

# Lewisham parent/carer guide

Providing information, advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people aged 0–25 years who have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND).



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This guide is for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-25 years who have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND).

- You may find it helpful to use this guide if:
- You think your child has SEN,
- You've been told by someone – such as your child's teacher – that they think he or she has SEN, and/or

You know that your child has SEN and you want to know more about how the system works and what to expect.

**The 0–25 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014** and **SEND: A guide for parents and carers (2014)** are key sources of information for this document. It also draws on the work of the Lewisham Parents Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Guidance Project, which involved representatives from Lewisham Parent Carer Forum, Contact, Signal, the local authority and the views of parents and carers obtained during a conference held on 4 June 2018.

# What is special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND)

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

## What are disabilities?

A disability is described in law ([the Equality Act 2010](#)) as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term (a year or more) and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This includes, for example, sensory impairments such as those that affect sight and hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy.

## Registering your young person for annual health checks

Annual health checks are for adults and young people aged 14 or over with a learning disability.

An annual health check will help your young person or adult stay well as it enables them to talk about their health and find any problems early to enable them to get the right care. You can ask for your young person or adult you care for to go on this register if you think they have a learning disability. Find out more by visiting [www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/annual-health-checks](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/annual-health-checks)

## Did you know?

### Lewisham disability register

The Disability Register is a voluntary register for children and young people under 18 who live in the borough and have a disability or special educational need.

How to register if I have a child or young person with special educational needs and / or disability?

Register online at Lewisham Local Offer – [joining the disability register](#)

# Where can you go for advice and support?

## **Lewisham Local Offer** [www.lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer)

The Local Offer aims to bring together information, advice and guidance and a range of local service providers who support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as useful information across education, health and social care within one website.

## **Universal National Support groups (0–25)**

[KIDS LONDON – SEND Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Service](#)

[MIND](#)

[Mencap](#)

[Council for Disabled Children](#)

## **Universal Local Support (0–25)**

[Lewisham Local Offer](#)

[Lewisham Children and Family Information Service](#)

[Lewisham Parent and Carer's Forum](#)

[Signal Family Support](#)

[Lewisham Autism Support](#)

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service \(SENDIASS\)](#)

[Down's Friendship and Creativity Group](#)

[NHS Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust](#)

[Kooth](#) – other health services available to help families & young people

[LEWISHAM \(COMPASS @ THEHUB\)](#)

[Parent Engage](#)

[Healthwatch Lewisham](#)

## **Early Years (0–5)**

[Lewisham Health Visitors](#)

[Health Visitor Community Hubs](#)

Lewisham children and family centres [www.lewishamcfc.org.uk](http://www.lewishamcfc.org.uk)

Early Years Settings [www.lewishamcfc.org.uk](http://www.lewishamcfc.org.uk)

[Lewisham Portage Service\\*](#)

\* Please visit the local offer to see eligibility criteria for Lewisham Portage Service.

# Where can you go for advice and support?

## **Primary and Early Secondary Phase (5–13)**

Talk to the school, starting with the class teacher.

Every school has to have a teacher who coordinates the SEN provision in the school called the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) who you could also request to talk to.

## **Key Stage 4 Secondary Phase and Further Education (14–25)**

Request to talk to the Learning Support Lead who is the equivalent of a school SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator).

[Baseline drop-in service](#)

[Lewisham Speaking Up](#)



# Early Years (0–5)

## In this section

- Support for under 5's
- Where to find information, advice and support
- Drop-ins and stay and play groups
- Workshops and courses available to parent / carers for children under 5



# Support for the under 5s

If your child is under 2 and does not attend an early years setting (nursery and/or childminder) and you think they might have SEND, talk to your doctor or health visitor. If they think your child has SEND, they must tell you and give you an opportunity to say what you think. By doing this they can consider what kind of support might best help your child.

They also need to let Lewisham's Early Years Team know, who will be able to advise on how best to support your child.

If you are concerned about your child's development you can also get advice by referring your child to the Lewisham Portage Service, or by asking your doctor or health visitor to make the referral.





# Where to get more information, advice and support

## Health Visitor Community Hubs

Health visitors are registered nurses or midwives with a specialist qualification in public health. They work with families who have children between the ages of 0 and five.

Community Hubs run concurrently throughout the Borough. The sessions are led either by the Health Visiting service (HV) or Children's Centre team (CC).

