

SENDCO GUIDE

Welcome to your SENDCo Guide!

This guide is designed to provide information, responsibilities and guidance for SENDCOs and support SENDCOs in understanding the EHC Team's shared vision, structure, and daily operations from September 2025 onwards.

Our mission is to ensure every child and young person with SEND receives the support they need to thrive, in partnership with families, schools, and local services.

From September, our SEND Team will be moving to locality-based working.

To provide the right support, in the right place, at the right time to support children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes. To achieve this, we will establish a resilient, locality working model for delivering statutory functions to support children, young people and families.



Version 1 - September 2025

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CORE PURPOSE

To establish a resilient locality working based structure, in line with social care, for delivering statutory SEND functions across the 0-25 age range



PRINCIPLES AND PARAMETERS

- We are committed to transforming the SEND team to better meet our statutory functions.
- This change is driven by the need to encompass the new social care reforms and ensure a seamless 0-25 continuation of support for families in Torbay.
- Integrating the latest social care reforms to provide comprehensive and cohesive support.
- Ensuring that our services are aligned with Children's Services, national standards and best practices and working in localities.
- Providing consistent and uninterrupted support from early years through to adulthood.
- Focusing on the holistic development and well-being of children and young people.
- Regularly reviewing and refining our processes to ensure the highest quality of service.
- Engaging with families and stakeholders to gather feedback and make informed improvements.

LEGISLATION/GUIDANCE

SEND Code of Practice

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

Provides statutory **guidance** on how education, health, and social care services must work together to identify and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. It emphasises early identification, person-centred planning, and coordinated provision to help individuals achieve positive outcomes and prepare successfully for adulthood



Children & Families Act

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents>

The **legal** framework for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), placing a duty on local authorities, health, and social care services to work collaboratively through integrated Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). It emphasises person-centred planning, early intervention, and preparing young people for adulthood, ensuring that their needs and aspirations are central to service delivery and decision-making.

