



Completing a Parent/Young Person Contribution

The SEN Code of Practice Says:

9.49 In seeking advice and information, the local authority should consider with professionals what advice they can contribute to ensure the assessment covers all the relevant education, health and care needs of the child or young person. Advice and information must be sought, as follows:

- Advice and information from the child's parent or the young person. The local authority must take into account his or her views, wishes and feelings.

When a Local Authority agrees to make an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) needs assessment, they **must** seek a contribution from the parent and/or young person.

How will this contribution be used?

The SEN Code of Practice Says:

1.7 Parents' views are important during the process of carrying out an EHC needs assessment and drawing up or reviewing an EHC plan in relation to a child. Local authorities, early years providers and schools should enable parents to share their knowledge about their child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon.

If the local authority decides to issue an EHCP, the parental/young person contribution will be used to complete Section A of the plan.

Section A essentially serves as an introduction that ensures that the family have an opportunity to share their unique knowledge about the child or young person.

Although Section A is not legally enforceable in the same way as Sections B and F, the Local Authority should listen and respond if you are not satisfied with the contents of Section A and request for changes to be made.

What should I include in my contribution?

The SEND Code of Practice (2014) says that Section A should include:

"Section A: The views, interests and aspirations of the child and his or her parents or the young person."

Nobody knows your child better than you do. There's no right or wrong way for completing the parental contribution. The following can be helpful as a guideline to making sure you have mentioned everything you feel is important:

- Each child or young person is unique and will have their own way of communicating their views, interests and aspirations. You may wish to ask your child about this in the appropriate language and quote the response in "their voice". Sometimes it will be relevant for a parent to write on behalf of their child.
- Use this opportunity to explain how to communicate with your child or young person and engage them in decision-making. For example: "my child communicates verbally" "my child prefers 1:1 communication."
- An Education Health and Care Plan should be a clear and succinct document that everyone can easily access. Consider bullet pointing what you want to say and avoid making unnecessary repetitions.
- It can help to think about your child's interests in terms of likes/dislikes or what helps me/ what doesn't help me. You could be specific about any potential triggers for behaviour, soothing strategies, particular interests and motivating factors.
- Some background information on any needs/difficulties your child has experienced over time can be included here. Page 97 of the SEND Code outlines the 4 broad areas of need and can be useful to refer to when considering if you have included every area of difficulty:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

- **Aspirations:** This could be small, manageable steps for your child to achieve or more broad aspirations such as eventual independence or employment. It could be helpful to focus on the things your child is unlikely to achieve without the additional support of an EHCP in place.

What about Young People?

The SEND Code of Practice says:

8.13 As young people develop, and increasingly form their own views, they should be involved more and more closely in decisions about their own future. After compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) the right to make requests and decisions under the Children and Families Act 2014 applies to them directly, rather than to their parents. Parents, or other family members, can continue to support young people in making decisions, or act on their behalf, provided that the young person is happy for them to do so, and it is likely that parents will remain closely involved in the great majority of cases.

Local Authorities should give young people (aged 16 years and above) the opportunity to make their own contribution as part of the EHCP process.

The way in which young people approach their contribution will differ according to each individual:

- Some will feel able to, and want to, complete it independently
- Some may wish to complete it with their parent/carer's support
- Others may need parents to advocate on their behalf if they lack capacity at that time to make decisions
- Some young people may want independent advice or support to participate in the process.

How we can help

SEND and You can offer a free confidential and independent service to young people. We always seek the permission of the young person when speaking to parents on their behalf.

We can support young people with gathering their views independently and explaining the Education Health and Care plan (EHCP) process.

You can find information on the ways in which young people can contact us here:

<https://www.sendandyou.org.uk/young-people-0-25/how-you-can-talk-to-us/>