

SEND Quality Assurance and Practice Development

Progress made on ensuring all EHC plans are of a good quality

1 July 2025

What is the purpose of an EHC plan ?

- In order to make a judgement on the quality of the EHC plan we must first decide its purpose and against what are we judging.
- The definition of an EHC plan is a statutory document which identifies a child or young person's (CYP) special Educational Needs, Health Needs and SC Needs related to their SEN and the additional provision required to support those needs in order to achieve their outcomes, potential and the child's aspirations .
- There is no “blue print” as to what a “good” EHC plan looks like but the SEND Code of Practice provides guidance on what should be included

The Legal requirements of an EHC plan



- An EHCP must include the following Sections
- A – the CYP's and parent's views wishes and aspirations
- B – a concise description of the CYPs identified special educational needs and the impact of those needs
- C- the health needs of the CYP related to the SEN
- D – the SC needs related to the SEN
- E -The Outcomes to be achieved to meet the needs in SEN Health and SC
- F The additional provision required to meet the SEN and achieve the Outcomes . This must be specified and quantified i.e. what is to be delivered, by whom and how often and how is it to be reviewed
- G- The additional provision required to meet the Health needs and achieve the Outcomes . This must be specified and quantified i.e. what is to be delivered, by whom and how often and how is it to be reviewed
- H1 and H2 The additional provision required to meet the SC and achieve the Outcomes . This must be specified and quantified i.e. what is to be delivered, by whom and how often and how is it to be reviewed
- I the description of the type of placement and the name of the setting
- J Personal budget
- K a list of the contributors to the EHC plan

What do we do currently that ensures quality

We complete over 1000 audits each year for quality assurance on EHC plans and this also includes processes for assessment, EHC plans and Annual Reviews.

- The SEND Audit – an audit of the assessment process and the annual review process (20 of each) each audit is moderated by a senior leader. 6 cycles of audit per year on a bi-monthly basis
- Multi agency audit – currently this takes the form of a single case study using the SEND Inspection Framework assessment, the reviews will assess how highly ambitious their aspirations and outcomes are. The review evaluates to determine if the child has had the opportunity to be included in their community, have friendships, feel safe and valued, are resilient, as well as developed knowledge and skills to gain employment, move on to higher education or live as healthily and independently as possible. These happen every 2 months before the single case studies, multi agency audits consisted of a bi- monthly review of each of the professional services involved in a child with an EHC plan. E.g. Health; Social Care; Education; EP Service. This involved a random selection of about 10 cases with the service involvement and looked at the quality of the advice and information from the service, the impact on the EHC plan and areas for development. We also conducted a multi agency audit with PACT focusing on the views and wishes of the child and parents. This resulted in the production of a pioneering adaption of Section A of the EHC plan with 4 pathways for enabling the voice of the child to be heard according to their needs and age.
- In Vision Audits – a platform which is used by multiple authorities throughout the Country which identifies the overall quality of EHC plans as well as by Section. At least 40 audits are undertaken each month on a multi agency basis with auditors coming from SEN, EP service, Inclusion Service, Health, PACT. Audits are randomly selected and moderated by SEND QAPD members.
- Audits of draft initial EHC plans and Amendment Notices(draft amended EHC plans) before issue to parents – used as a CDP for staff as well as gatekeeper for ensuring draft are judged as Good as well as ensuring that the Final will be judged as Good. These audits are on a rolling basis and are arranged so that every officer has the opportunity for the CPD . A report is made each month on the audits undertaken.
- Audit of Annual Review process (new from May 2025)
- 5 EHC plans are presented to DfE originally on a monthly basis but now mainly on a 3 monthly basis, which are judged as being Good as a moderation tool
- Feedback audits – learning from what others have thought of the processes
- Through analysis of all the audits to develop a “learning loop “ of improvements through Practice Development . Developments have included weekly cycle of training through Workshop Wednesdays / individualised induction and refresher programme (through SharePoint) -SEND Information Library channel with Guidance and process material; training documents; standardised wording suggestions; DELTA Training; Targeted support with staff; whole service training spending a day in a different part of the service – phase 1
- The audits are also used in the performance management of staff and are recorded on the Synergy database.