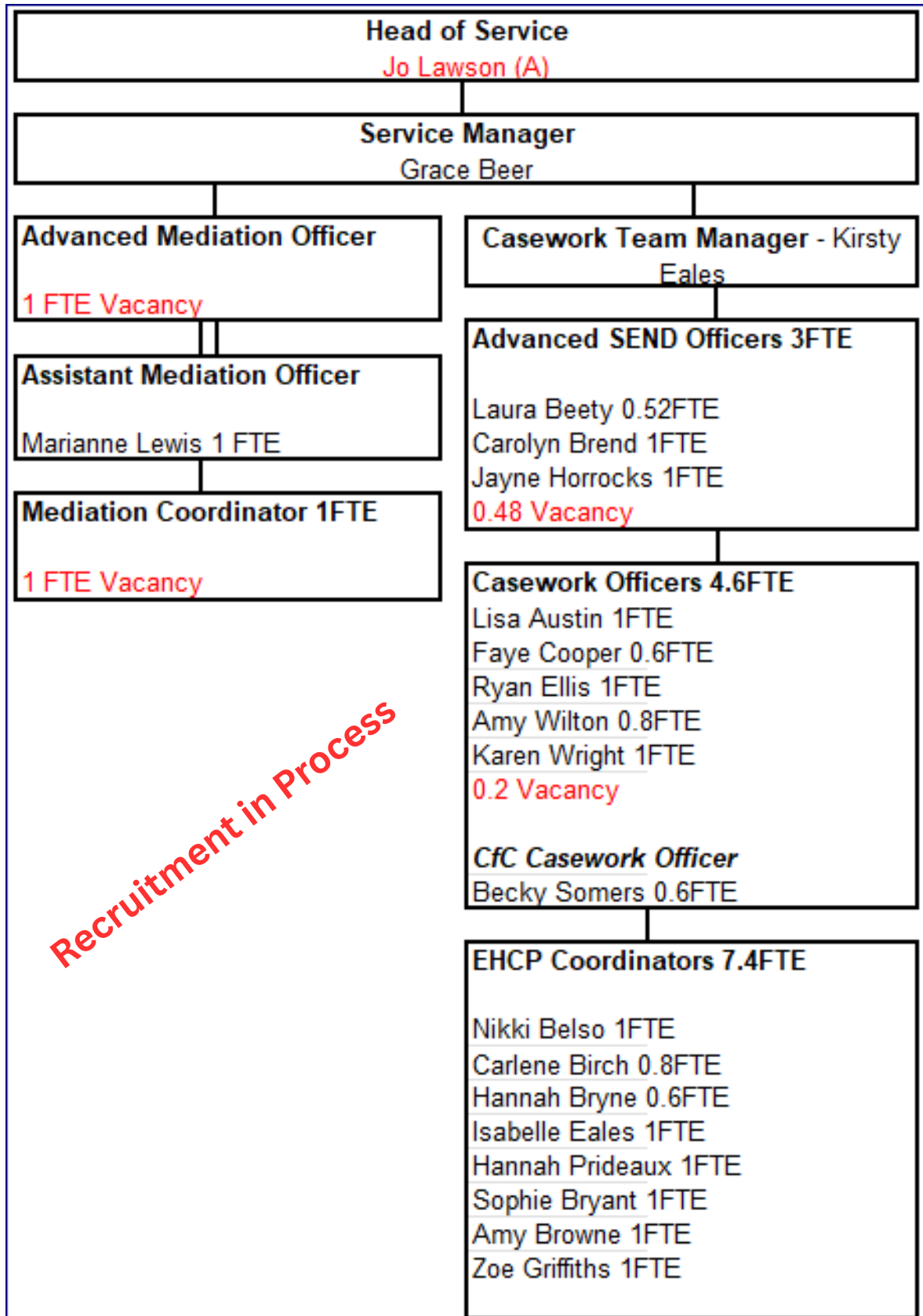


Equality Act

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

This Act **legally** protects children and young people with disabilities from discrimination in education, requiring schools and local authorities to make reasonable adjustments and provide auxiliary aids to ensure equal access and inclusion. It also places a Public Sector Equality Duty on education providers to actively eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations for pupils with protected characteristics, including those with SEND

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE



LOCALITY WORKING

Our team is divided into 2 locality groups to ensure tailored, community-focused support:

- Each team serves 0–25 age range, ensuring all statutory functions are delivered within their area.
- Each locality team works closely with local schools, health, and social care partners.
- Locality working enables us to respond quickly to emerging needs and build strong relationships with families and professionals.



Torquay



Paignton & Brixham



Cared for pupils, out of area

LOCALITY WORKING

Torquay

Advanced Officer:

Carolyn Brend



Casework Officers:

Karen Wright / Ryan Ellis / Faye Cooper



EHCP Coordinators:

Hannah Prideaux / Hannah Byrne / 1 x Sophie Bryant/ 1 x Carlene Birch



Mediation Team



Contact:

EHC Needs Assessments

ehcp@torbay.gov.uk

Annual Reviews/Amends

TorquaySEND@torbay.gov.uk

PaigntonSEND@torbay.gov.uk

Mediation

send.mediation@torbay.gov.uk

LOCALITY WORKING

Paignton & Brixham Sub cohort - CfC out of area

Advanced Officer:

Jayne Horrocks / Laura Beety



Casework Officers:

Amy Wilton / Lisa Austin / 1 x Becky Somers



EHCP Coordinators:

Nikki Belso / Amy Browne / Isabelle Eales / 1 x Zoe Griffiths



Mediation Team



Contact:

EHC Needs Assessments

ehcp@torbay.gov.uk

Annual Reviews/Amends

TorquaySEND@torbay.gov.uk

PaigntonSEND@torbay.gov.uk

Mediation

send.mediation@torbay.gov.uk

Laura Beety and Becky Somers will be the sub team for cared for, out of area pupils.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Key Responsibilities of a SENDCO in the EHC Process:

Identification and Early Intervention

SENDCOs lead the early identification of SEN within schools, ensuring that needs are recognised promptly and addressed through appropriate support. They initiate and oversee the Graduated Approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review), which is the foundation for determining whether an EHC needs assessment is required.