There are four baby hubs in Lewisham which run the same time table each week.

- Ladywell children's centre, Monday 1–3pm
- Waldron Health Centre, Wednesday 1–2.45pm
- Bellingham children's centre, Thursday 9.30–11.30am
- Downham Health and Leisure centre (run by the HV service), Thursday 9.30am–12 noon

[See timetable of all community hubs](#)

## Lewisham Portage Service

The Lewisham Portage Service is an educational home visiting service provided by Lewisham for pre-school children with developmental needs. It aims to improve outcomes (what your child will achieve) for children and families in the borough.

Portage is provided to:

- families living within the borough of Lewisham who have a child under 3 years of age with a disability or additional needs
- children over 3 if they are not in full receipt of their 15 hours a week government funded early years placement (GFP). This is regardless of status, i.e. in temporary housing, immigration status, foster care or childminder.

[Find out more.](#)

## Early Years settings

If your child attends an Ofsted registered early years setting, you will get a written progress check when your child is 2 years old, ongoing observations of your child's progress, and a written assessment in the summer term of Reception year in school. Your child's health visitor will also carry out a health check when they are two and a half.

You may be contacted by your child's early years setting or school if they think your child needs additional support. You can also approach them if you think your child might have SEN. You will be involved and your views will be needed throughout the process and you will be kept up to date with the progress made.

If your child has more complex needs they might instead need an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. You can find out more about and Education, Health and Care needs assessment on Lewisham Local Offer.

# Drop-ins and stay and play groups

## Lewisham Children and Family Centre's

Families can access a range of services from health, education and social care professionals at centres across the borough.

For more information visit Lewisham's Family Information Service or visit the [children and family centre](#) website: .

## Drumbeat Tom Tom – Stay and Play Group

A stay, play and learn group for under 5's with Social Communication difficulties (including those with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder), and additional needs.

These sessions are by referral only.

Visit [www.drumbeatasd.org](http://www.drumbeatasd.org) for more information.

## Early Years SEND Factor

Virtual drop-in information, advice and guidance sessions covering a range of topics such as toileting, transitioning to nursery/school and appropriate sign-posting of where to find further support.

Sessions are held on the second Thursday of each month. Parent/carers of children 0-5 years. Email [local.offer@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:local.offer@lewisham.gov.uk) for more information on how to attend.



# Workshops and courses available to parent / carers for children under 5

## Children and Family Centre workshops and programmes

**Course name: Triple P**

Area of need: behavioural difficulties

Target age: 2–8 years

**Course name: Schools Outreach and Being a Parent Taster Session**

Target age: 2–8 years

**Course name: Beautiful Babies, Beautiful Brains**

Area of need: Attachment and parenting capacity

Target age: 3–18 months

**Course name: Owl Babies**

Area of need: Child development – baby's mental and emotional health

Target age: under 1 year

**Course name: Baby Massage**

Target age: under 1 year

Visit [www.lewishamcfc.org.uk](http://www.lewishamcfc.org.uk) for information about drop-in sessions and stay and play in your area.

# Primary and Early Secondary Phase (5–13)

## In this section

- How do I know if my child needs support?
- Support available to your child at school
- What is SEN Support
- What to do if you feel your child needs additional support
- Where to find information, advice and support



# How do I know if my child needs support?

**You may be concerned about your child for one or more of the following reasons:**

## Communication

- They find it difficult to make sense of language or to communicate effectively with others

## Learning

- Learn at a significantly slower pace than others their age
- Persistent difficulty understanding parts of what they are taught
- Regular difficulties with organisation and remembering things
- Persistent difficulties with reading, writing and/or maths

## Emotional

- Difficulties managing their relationships with other people
- Withdrawn
- Difficulties with behaviour, which gets in the way of their learning or the learning of others, or is affecting their health and wellbeing

## Physical and/or sensory

- They have a visual and/or hearing impairment or physical need that means they must have additional ongoing support and equipment

**Please remember:** Your child may not require a diagnosis to receive additional support for their needs. Equally, a diagnosis in itself does not necessarily indicate that your child has SEN or that the support needed is beyond what a school can be expected to provide.

# Support for children of school age

Most children of school age who have SEND will attend a mainstream school. Mainstream schools include all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools.

If your child has a disability, whether or not they have SEN, their school will take reasonable steps to ensure your child is able to access the learning environment.

