
EHCP Timeliness

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum / HFG
Date of Meeting: 15 June 2026
Report Author: Emma Ferrey
Item for: Discussion **By:** All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out the current position on timeliness of finalising EHCPs and measures in place to improve.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Report is for information and discussion.

Is the Schools' Forum required to make a decision as part of this report or subsequent versions due to be considered later in the meeting cycle?

Yes:

No:

3. Executive Summary

3.1 The KPI for EHCP timeliness has reduced from 47% in 2024 to 22% in 2025.

3.2 The SEN Assessment Team are over capacity and have been for some time. There has been no increase in the size of the team, despite the trebling of demand.

3.3 The demand for EHCPs, in terms of numbers, is significantly increasing, likely due to concerns from parent carers, and schools, regarding the implementation of the SEND White Paper Reforms over the coming years.

4. Introduction and background

4.1 The Statutory timescale is 6 weeks from request for an EHCP made by parent, young person, school or other agency to the LA deciding whether to carry out an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA).

4.2 The Statutory timescale is 16 weeks from request made by parent, young person, school or other agency at which point the LA should issue a draft EHCP. The intent of the SEN Code of Practice (2015) is that the Draft EHCP is issued at week 16, enabling the parents to make representations, identify their preferred school for the local authority to consult with, as well as consulting with its own preference

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- 4.3 The statutory timescale to issue a Final EHCP is at week 20. The Final EHCP should contain an educational provision, and its type, named in Section I (placement). At this time, parents are given their right to appeal the content of EHCP, namely B (SEN Needs), F (Provision) and I (placement). Parents can raise an extended appeal to include Health (G) and Social Care (H) provision.
- 4.4 Over the past 4 years, EHCP timeliness has decreased, both in numbers of Plans and as a percentage. Table 1 below shows the number of Plans completed within the 20-week timescale, this number as a percentage and the total number of EHCP assessments.

Table 1

Year	All EHCP assessments	No. completed within 20 weeks	% completed within 20 weeks
2020	83	60	72%
2021	157	98	62%
2022	190	114	60%
2023	281	177	63%
2024	266	125	47%
2025	259	58	22%
2026 (to April)	101	2	2%

- 4.5 To note: from 2020 to 2024, the number of Plans issued within the deadline had doubled, but the overall percentage had increased due to the escalation of requests for EHCP. 2025 data shows approximately the same number of Plans issued within deadline but a significantly reduced percentage as a whole.
- 4.6 The reduction in timeliness in 2025 and 2026 is due to a number of factors:
- (1) Capacity of the SEN Assessment Team
 - (2) Awaiting EP assessment report
 - (3) Parents challenging the content of the EHCP, particularly when they have commissioned private specialists
 - (4) Schools responding to consults with 'cannot meet need' which leads to further consultations required
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- (5) Schools challenging banding/ funding agreements in Plans and requesting increased funding
- 4.7 As at March 2026, there were 122 statutory assessments in progress awaiting information and evidence, of which, 45 were over 16 weeks. Of these 122, 34 were awaiting EP assessments and 13 of these were over 16 weeks.
- 4.8 Demand for EHCP assessments is being driven by parents. Almost 40% of requests for EHCP assessments now come from parents (compared to 14% in 2020 and 21% in 2023).
- 4.9 A decision was made in June 2024, to reduce the threshold for EHC assessments. This was due to the number of appeals to Tribunal because of 'Refuse to Assess'. This has had a significant impact on the number of assessments processed.
- 4.10 HFG requested that average time to EHCP issue was included in this report. For calendar year 2025, average time was 25.7 weeks. For YTD (i.e. June 2025-May 2026) average time was 29.2 weeks.
- 4.11 The publication, in February, of the White Paper SEND Reforms has caused concerns amongst both parent carers and school staff around what the new threshold will be for EHCPs (although this will not be included in the revised Code of Practice until around 2029 or later, it is not yet clear).
 - (1) From February 2026 to March 2026 we have seen a 68% increase in EHC needs Assessments requests; from 31 to 52 respectively.
 - (2) For the same period in 2025 there was a 21% increase (from 33 to 40).

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The SEN Assessment Team is a small team that has, up until last year, managed to keep up with increasing demand. However, there are not enough EHC Coordinators to draft and finalise the Plans. The Team has also been significantly impacted due to delays in receiving EP and other professional assessments.
- 5.2 The service also recognise the demand on schools, which can lead to an increase in rejections of consults, which in turn adds further delay.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 None.
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