

Educational Psychology Overview Guide

Educational Psychology Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments

An education, health and care needs assessment (EHCNA) is an assessment of the education, health and social care needs of a child or young person.

For some children/young people, their complex needs mean that they require additional support that is beyond that available through SEN (special educational needs) support in a typical school. In some of these cases, the school or the parent might request an EHC assessment (SEN Code of Practice, 2014). If the local authority agrees to this, an EP must be formally asked to conduct a statutory psychological needs assessment.

What is the Educational Psychologist's role in EHCNA's?

The EP's role is to help define or clarify the strengths and needs of an individual child/young person in the context in which they are living and learning. EPs can work in a number of different ways to do this:

- Consultative approaches which involve conversations with key people (parents/carers, education staff and other professionals) in order to try to establish a shared understanding of the child/young person's needs and what support will best support positive outcomes.
- Direct assessment work
- Contributing to multi-disciplinary planning through attending/facilitating meetings

The EP will also assist in generating person centred outcomes* that will show that the child/young person is progressing and make recommendations about the educational provision and approaches needed for this progress to happen.

What does an Educational Psychology EHC needs assessment look like?

EPs recognise that every child/young person is unique and individual and we adapt our approach to meet the needs of each individual and their educational context.

This means that the EP will decide what assessments they will use based on what they feel is going to help them to best understand the child/young person, their needs and their strengths. In line with the 'tell it once' principle in the SEN Code of Practice (2014; para 9.47) EPs will also look to see what information is already available which can inform their psychological recommendations.

There are key features to all EP EHC needs assessments, described overleaf.

*Current government guidance specifies that generally between 4-6 outcomes would be appropriate (Nov 2023)

Key features of an EP's needs assessment

- EP assessment will always include conversations with parents/carers to understand their journey to this point, their views about their child's strengths needs and what the hopes are for the future.
- EP assessment will always include listening to the views of the child/young person. They use a range of approaches to achieve this.
- EP assessment will always explore key areas of the child/young person's development, with a greater focus on areas where the child/young person experiences the most need. These are:
 - Cognition and learning (maths, literacy, problem solving, concentration and attention skills).
 - Communication and social interaction (how they communicate with others and how they understand the complex rules of interacting with others).
 - Social, emotional and mental health (emotional wellbeing and how they regulate their emotions).
 - Social needs (activities outside of school that help them to be part of the wider community, e.g., sports, clubs and interests).
 - Physical development (their ability to move around and manage their environment).
 - Additional medical needs that might impact on their development.
 - Independence and self-help skills (where these are not in line with children of a similar age)

Assessment Tools and Approaches

Consultation provides the framework for much, and in some cases, all of the assessment completed. Where some direct work with the child/young person is needed, the EP will use their psychological knowledge to select the most appropriate approach. They will consider:

- The specific concerns identified and what questions need answering.
 - The age, interests and needs of the child/young person they are working with.
 - The 'least intrusive and most effective' approach to obtaining the information needed.
- (Please see our separate guides to consultation and EP assessments for more information).

EP psychological assessments are most successful when the EP has known the child/young person, the family and the teachers over a longer period of time. This allows them to see the child/young person's responses to support and progress over time. In these cases, the EP has probably been part of the team that put together the school's request to the local authority to ask for an EHC assessment.

Where ongoing involvement is not possible the limitations to our recommendations are made clear. The degree of specificity we are able to offer in our recommendations will likewise be aligned with our degree of involvement. Any one-off assessment can only ever be a snapshot of the child/young person's needs at that moment in time and should be viewed as contributing to wider information collected over time by others.

For more information about education, health and care plans see our local offer information:

<https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/advice.page?id=tew4Cta4tD4>

or watch the following video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axMjmY1-7WU>