**How to Check an EHCP Draft** *By SEND Empowerment Advocacy*

### **Overview**

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) draft is your opportunity to make sure your child or young person's needs and provisions are correctly and fully captured. This document is your chance to review, question, and improve the EHCP before it becomes legally binding.

This guide will walk you through how to check each section, what to look for, and how to respond effectively within your 15-day window.

## **GENERAL TIPS FOR REVIEWING THE DRAFT**

* **Read slowly and carefully**. Don’t rush. Highlight anything unclear or vague- it may be helpful to use different colour highlighters to annotate the draft.
* **Cross-reference**: Use reports from school, therapists, and medical professionals.
* **Be specific**: Keep notes on what you want to change and why.
* **Know your deadline**: You have **15 calendar days** to respond.

**Layout**

Consider the Layout of the Draft EHCP,

* Are all the sections of the plan completed?
* Is there a lot of blank or wasted space?
* Are any sections missing?
* Is section F linked to needs or outcomes?
* Does the plan include non-statutory sections that should be removed?

## **SECTION A: Views, Interests, and Aspirations**

This section is to reflect the child/young person’s and their parents' voice. It should reflect who they are beyond their diagnosis. Section A must only include things which are said by the child/young person or their parents, it cannot be written by the LA, teaching staff, health care professionals etc.

**Check for:**

* Their likes/dislikes
* Interests, hobbies
* How they communicate (and how they communicate when dysregulated)
* How they learn best
* What helps them feel safe
* What they struggle with
* Their short- and long-term goals
* All the individual's relevant history

**Tips:**

* Include direct quotes where possible
* Avoid generic statements like "wants to be independent"
* You can speak on behalf of your child if they can’t express their views directly.

You could ask your child:

* What they feel people like about them?
* What are they interested in?
* What is their favourite thing to talk about? Etc

This section is often considered the most important by those who read them. When EHCPs are sent out to consult schools, will this section tell the school everything they need to know about the child/young person? What would you and your child want a school to know about them and how best to support them?

## **SECTION B: Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

This section must describe **all** of your child’s educational needs – anything that creates a barrier to learning and requires support to access education.

### **🔍 Areas to Review:**

1. **Cognition and Learning**
	1. Is there mention of any learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, or global developmental delay?
	2. Are academic delays clearly described (e.g. reading age, numeracy level)?
	3. Does the plan explain how these affect access to the curriculum?
2. **Communication and Interaction**
	1. Does it include diagnoses like speech delay, language disorder, or autism spectrum condition?
	2. Is there information about how your child understands and uses language?
	3. Are difficulties in social communication and peer interaction noted?
3. **Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH)**
	1. Are issues like anxiety, ADHD, or emotional dysregulation included?
	2. Are triggers and behaviours described clearly and factually?
	3. Does it mention how these difficulties impact learning or the classroom environment?
4. **Sensory and/or Physical Needs**
	1. Are any sensory processing issues, motor skill difficulties, or physical disabilities listed?
	2. Is the impact on learning and participation clearly explained?

### **️ Tips:**

* Every need must be supported by evidence in reports (e.g. from EPs, SALTs, OTs, CAMHS).
* Needs must be described **clearly and specifically**, not just named.
* Check for **any gaps**—are there needs you know exist that are not mentioned?
* If a report highlights something but it’s missing in this section, ask for it to be added.

### **Things to look out for:**

* Vague or blanket statements like “has some difficulties” or “struggles a bit.”
* Missing areas of need (e.g. only mentioning learning but ignoring emotional needs).
* Is there unnecessary information? Such as excessive test results etc.
* Needs described without a clear link to impact on education.
* Is the plan heavily weighted towards strengths?
* Are there needs reframed as strengths?
* Things such as “mum reports” should be removed.

Remember: **Everything in Section B must lead to provision in Section F**. If it’s not listed here, there is no legal requirement to provide support for it.

## **SECTION C and G: Health Needs**

For Section C Health issues **related to learning** should go here (e.g. anxiety, epilepsy, speech delay).

**Check for:**

* Conditions mentioned in medical letters or assessments
* Mental health diagnoses
* Any CAMHS involvement

For Section G only health provision that educates or trains should be here (e.g. therapy for communication needs).

**Check for:**

* Named professionals and specific session details
* Anything from NHS services supporting SEN

Look out for:

* Needs in C that should be in B
* Provision in G that should be in F

## **SECTION D: Social Care Needs**

Section D covers any social care needs that relate to your child’s **education, training, or preparation for adulthood**. These are not general family or health needs, but those that could impact your child's ability to access education or function within a learning environment.

### **🔍 What to Look For:**

1. **Daily Living Needs**
	1. Support with dressing, eating, or personal hygiene that might be required during the school day
	2. Assistance needed for toileting at school or transitions between settings
2. **Behavioural Needs at Home that Affect Schooling**
	1. Challenging behaviours, meltdowns, or emotional distress at home that stem from school-related anxiety
	2. Lack of sleep due to anxiety or sensory overload impacting readiness to learn
3. **Support for Social Development**
	1. Help with forming relationships or engaging in community/social activities that support independence and educational access
4. **Family Support Needs (as relevant to the child’s education)**
	1. Parenting courses, social care keyworker involvement, or support for family routines that enable school attendance
5. **Respite / Short Breaks**
	1. If your child’s needs are complex enough to require respite care or breaks for the family to maintain their caregiving role, this should be noted

### **️ Tips:**

* If a social worker has completed a Child and Family Assessment, check if their conclusions are reflected here
* Include relevant needs from Early Help, family support, or Section 17 assessments (Children Act 1989)
* If your child receives care or support outside of school that enables access to education, it should be included

###  **Red Flags:**

* Section D left blank when social care is clearly involved
* Generic phrases like “no social care needs identified” without supporting evidence
* Overlooking home environment stressors that affect school attendance or learning

Section D is especially important if your child has complex needs at home that impact their access to or engagement with education.