If your child has SEN, your school needs to do its best to give them the support they need. They may be identified as needing SEN Support. The school may need to find out more information about the best ways to support your child, which could include getting advice and support from specialists outside the school such as an educational psychologist or speech and language therapist. You will need to give your consent for referrals to be made.

It is important that the SENCO ensures that all adults working in the school understand their responsibilities to children on SEN Support.

Your child's school must provide you with an annual report on your child's progress and should communicate with you regularly about your child's progress.



# What is SEN Support?

## **SEN Support can take many forms, for example:**

- an individualised learning programme for your child
- extra help from a teacher or a learning support assistant
- making or adapting materials and equipment
- working with your child in a small group or on a one to one basis for part of the school day
- observing your child in class or at break and keeping records
- helping your child to take part in class activities
- making sure that your child has understood things by encouraging them to ask questions and to try something they find difficult
- helping other children to work with your child or play with them at break time
- supporting your child with physical or personal care difficulties such as eating, getting around school safely, toileting or dressing

For more information, visit [School provision and support for children with SEND](#)

**Please remember:** A very small number of CYP have needs that clearly require an EHC needs assessment and plan. An EHC plan brings your child's education, health and social care needs into a single legal document. Your child must have significant special educational needs to be eligible for a plan. Once Lewisham LA is aware of them it should start the process without delay.

# Key Stage 4 Secondary Phase and Further Education (14–25)

## In this section

- Pathways and educational options for 14+ year olds
- Support for people aged 16 and over in further education
- Support for young people preparing for adulthood
- Training and employment opportunities for young people with SEND





# Support for young people preparing for adulthood

From the age of 16 the law recognises that young people have rights to take some decisions for themselves, provided they are capable of doing so (as determined by a mental capacity assessment).

At age 16 and beyond, young people will become increasingly independent and want to exercise more control over the support they receive for their special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND). Further education settings, Lewisham local authority (LA) and others who provide services for young people when they are over compulsory school age are expected to communicate directly with the young person.

You should talk to your young person and agree how best you can be involved, and how much support they will need as they get older. Once you have agreed arrangements which work for you, your young person should let their further education setting know. This way you can receive the information and support you need as a parent to continue to give your young person the support they need from you.

Preparing for adulthood is about preparing your young person with SEND for different aspects of life, and recognising the increasing independence of young people once they reach 16 and beyond. Your young person will need to start thinking about:

- employment (and the right education to get there)
- somewhere to live
- having friends and being part of their community
- being happy, healthy, safe and confident about your future

For more information on preparing for adulthood, visit

[Lewisham SEND Local Offer – Preparing young people with SEND for adult life](#)

**Please remember:** From the age of 16 the law recognises that young people have rights to take some decisions for themselves, provided they are capable of doing so (as determined by a mental capacity assessment).

# Pathways and educational options for 14+ year olds

Since September 2015 all young people have to participate in some form of education or training until they are 18. However, this does not mean your young person has to stay at school. They could:

- Participate in full-time education (known as a study programme) at a college, school or with a training provider
- Take up an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship
- Go into full-time employment or volunteering (of 20 hours or more per week) if combined with accredited part-time education or training.

If your young person has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, in the summer term of Year 10 they will receive a letter from Lewisham Council's SEN Team asking them to tell us what education setting they want to go to next. Over the autumn term of Year 11, your young person needs to think about what they want to do next and visit post-16 education settings they are interested in. They will also have the annual review of their EHC Plan where they will also discuss what they want to do next and say their first and second choice for your post-16 education setting.

There are a range of education and training options your young person could consider which are detailed at [lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer](https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer).



# Information, advice and guidance

Learning options for 14–19 year olds can be explored here. There is a vast amount of information including careers advice and financial support for young people (16–19 year olds) in education.

Lewisham Education Business Partnership help young people prepare for education, employment, training or higher education.

The careers education, information, advice and guidance programme (CEIAG) raises awareness of post-16 pathways in all local secondary schools.

Get advice about studying full or part time from the Disabled Students Helpline.

Baseline drop-in service provides support and advice for young people aged 16–18 (up to 25 years old for those with additional needs) not in employment, education or training (NEET).

In school, your young person will also have access to a named careers lead who will be able to offer your young person advice and guidance.



# Support for people aged 16 and over in further education

If your young person has SEN, the further education setting needs to use its best endeavours to give them the support they need. Support for most young people will be provided through SEN Support. This might include support from outside the further education setting.

