

Early Years FAQ

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Referrals and Assessment for Education, Health and Care Plans.

When the SEND Assessment Team Bolton LA are considering whether an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment is necessary, we consider whether there is evidence that, despite the Early Years provider having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child, the child has not made expected progress. Expected progress relates to the individual child and NOT the “average” child.

We are looking for evidence of interventions and strategies used at ‘SEN Support’ and the use of a graduated approach; an assess, plan, do, review cycle for AT LEAST two terms with external agency input.

When making our decision whether to assess a child’s EHC needs, we must consider a wide range of evidence, including:

- Evidence of the child’s academic attainment (or developmental milestones in younger children) and rate of progress (for Early Years settings, this will include the Early Years Ages and Stages AND the Developmental Journal).
This is provided by the educational setting completing the High Needs Referral Form.
- Information about the nature, extent and context of the child’s SEN.
This is provided by the educational setting completing the High Needs Referral Form.
- Evidence of action already being taken by the Early Years provider, to meet the child or young person’s SEN.
This is evidenced by completing the provision map on the High Needs Referral Form.
- Evidence that where progress has been made, it has only been as the result of much additional intervention and support over and above that which is usually provided.
This is evidenced by completing the provision map on the High Needs Referral Form.
- Evidence of the child’s physical, emotional and social development and health needs, drawing on relevant evidence from clinicians and other health professionals and what has been done to meet these needs by other agencies.
This is evidenced by the educational setting submitting completed panel reports from any external agencies involved with the child e.g. Ladywood Outreach; Behaviour Support Service; Educational Psychologist; Speech and Language Therapist (SALT); Occupational Therapist (OT); Physiotherapist; CAMHS; Consultant Paediatrician etc.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE

Category 1 children

This applies to children where there is clear evidence that they have:

- Profound and multiple learning difficulties;
- Severe and complex learning difficulties (where the child's attainments are likely to remain below P level 8 for most of their school career);
- Severe physical disabilities i.e. the child is completely reliant on an adult to carry out physical tasks; or
- A significant sensory impairment i.e. A severe sight impairment or a profound hearing impairment.

For these children we expect evidence from the Early Years setting, a health professional confirming that they fall into one of the above categories and a report from an Educational Psychologist.

If the child has severe physical difficulties, we do not require the EP report.

Referrals during the COVID-19 restriction period

You need to be able to demonstrate that you have followed the graduated response outlined above.

Where you are requesting an EHC Needs Assessment for a child due to transfer to school in September 2020 and can show that you have requested a panel report from an external agency, e.g. Ladywood Outreach, Educational Psychology Service (prior to 1st March) we will accept referrals without all of the additional evidence usually required.

However, in addition to the High Needs Referral form, you should be able to support in some part the level of need that the child has and show that you have followed a graduated response. For example, this could include the referral pack that you used for the Inclusion Fund Panel with an update of the progress the child has made using the Developmental Journal.

We would NOT expect children who have received Inclusion Funding at less than Level 3 to be referred through for an EHC Needs Assessment.

Any referrals for children starting school in September 2021 should not be sent in at this time.