Coordination of Support

They coordinate provision for pupils with SEN, ensuring that interventions are tailored and effective. This includes working with teaching staff, support staff, and external professionals such as educational psychologists and therapists.

Liaison with Families and Professionals

SENDCOs act as a key point of contact for parents and carers, supporting them through the EHC assessment and planning process. They also liaise with local authority EHC Coordinators, casework officers, health and social care professionals, and voluntary organisations to ensure a joined-up approach.

Contribution to EHC Needs Assessments and Plans

When a child is being considered for an EHC plan, the SENDCO provides detailed evidence of the child's needs, the support already in place, and the outcomes of previous interventions. They contribute to the development and review of the EHC plan, ensuring it reflects the child's needs and aspirations.

Monitoring and Reviewing Progress

SENDCOs ensure that the provision outlined in the EHC plan is delivered and regularly reviewed. They monitor progress and coordinate annual reviews, adjusting support as needed to meet evolving needs.

Strategic Leadership

Beyond individual cases, SENDCOs help shape the school's overall SEN strategy, ensuring compliance with the SEND Code of Practice and promoting inclusive education.

PRACTICE STANDARDS

Role of the SENDCo

- Fulfil statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014.
- Coordinate SEND provision across the school.
- Be part of or report to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Oversee support staff and provision mapping.
- Lead on inclusion and monitor impact.

Statutory Duties

- Operate the SEND Policy daily.
- Coordinate provision for pupils with SEND.
- Liaise with parents and carers.
- Maintain the SEND register and pupil records.
- Collaborate with external agencies (LA SEND Team, health, social care).
- Ensure EHCPs are implemented and reviewed.
- Contribute to annual reviews.
- Ensure compliance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

Communication & Family Partnership

- Lead co-production with families.
- Provide clear updates on pupil support and progress.
- Use accessible, jargon-free language.
- Respond to queries within 5 working days.
- Maintain positive and constructive relationships.

Quality First Teaching (QFT) & Inclusive Practice

- Promote QFT as the first response to SEND.
- Support teachers with differentiation and reasonable adjustments.
- Deliver SEND training to staff.
- Monitor classroom practice regularly.
- Embed restorative and trauma-informed approaches.
- Ensure SEND Support Plans are in place and reviewed termly.

PRACTICE STANDARDS

Graduated Response

- Apply the Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycle consistently.
- Ensure interventions are evidence-based and tracked.
- Support staff in creating one-page profiles and provision plans.
- Keep accurate records of pupil outcomes.

Working with the LA (Torbay SEND Team)

- Submit EHCP requests with graduated response evidence.
- Provide timely information for assessments and reviews.
- Attend annual reviews, annotate amended EHC plans and submit all reports within 2 weeks.
- Liaise with Locality Teams on placements and transitions.

Data, Tracking & Reporting

- Maintain an accurate SEND register.
- Track attainment, progress, attendance, and exclusions.
- Report SEND outcomes to Governors.
- Use data to inform provision and resource allocation.

Leadership, Training & CPD

- Provide termly SEND training for staff.
- Stay updated with SEND law and policy.
- Build expertise in SEMH, autism, dyslexia, SLCN.
- Mentor and support teaching assistants.
- Attend the SENDCO forum.

Safeguarding & Pupil Wellbeing

- Safeguard pupils with SEND in line with school policy.
- Liaise with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) for complex needs.
- Monitor exclusions and behaviour of SEND pupils.
- Promote inclusive behaviour management and restorative practice.

PRACTICE STANDARDS

Summary Checklist

- Update SEND register termly.
- Evidence graduated response for all SEND pupils.
- Review SEND Support Plans termly.
- Submit EHCP contributions on time.
- Maintain clear communication with families.
- Deliver regular staff training.
- Share reports with Governors.
- Ensure transition plans are in place.
- Engage in reflective practice and continuous improvement.