Current position of our EHC plans

When auditing began only those EHC plans issued for the first time (Initial) were included. In Sept 2024 we included EHC plans amended through Annual Review First issue plans had more of a focus then and we are now working on improving the amended EHC plans

May 2024 Initial EHCP

Grade	Kent	National
Outstanding	0%	2%
Good	21%	40%
RI	66%	42%
Inadequate	13%	16%

Amended final EHC plans issued Sept 2024

Grade	Kent	National
Outstanding		1%
Good	21%	37%
RI	47%	46%
Inadequate	32%	17

May 2025 Initial and final EHC plans

Grade	Initial	Amended	Kent	National
Gold	0%	0%	0%	0%
Silver	59%	5%	29%	32%
Bronze	41%	76%	61%	46%
Significant Gaps	0%	19%	10%	22%

As can be seen from the above comparative tables there has been an improvement in overall gradings of EHC plans Individual Sections of the EHC plan have seen improvement as well Particularly in Sections A, B C, and E .
The gradings have now changed in line with Ofsted; Gold = Outstanding; Silver= Good; Bronze = Requires Improvement and Significant Gaps = Inadequate

Kent SEND Quality Assurance in the wider community

- The SEND QAPD Manager took part in a working party with Dame Christine Lenehan (DfE lead advisor for SEND) and Deborah Glassbrook on Understanding Quality Assurance Frameworks for SEND Improvement working with Council for Disabled Children and DfE to produce a National Guidance for Writing Quality Assurance Frameworks for SEND.
- Our own SEND Quality Assurance Framework along with other documents was submitted as part of the research . The Kent Framework was held up as exemplar to be referred to in the Guidance and Dame Christine described our framework as excellent.
- As a result, we were also asked to provide a case study to be included in the national guidance on our workforce as it came through as integral to what we do. In particular our Quality Assurance Cycle and how it works in practice.
- Youth Justice – QAPD has supported Youth Justice in updating their framework and providing a consistent approach across services.

Action points going forwards:

1. Targeted Professional Development and Recognition

- Implement structured 1:1 feedback for officers responsible for EHC plans graded as having “Significant Gaps,” focusing on developmental support and upskilling.
- Introduce a formal recognition system (e.g. “Gold Standard” acknowledgments) for officers producing high-quality plans, reinforcing a culture of excellence.

2. Strengthening Social Care Contributions

- Co-design improved guidance and shared expectations with Social Care colleagues to enhance the quality and consistency of input for Sections D, H1, and H2.
- Develop practical tools to support translation of professional advice into clear, accessible, and meaningful content for EHC plans.

3. Reinstating and Expanding Multi-Agency Audits

- Resume bi-monthly multi-agency audits involving Health, Social Care, EPs, and Education professionals to assess the quality and clarity of advice being submitted.
- Use audit insights to drive cross-agency workshops and improvement plans, ensuring all partners understand what high-quality input looks like.

4. Embedding the New EHCP Template and Pathways

- Roll out and monitor implementation of the updated EHCP template, including Appendix 1 with the four pathways to voice.
- Provide targeted training on embedding a clear “golden thread” from aspirations to provision and outcomes.

5. Quality and Consistency in Key EHCP Sections

- Deliver focused training on:
 - **Section F:** Writing provision that is specific, measurable, and distinguishable from universal offer.
 - **Sections D and G:** Effectively utilizing Social Care and Health advice in EHCPs.
- Continue 1:1 pre-issue coaching for officers to quality-check draft plans and ensure consistency of standards.

6. Enhanced Partnership Working and Shared Accountability

- Engage partner agencies in reviewing the quality of advice provided, supported by re-established multi-agency case audits from September.
- Develop shared improvement objectives with Health, Education and Social Care partners based on audit outcomes.

7. Improving Quality of Amended EHC Plans

- Strengthen links with schools via SENCo forums and webinars to raise understanding of amendment processes and expectations.
- Create exemplars and practical tools to support schools in producing high-quality review documentation that leads to robust plan amendments.

Challenges



- Advice and Information . EHC plans are only as good as the advice and information received from professionals . It is sometimes difficult for officers to interpret the professional language used by our professional colleagues which means that information may be missed . Surgeries are now in place with Health, Social Care and EP service for the Assessment Service although capacity prevents this extending to the Casework service. However more work is needed to ensure needs are accurately described, Outcomes are presented in Advice and Information and are S.M.A.R.T. and additional provision is specified and quantified.
- Quality Assurance of the advice and Information from professionals is needed to ensure the correct information is received and the needs and required provision are better identified. From September the Multi agency audits will be re-established – alongside the single case studies. This is to analyse what is being received as Advice and Information and that it is fit for purpose. Joint working on this will help our partner agencies take forward to their service colleagues what is good and what needs to improve in terms of [providing SEND with impactful and timely advice and information.
- Raising the quality of amended EHC plans. We are working closely with both Schools (SENCo Form and webinars for SENCos) to ensure that the process of Annual Review meetings and the reports required enable robust decisions on EHC plans including accurate amendments based on evidence received.