead professional responsible for co-ordinating the assessment, keeping families up-to-date and driving the process?
- Is there a process for ascertaining all the professionals and services involved with the child/young person/family?
- Is there engagement of family support teams, CAMHS, health, social care, etc as well as schools, SEND teams and Educational psychologists?
- Is there a link worker within CAMHS?

- Do assessments include wider needs of the child?
- Do processes make sure parents understand what all professionals can offer, with contact details and maybe examples of what support they have provided to other families?
- Are health assessments and diagnoses being produced in a timely manner?

### **LA Decision-Making**

Are decisions clear, transparent and evidence-based?

- Are multi-agency panels and LA designated decision-makers making effective, evidence-based decisions? How do you know? Are you assessing the effectiveness of panel decisions?

Are parents informed of their right to appeal and how to go about it?

- Is there signposting to mediation and tribunals?
- Is clear information given about how to raise a complaint and different routes for this (including how to escalate)?
- Is raising concerns an easy and acceptable part of the collaborative process?

### **Timescales**

Is the LA adhering to the required timescales for assessment within 6 weeks? What are the facilitators and barriers? Are there changes that could be made to reduce delays?

- Are families kept informed about the reasons for delays to the timescale?
- Are timescales for EHCPs and school annual cycles for admissions aligned?
- Have you identified potential outcomes of assessments that may result in delays with the timescale?

### **Outcome of the Assessment Step and Next Steps**

Do LA processes clearly inform parents of the outcome of the assessment

stage?

If an EHC Plan is to be developed, are parents provided with clear information on the next step of the process?

If the LA decide an EHC Plan is not needed, are parents informed of

- their right to appeal?
- how the local offer will help?
- why the LA believes the child can be effectively supported through what is available at school/early years provider etc?