SEND PROCESSES AND TIMELINES

Overview of the EHCP process (request, assessment, issuing, review)

For new EHCP assessments, continue to use ehcp@torbay.gov.uk.

Annual review timeline and expectations

Submission Process

1. Identify the locality of the child or young person (TQY or PGN/BRIX).
2. Send annual review paperwork to the appropriate locality inbox:

- TQY: TorquaySEND@torbay.gov.uk

- PGN/BRIX: PaigntonSEND@torbay.gov.uk

As this a duty delegated to schools via the local authority the Locality Teams will support with schools and families for appropriate maintenance of these processes

The local authority are ultimately responsible for decision making and will provide oversight, support and statutory administrative tasks.

STATUTORY FUNCTIONS



Key Statutory Functions:

EHC Needs Assessment (EHCNA)

SENDCO Role:

- Identify children/young people who may need an EHCNA through the Graduated Approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review).
- Gather evidence of SEN, current support, SEND support plan and progress.
- Coordinate input from school staff and external professionals.
- Support families in understanding and submitting requests.

Legal Reference:

- Children and Families Act 2014, Section 36: Parents, young people, or schools can request an assessment.
- SEND Code of Practice, Paragraphs 9.1–9.14: Describes the process and criteria for assessment.

Final EHC Plan Issued & Funding Allocated

SENDCO Role:

- Review the draft plan and ensure it accurately reflects the child's needs and provision.
- Ensure provision in Section F is specific, detailed, and deliverable.
- Work with the LA to clarify funding arrangements (e.g. High Needs Block, Notional SEN Budget).
- Implement the plan and monitor delivery of support.

Legal Reference:

- Children and Families Act 2014, Section 42: LA must secure the provision in the EHC plan.
- SEND Code of Practice, Paragraphs 9.61–9.76: Covers issuing the final plan and naming the school.

STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

Key Statutory Functions - continued...

3. Annual Reviews

SENDCO Role:

- Organise the review meeting (at least annually; every 6 months for under-5s).
- Coordinate with education settings to gather updated reports (at least 6 weeks before the meeting).
- Send invitations to professionals and families (at least 2 weeks before).
- Facilitate person-centred review meeting, focusing on progress against outcomes and whether the plan needs updating.
- To submit paperwork to Locality Team within 2 weeks of meeting

Legal Reference:

- SEND Regulations 2014, Regulations 18–22: Sets out review duties.
- SEND Code of Practice, Paragraphs 9.166–9.185: Details the review process and responsibilities.

4. Phase Transfer Annual Reviews

SENDCO Role:

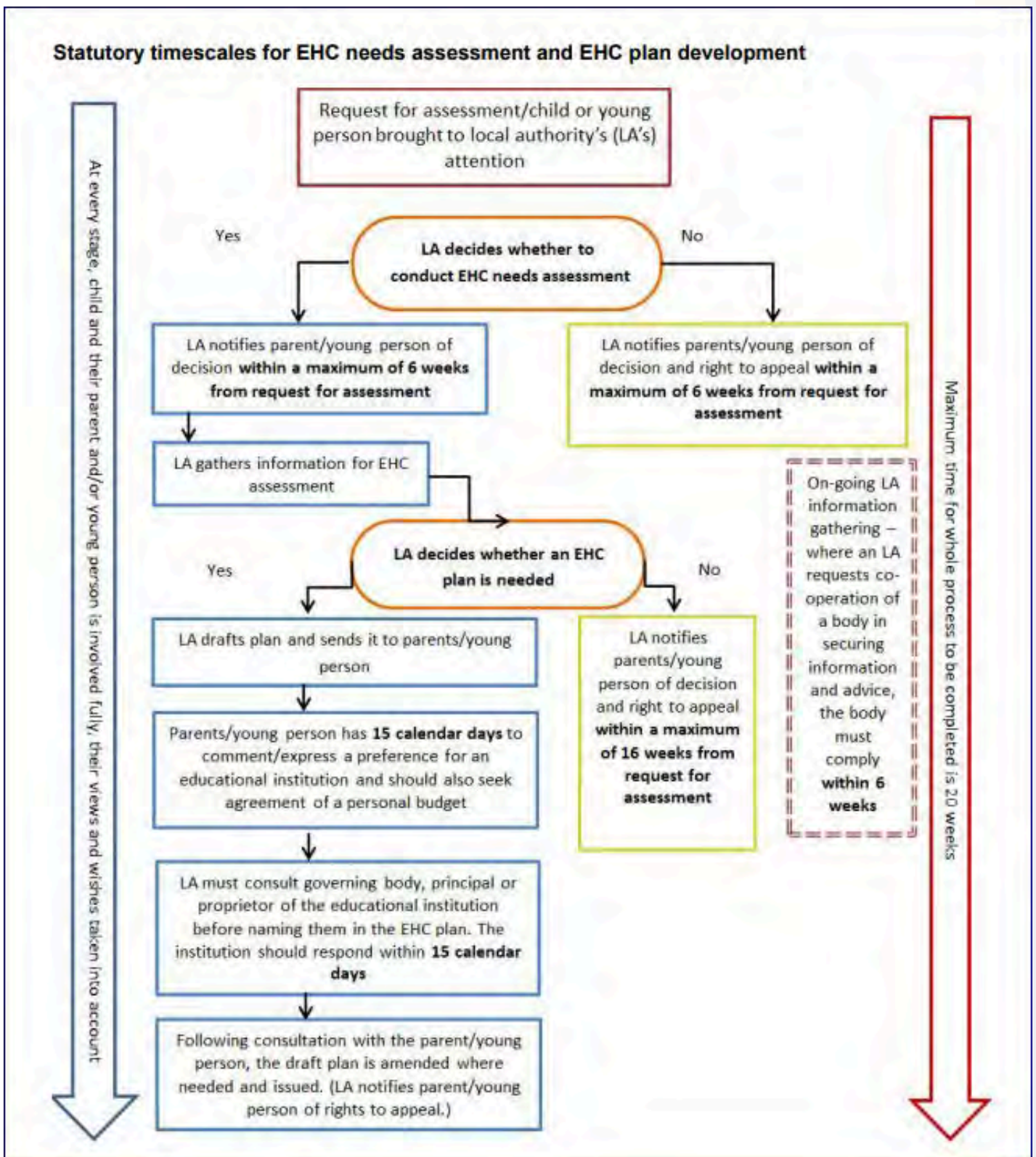
- All year 5s and 10s require a transition review, to start discussing next placement and views etc.
- Phase transfer review and annotate the EHC Plan in the autumn term of the final year at the current setting.
- Timely submit review with annotated plan
- Liaise with Locality Team for deadlines.
- Submit Specialist Educational Placement (SEP) form by the deadline, for any pupil who will require an ERP or Special School placement as their next setting.
- Support transition planning, including visits and sharing information with the new setting.

Legal Reference:

- SEND Code of Practice, Paragraphs 9.179–9.182: Covers phase transfers.
- Children and Families Act 2014, Section 44: Requires timely review and amendment of plans.

STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

20 week process



DECISION MAKING PANELS

What Are the Decision Making Panels?

There are two distinct panels being introduced:

- **Decision to Assess (DTA) Panel:** Reviews applications for Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments for children and young people aged 0–25.
- **Decision to Issue (DTI) Panel:** Determines whether an EHC plan should be issued, what funding is required, and the appropriate educational setting (mainstream, enhanced resource provision, or specialist) for the child or young person

These panels are part of the SEND service's commitment to co-production, joint planning, and equitable decision-making across Torbay.

When and How Often Do They Meet?

- Panels will be held every Thursday afternoon, starting from mid-September 2025
- Referral documentation must be uploaded by Monday noon.
- Agendas and papers are circulated by Tuesday noon.
- Minutes and decisions are recorded via CoPilot transcript and shared by Friday close of business

Who Attends?

- A quorum requires at least one decision-maker from education, health, and social care.
- The Chair is a Local Authority Officer, responsible for final decisions
- Panel members include representatives from the SEND Partnership and may also include auditors like Gibson, Blanche under the SENDQA Framework
- Non-members may be invited if additional information is needed for specific cases

DECISION MAKING PANELS

What Decisions Are Made?