In line with the SEND Code of Practice, the further education setting should take reasonable steps to support the inclusion of a young person with a learning disability, for example a student who does not use verbal communication but is doing a mainstream course, by:

- the involvement of staff from the further education setting's learning support team
- using staff expertise to access technology to identify appropriate switches or communication boards to facilitate your young persons involvement in entry level courses
- providing staff development to ensure an understanding of your young persons particular method of communication

**The further education setting should also:**

- keep records of your young persons progress and the support they receive up to date
- keep you informed of progress

If your young person has an EHC Plan, annual reviews will continue in further education to monitor progress towards their agreed outcomes.



# Employment (and the right education to get there)

[lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer](https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer) provides information for young people with SEND about jobs, money, housing, community participation and healthy living.

## **Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance**

Supporting your young person with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to find resources offering careers advice such as useful websites for those aged 14 to 19 wanting advice on education, employment, and training.

## **Work Experience/ Volunteering / Training / Traineeships**

Training is an important way for your young person to gain new skills, improve existing skills and learn more about the areas they are interested in. Find out more information about work experience, volunteering, and training for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## **Supported Internships**

Supported internships are a structured study programme based primarily at an employer. They enable young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace.

## **Apprenticeships**

Explore apprenticeship opportunities in Lewisham with your young person with special educational needs. You can also sign up to get email alerts about new vacancies.

## **Jobs and Supported Employment**

Supported Employment is a personalised model for supporting people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to secure and retain paid employment.



# Somewhere to live

[lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer](http://lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer) provides information for young people with SEND about jobs, money, housing, community participation and healthy living.

## **Housing**

Supporting your young person with special educational needs and disabilities to find out about supported tenancies, support with housing costs, to see if they are eligible for social housing to live independently.

## **Moving into adult social care**

Adult social care can support your young person's transition into adulthood and provide adult care services as a result of the adult Care Act assessment of need. Where relevant this could include consideration of the special educational needs education, health and care plan and/or a children's services assessment and community support plan.

## **Travel**

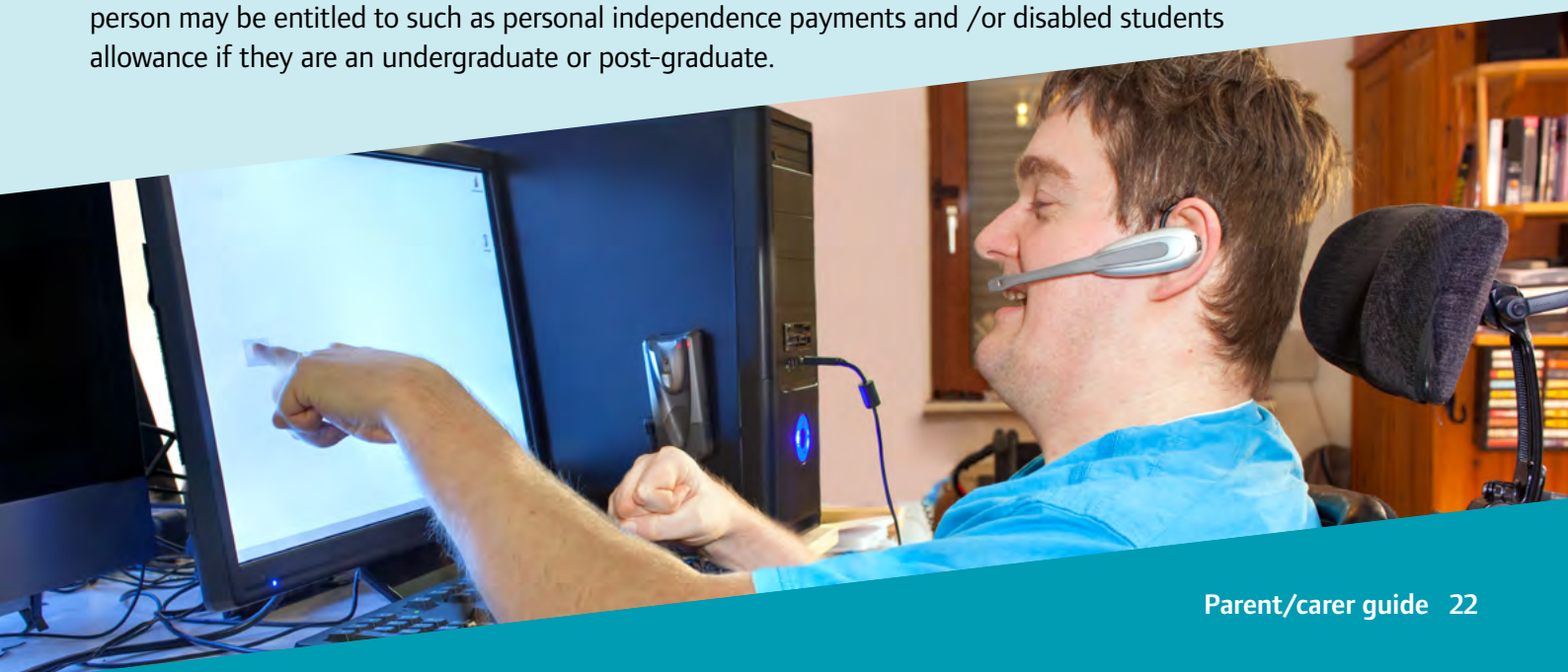
There is a range of transport options for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Find out more about Lewisham's community transport scheme, Transport for London (TfL) accessibility information, eligibility for a disabled persons freedom pass and more on Lewisham Local Offer