Some parents do not want a Social Care assessment done, where others do. If a social care assessment hasnt being completed, you can highlight this section and remind the LA that as part of the needs assessment, the LA must have input from social care so the individual should have been automatically referred to Social Services under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 at the point when the LA decided to assess the child or young person's needs.

## **SECTION E: Outcomes**

These should be **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound). An outcome is the benefit or difference made to a child or young person because of an intervention or provision made in the EHCP.

**Check for:**

* Clear links to needs listed in Sections B-D
* Outcomes that are meaningful and not vague

**Tips:**

* Avoid outcomes like "to improve communication" – ask: how will we know it’s improved?

Outcomes should:

* NOT focus on improved behaviour rather than benefit to the individual.
* Should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound)
* There MUST be outcomes relating to all areas of difficulties.
* Should be outcomes which the individual has influence and control over.

## **SECTION F: SEN Provision**

This is one of the **most important sections** of the EHCP. It outlines the **specific, detailed support** your child will receive to meet the needs identified in Section B. It is also the section that is legally enforceable – the local authority must provide everything specified here.

### **What to Look For:**

1. **Direct Match to Section B**
	1. Each identified need in Section B must have a corresponding provision in Section F.
	2. If there’s a need with no provision, it must be addressed.
2. **Detail and Specificity**
	1. What support will be provided?
	2. Who will deliver it? (e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, Specialist Teacher)
	3. How often and for how long? (e.g. “30 minutes, twice per week”)
	4. Where? (e.g. in class, small group, 1:1, in a therapy room)
3. **Qualified Professionals**
	1. Does the plan specify the type of professional? E.g. “qualified Speech and Language Therapist” not “communication support.”
4. **Named Interventions and Methods**
	1. Specific interventions (e.g. “Lego Therapy,” “Precision Teaching,” “Zones of Regulation”) are better than vague descriptions like “help with social skills.”
5. **Resources and Equipment**
	1. Does it mention assistive tech, specialist furniture, visual aids, etc.?
6. **Support with Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood**
	1. Especially important for older children: support with moving to secondary school or into employment/training should be included.

###  **Tips:**

* Ask: “If a new staff member read this, would they know what to do on Day 1?”
* Use the “Golden Thread” test: **need ➝ outcome ➝ provision ➝ measurable progress**
* Seek support for training of school staff if your child’s needs require it

### **Red Flags:**

* **Vague wording**:

“opportunities for,” “access to,” “benefit from” “will benefit from” “upto X hours per week” “small group” these are not enforceable

* **Unqualified staff**: Simply stating “teaching assistant” is not enough — what training or qualifications do they have?
* **Missing frequency or duration**: How often? For how long? Without this, provision is hard to monitor
* **Copy-paste language**: Does it sound generic? Provisions should reflect **your** child’s needs, not a template

###  **Examples of Good vs Weak Provision:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Weak Provision** |  | **Strong Provision** |
| “Support with reading” |  | “A qualified specialist teacher will deliver 1:1 reading intervention for 30 minutes, 3x per week, using a structured phonics programme.” |
| “Access to sensory resources”  |  | “Child will have access to a personalised sensory toolkit at all times and receive support from an OT to use regulation strategies during transitions.” |
| “Help with social skills” |  | “Weekly 45-minute social communication group delivered by SALT using Lego Therapy principles.” |

If it’s **not clear, not specific, or not measurable**, ask for it to be rewritten.

##  **SECTION H: Social Care Provision**

Split into H1 (under Children Act) and H2 (under Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act).

**Check for:**

* Family support services
* Respite or personal care

##  **SECTION I: Placement**

This section should be **blank in the draft**, but you can **express a preference**.

**You have the right to request:**

* Mainstream or specialist school
* A specific school if it can meet needs

##  **SECTION J: Personal Budget (Optional)**

Only appears if you request a personal budget for specific provision.

**Check for:**

* Clear explanation of what the budget covers

## **SECTION K: Advice and Information**

This must list all the reports used to write the EHCP.

**Check for:**

* Every report you submitted is listed
* Any missing assessments? Request they be added

##  **HOW TO RESPOND TO THE DRAFT**

1. **Make a written response**: You can email or write a letter.
2. **Be clear and structured**: List your changes by EHCP section or annotate the draft.
3. **Attach supporting evidence** if relevant.
4. **Request a meeting** if you feel it would help.
5. **Keep a copy** of your response.

Checking an EHCP draft can be overwhelming, but your input is vital. You are the expert in your child’s day-to-day needs. Trust your instincts, refer to evidence, and don’t hesitate to ask for help.

If you need any support checking a Draft EHCP please contact info@send-empowerment.co.uk as soon as you receive the draft or when you get the agree to issue so we can pre-schedule.