- DTA Panel: Decides whether to initiate an EHC needs assessment. It does not have financial decision-making authority
- DTI Panel: Reviews assessment information to decide:
 - Whether to issue an EHC plan
 - What funding is needed
 - What type of educational setting is appropriate

Code of Conduct and Governance

Panel members must adhere to strict standards:

- Objectivity: Decisions must be evidence-based, free from personal bias.
- Confidentiality: All members sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Impartiality: Fairness is essential; known relationships must be declared.
- Respect: All individuals must be treated with dignity

Communication and Follow-Up

- Casework officers are responsible for communicating decisions to families
- Business Support Officers manage administration, record decisions, and circulate minutes

TRANSFERRING IN/OUT

4. Transfer of EHC Plans Between LAs

- **Legal Basis:** Regulation 15 of the SEND Regulations 2014.
- **Timeframe:** Transfer must occur on the day of the move or within **15 working days** of becoming aware of the move.
- **Tasks:**
 - If a setting receives communication that a pupil, with an EHCP, is moving out of Torbay please do inform your locality team as soon as possible. Please obtain move date, new address as a minimum.

SUPPORT & CONTACTS



Phone: [01803 207884](tel:01803207884) (inquiry line open 10am – 2pm Mon – Fri and 24 hour answerphone facility)

Email: sendiass@torbay.gov.uk

Website: <https://sendiasstorbay.org>

TORBAY COUNCIL

If you are unsure which locality to use or have questions about the process, please contact the SEND team via ehcp@torbay.gov.uk

Key Changes

- The current SENDMonitoring@torbay.gov.uk inbox will be retired.
- Two new locality inboxes will be introduced:
 - TorbaySEND@torbay.gov.uk
 - PaigntonSEND@torbay.gov.uk
- All new EHCP assessment requests should continue to be sent to ehcp@torbay.gov.uk

Please continue using ehcp@torbay.gov.uk for all EHCNA requests. This ensures central oversight and allows allocation to the correct locality (TQY or PGN/BRIX).

Torbay's LOCAL OFFER:

<https://torbayfamilyhub.org.uk/>



FAQS

Annual Reviews

Where can I find the most up-to-date forms to carry out an annual review?

The forms and guidance notes are on the Local Offer. Always use the latest version. There's also a video created by young people with SEND explaining annual reviews.

Can I have a copy of the EHCP for an annual review?

Yes, request it from the Locality Team. Word copies are for annotation only as the EHCP is a legal document.

When is the next annual review expected?

It must be held within 12 months of the previous review. The date of the review is when the decision letter is sent. The LA provides deadlines for when reviews must be completed.

If an EHCP has been amended, will this affect the date of the next annual review?

No, amendments do not change the review date.

How do I know when to do the review for CYP that have moved into the area?

The review must happen within 12 months of the last review or within 3 months of the plan being transferred—whichever is sooner.

Who do I invite to the annual review?

The child/young person and their family, plus professionals from education, health, and social care. All involved professionals must be invited, even if they cannot attend.

Where can I get the professional contributions to review form?

Send it out at least two weeks before the meeting so professionals can respond and their input can be shared with attendees.

Can an annual review take place at the same time as a PEP meeting?

For cared for children, it's encouraged to align the annual review with their Care Plan review, especially the PEP.

FAQS

Funding

How do I apply for additional E3 funding?

Hold an annual review and attach the Element 3 Top-up funding request when submitting to the LA.

What do I need to include in the E3 funding application?

Include:

- Trigger for the request
- Current support and its impact
- Detailed use of current funding (a costed provision map)
- Projected costs per term

What happens if I don't agree with the amount of E3 funding allocated at consultation?

Review the reasons for the decision. Often, it's due to insufficient detail. Provide a narrative showing what's been done, its impact, and why more funding is needed. Placements cannot be refused due to funding issues.

When will I hear about the E3 funding outcome?