## **Assistive technology**

Find out more about how to support your young person with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to get equipment to help them live at home independently.

## **Money, benefits and grants**

Support and advice for you and your young person with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) about managing money, exploring benefits and funding your young person may be entitled to such as personal independence payments and /or disabled students allowance if they are an undergraduate or post-graduate.



# Having friends and being part of a community

[lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer](http://lewisham.gov.uk/localoffer) provides information for young people with SEND about jobs, money, housing, community participation and healthy living.

## Community activities

### Youth clubs

### Accessible places to go

## Groups

It is important that everyone has the opportunity to have their say, and that people listen to young people, especially regarding things that directly affects them.

If your young person feels happy to talk about their ideas and wants to get involved with other like-minded young people, there is a variety of groups they can join to get their voices heard:

- **Champions of Inclusion** – For young people by young people. Lewisham wants to hear the voices of children and young people with SEN/D.
- **Lewisham Young Advisors** – a group of young people making positive changes to their community. They are the youth voice in local democracy.
- **UK Youth Parliament** – an opportunity for 11–18-year-olds to stand for election as a MYP (Member of Youth Parliament).
- Student councils and student unions – your young person can ask at their sixth form or college about opportunities to have a voice in their school or college.



# Being happy, healthy, safe and confident about the future

Lewisham Local Offer provides information for young people with SEND about jobs, money, housing, community participation and healthy living.

## Advice and support

There are free, confidential health and wellbeing services for children and young people who need support with issues related to drugs, alcohol, emotional and mental health and sexual health.

## Sexual health

There are lots of sources of sexual health information and advice for young people.

## Aids, adaptations and equipment

If your child or young person has a permanent disability, they may be eligible for an functional assessment of their daily activities for support to increase their safety and independence.

## Health and wellbeing

## Mental health and emotional wellbeing





There are many services in Lewisham that can offer advice, support and guidance if you are worried about your young person's mental health, resilience or emotional wellbeing.

Most services are aged from 10–19 (or up to 25 if your young person has special educational needs and disabilities) and/or education, health and care (EHC) plans

### **In this section**

- What is an education, health and care plan?
- Who can get an education, health and care plan?
- What is an education, health and care needs assessment?
- How can a request be made for an EHC needs assessment?
- What if the Local Authority do not agree that an EHC plan is needed?

# What is an education, health and care plan?

Education, Health and Care Plans are legal documents that describe a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs.

They explain the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and explain how the help will support a child or young person to achieve what they want to in their life.

EHC Plans can be issued to a child or young person between the ages of 0 and 25 years although this will not be the case for all young people with SEND and will depend on their assessed need.

EHC Plans are reviewed annually.

## Who can get an education, health and care plan?

The following people can request an EHC needs assessment for a child/young person aged between 0–25 years of age:

- the parent/carer
- a young person aged over the age of 16 but under the age of 25 years
- a child/young person aged 10–18 years in a youth custodial institution
- 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)
- professionals or family/friends (this should be done with the knowledge and agreement of the child's parent or the young person).

# What is an education, health and care needs assessment?

If your child or young person has special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), they may require an education, health and care (EHC) needs assessment.