The panel meets weekly. You'll usually hear back within 1–3 weeks of submitting the application.

What if we think we can meet need but the funding isn't sufficient in a consultation?

Note this in the consultation response. Explain why more funding is needed, what support is in place, expected impact, monitoring plans, and costings. Again, placements cannot be refused due to funding.

FAQS

Transitions

When must you have a Year 6 review done for secondary transition?

Early in the Autumn term. This ensures EHCPs are finalised by 14th February for secondary consultations.

When must you have a Year 11 review done for post-16 transition?

In the Autumn Term. EHCPs must be finalised by 31st March for post-16 consultations.

How do parents/young people request a personal budget?

Review any existing PBs during the annual review. New requests should be discussed with the caseworker. Information can be found on the Local Offer.

General

Can I 'back-class' a child?

Only in exceptional cases. It's usually not beneficial, especially when transitioning to secondary school. Must be agreed with the family and LA.

Where can I signpost parents and carers for more information?

The Family Hub website has useful resources for families:
torbayfamilyhub.org.uk

JARGON BUSTER

SENDCo Jargon Buster

- ADD – Attention Deficit Disorder.
- ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
- ADHD-PI – ADHD Predominantly Inattentive (also called ADHD-I).
- ASD / ASC – Autistic Spectrum Disorder / Condition. (Condition is preferred)
- CAF – Common Assessment Framework; a non-statutory assessment used by social services, health, or education.
- CAFA – Children and Families Act 2014.
- CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- CCG – Clinical Commissioning Group; NHS body for local health service commissioning.
- CHC – Continuing Health Care.
- C&I – Communication and Interaction.
- C&L – Cognition and Learning.
- Code or CoP – SEND Code of Practice 2015; statutory guidance under CAFA.
- CP – Clinical Psychologist.
- CSDPA – Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.
- DCS – Disabled Children’s Services/Director of Children’s Services
- DSCO – Designated Social Care Officer.
- CDC – Child Development Centre.
- DCD – Developmental Coordination Disorder / Dyspraxia.
- DfE – Department for Education.
- DLA – Disability Living Allowance; non-means-tested benefit for under-16s.
- DLD – Developmental Language Disorder.
- DMO – Designated Medical Officer.
- EHCNA - Request for EHC Needs Assessment
- EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan.
- EHRC – Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- ERP – Enhanced Resource Provision
- EP – Educational Psychologist.
- EQA – Equality Act 2010.
- EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage.
- FSW – Family Support Worker.
- HI – Hearing Impairment.
- IPOC - Individual Package of Care (ICB)
- IPOP - Independent Placement and Overview Panel (LA)
- IEP – Individual Education Plan/SEND Support Plan
- ISEP - Independent Specialist Educational Placement
- LA – Local Authority.
- CLA – Child Looked After *OR*
- CFC - In Torbay we use the term ‘Cared for Child’
- LDA – Learning Difficulty Assessment.

JARGON BUSTER

SENDCo Jargon Buster

- LEA – Local Education Authority.
- LO – Local Offer; outlines available SEND support.
- MLD – Moderate Learning Difficulties.
- MSI – Multi-sensory Impairment.
- OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.
- ODD – Oppositional Defiance Disorder.
- OLEA - Other Local Education Authority.
- Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education.
- OT – Occupational Therapy.
- PALS – Patient Advice and Liaison Service.
- PCT – Primary Care Trust.
- PDA – Pathological Demand Avoidance.
- PIP – Personal Independence Payment; non-means-tested benefit for over-16s.
- PMLD – Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities.
- PRU – Pupil Referral Unit.
- SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health.
- SEND Code of Practice – Statutory guidance for identifying and supporting SEND.
- SENCo – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.
- SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- SENDIASS – Special Educational Needs & Disability Independent Advice and Support Service for SEND.
- SLD – Severe Learning Difficulty.
- SpLD – Specific Learning Difficulty.
- SLT / SALT – Speech and Language Therapy.
- SMART Targets – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timed goals.
- SW - Social Worker.
- VI - Visual Impairment.