Before an agreement is reached that an EHC Plan is necessary an Education, Health and Care needs assessment must take place. An EHC needs assessment is a detailed look at the special educational needs (SEN) of a child or young person and the support he or she may need in order to learn.

**The needs assessment brings together information about:**

- what your child can and cannot do
- the additional help they need.

**It includes information from:**

- you (if you are a child or young person)
- your child (if you are a parent or carer)
- the early years' setting, school or college
- other professionals who work with or support your child.

To get advice and support about education, health and care (EHC) needs assessments and plans visit Lewisham Local Offer. You can also contact Lewisham Special Education Needs (SEN) Team or get impartial advice and support from the special education needs and disability information, advice and support service (SENDIASS).

**[Watch the Council for Disabled Children's video on 'what is an EHC Plan'.](#)**

# How can a request be made for an EHC needs assessment?

Prior to a professional submitting a request they must hold a 'team around the child/young person' meeting with the parent, child/young person and other relevant professionals to:

- gather information on the needs of the child/young person
- get the views of the family and the child/young person
- complete the 'My World' profile with the child/young person
- discuss how the education setting is meeting the child's needs from their local offer and establish why the child's needs cannot be met
- complete a formal EHC needs assessment referral request form
- obtain signed consent from the parent young person.

Parent/ young people and family/friends are encouraged to make a request via their child/young person's educational setting in order to support the request. However, they can make requests directly in writing to the Lewisham Children with Complex Needs Service, Special Education Needs Team.

All EHC needs assessment request must be sent to Lewisham Special Education Needs (SEN) Team.



## When the local authority receives your education, health and care needs assessment request:

The local authority has up to six weeks to decide whether to make a needs assessment.

During the first six weeks after the application the local authority will look at all the information and then tell you whether it has decided to go ahead with the EHC needs assessment OR that an EHC needs assessment is not necessary.

During this time the LA may ask you, the school and other professionals for information.

Sometimes advice and information is already available because other professionals have been working with your child. Sometimes new advice will need to be requested.

If the local authority think an EHC Needs Assessment is not needed they must tell you why and give you information about: (a) your right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal and the time limit for appealing; (b) independent disagreement resolution and mediation EHC needs assessment for children in early years settings or at school; (c) how to get further information, advice or support.

## What happens if the Local Authority decides an EHC Needs Assessment is not needed?

If the Local Authority decide that an assessment is not needed, they will write to you as the child's parent, or directly to a young person over 16, as well as the education setting to explain their decision and their reasons for making this decision. This should include feedback about the information available at the point of decision making.

The Local Authority must also give you details about:

- your right to appeal against the decision to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).
- The disagreement resolution arrangements available, including mediation services.

## What happens if the Local Authority decides that an EHC Needs Assessment is needed?

If it is decided that an EHC needs assessment is needed, your child or young person will have an allocated Senior SEN Case Officer who is linked to their education setting who will coordinate the assessment. If your young child or young person is not in any education setting, the colleagues at the SEN duty desk will advise you of who the allocated Senior SEN Case Officer is – all parents (or the young person if over 16 years) will be allocated an SEN Caseworker.

The Senior SEN Case Officer will start gathering information about the child or young person from a number of professionals linked to your child or young person. This is a formal process and statutory advice will be requested in line with the SEN panel's recommendations and suggestions. Compulsory contributions to the statutory EHC Needs Assessment are advice from a community paediatrician and an educational psychologist, other advice may be requested in line with your young person's identified needs (not diagnosis).

The Senior SEN Case Officer will be in contact with the young person and family throughout to give information on the progress of the request/assessment. The child or young person and their family will be at the very centre of the assessment and their views will be listened to every step of the way. This is called a person-centred approach.

The assessment will focus on identifying needs and suggesting outcomes for the child or young person. Local Authorities also have a duty to provide all parents, children and young people with impartial information. In Lewisham this is provided by SENDIAS:

- [www.kids.org.uk](http://www.kids.org.uk), you can contact them by email on [Lewisham@kids.org.uk](mailto:Lewisham@kids.org.uk) or telephone 020 3319 2163.

## What happens after an EHC Needs Assessment has been conducted?

Lewisham SEND multi-agency panel will carefully consider all of the advice collected during the assessment and will decide whether an EHC plan is necessary for the child or young person.

### If the decision is “Yes, an EHC Plan is needed”:

If the Local Authority decides that an EHC Plan is necessary, they will send a Draft EHC Plan, together with a copy of all the advice and reports collected during the assessment, to the parent or young person. The Local Authority must give the child’s parent or young person at least 15 days to give their views on the content of the draft EHC Plan, to express a preference for an educational institution and to seek the agreement of a personal budget. Parents or young people can contact the SEND Service to discuss any issues or concerns.

### If the decision is “No, an EHC Plan is not needed”:

If, following the completion of an EHC needs assessment, the SEND service decides NOT to issue an EHC plan it must notify you, the current educational setting and the health service and give reasons for its decision. This notification must take place as soon as practical and at the latest within 16 weeks of the initial request. You will be notified of your right to appeal the decision to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) and of the requirement that you consider mediation should you wish to appeal.

## Mediation/Appeal

Decisions are made at key points in the process and your SEND Case Officer will keep you fully informed of the decisions made and the reasons they were made. You will be informed of your right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal (SENDIST) and of the requirement for you to consider mediation should you wish to appeal against the decisions made. Mediation is arranged by the Local Authority, unless the issues relate to health, in which case the responsible commissioning body must arrange the mediation. The mediator must be independent of the Local Authority.

If you wish to bring an appeal about the special educational needs element of the plan, you may do so only if an independent mediation advisor has provided you with information about mediation and how it might help.

You can then decide whether to go to mediation before you bring an appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). Where you decide against mediation, you will be able to go straight to appeal after receiving a certificate stating they have considered mediation.

# Advice and Support Services

If you have any questions or concerns about the Education Health and Care needs assessment process, Education Health and Care plans, or the outcome of decisions that have been made during the process, these should be addressed with Lewisham's Special Education Needs Team in the first instance.

## Special Educational Needs

Kaleidoscope Child Development Centre  
32 Rushey Green  
SE6 4JF  
Tel: 020 8314 6303 / 6369  
Email: [sen@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:sen@lewisham.gov.uk)

If you would prefer independent advice, information and support in relation to your child's special education need and or disability, Education, Health and Care needs assessment and Education, Health and Care plan processes and decisions you can contact Lewisham's independent advice, information and support services. Lewisham's Independent services are working together to ensure that you are provided with the right advice and information.

## Lewisham's Special Education Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

Leemore Central Community Hub  
Bonfield Road  
SE13 5EU  
Email: [Lewisham@kids.org.uk](mailto:Lewisham@kids.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 3319 2163.

## Independent Supporter, Contact Lewisham,

Leemore Central Community Hub  
Bonfield Road  
SE13 5EU  
Tel: 020 8297 8056,



## Disagreement Resolution Service

If you are unable to resolve a disagreement you can access our independent Disagreement Resolution Service to deal with a number of disagreements. Use of the disagreement services is voluntary and has to be with the agreement of all parties.

The Disagreement Resolution Service, can support the parent/young person if they disagree about any aspect of SEN provision, and health and social care during the processes related to EHC needs assessment and EHC plans.

### Contact details:

#### KIDS LONDON - SEND Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Service

Telephone: 020 7359 3635 (or fax 020 7520 0846)

## Mediation Service and Appeal to Tribunal

Mediation can take place following a decision by Lewisham Council:

- not to carry out an EHC needs assessment
- not to draw up an EHC plan
- after they receive a final EHC plan or amended plan
- following a decision not to amend an EHC plan
- a decision to cease to maintain an EHC plan.

The mediation arrangements are specifically linked to decision about EHC needs assessment and EHC plans.

### Mediation contact details:

#### KIDS LONDON - SEND Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Service

Telephone: 020 7359 3635 (or fax 020 7520 0846)

## First Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs & Disability)

First Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs & Disability) can be contacted at the following address:

Special Educational Needs & Disability  
2nd Floor Old Hall, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road  
Darlington, Co.Durham, DL3 9GB.  
Telephone: 01325 392760  
Email: [sendistqueries@tribunals.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sendistqueries@tribunals.gsi.gov.uk)

If you decide to appeal to the Tribunal you must contact the Mediation Service first. If you decide not to use mediation, the mediation service will issue you with a certificate to enable you to lodge your appeal to Tribunal, within two months of the original decision being sent by us or within one month of receiving the certificate whichever is the later.

# Information, advice and guidance sessions



Look out for information sessions and training such as The SEND Factor on Lewisham's SEND Local Offer

**Sign up** and receive information, advice, and news by email about our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services.

