

## **January 2023 – ISL processes for managing EHC Assessment processes.**

As you are all aware, there has been a significant increase in requests for EHCP needs assessments over the last few years. This is a national issue as well as a local issue. In Hertfordshire, the rise has been steeper than in many areas as there has previously been a lower number of EHCPs in Hertfordshire compared to the national average. At the same time as this growth in requests for assessment, there is a shortage of educational psychologists across the country. We are working hard to attract new and trainee psychologists to Hertfordshire.

In light of these national and local challenges, we have reviewed our service delivery models across ISL to ensure that we are delivering in the most effective way and to ensure we maximise the very special skillsets our services offer. This practice guidance note outlines the approaches and activities that are taken by our ISL teams. These approaches and activities are in line with the requirements of the Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015), including:

- advocating the 'Tell Us Once' approach so that assessments are not repeated
- ensuring a comprehensive and robust EHC needs assessment for each child/young person going through the assessment process, utilising the specialist skills of our specialist teaching team and educational psychology teams and avoiding duplication
- ensuring coproduction meetings take place to develop initial plans
- ensuring that funding mechanisms are completed
- providing support for schools when assessments are not agreed, and in relation to delivery of EHCP provision for new plans.

### **Coordinating the assessment:**

The statutory SEND team will coordinate the EHC assessment process, ensuring that steps are taken in timescale, monitoring quality, and ensuring placement and funding decisions are taken. This will include:

- Arranging decision making panels, ensuring that invites and papers are circulated in advance.
- Communicating with families and other teams about the outcomes of panel.
- Monitoring completion of statutory advice and chasing where necessary.
- Coordinating the decisions following assessment.
- Drafting EHC plans and written feedback following the advice received and in coproduction with parents and schools.
- Levelling draft plans.
- Participating in regular quality audits of new drafts and advice.
- Arranging planning/coproduction meetings and taking actions relating to draft EHC plan content following planning meetings.
- Engaging with family re placement preferences and consulting with the schools requested.
- Identifying appropriate section I content and finalising within timescales.

### **Provision of educational and psychological advice:**

In line with the requirements of the Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015), every assessment will include psychological advice, developed by our Educational Psychology service. Advice will always include suggested outcomes and provision, but the format and approach to developing this advice will take a number of forms dependent on the professional input of the assigned psychologist

Advice may be provided in the form of a report or as verbal contributions during a dedicated advice meeting. It may be based on information already available, including information from previous consultations or from paperwork provided for Local Multi Agency Panel (LMAG). Some advice will include outcomes of remote assessments, or face to face assessments. Assessments will be thorough and parents/carers as well as schools/settings will contribute and be kept informed. We will always do our very best for children and young people and take their individual circumstances into consideration.

Some children and young people will also receive advice from our SENDSAS team (specialist advisory teaching service) who will be represented at LMAG panels. Their advice will focus on Strengths, Needs, Outcomes and Provision.

For those children and young people with physical and/or neurological impairment, or those who are deaf or visually impaired, the advisory teacher may also attend the co-production meeting as these specialist teachers will often lead on how the plan will be implemented in the setting.

### **Additional support for schools:**

Our new SEND Implementation and Support Officers will support implementation of new plans, meetings where there may be difficulties with transition or where specialist placement has not been agreed, and schools and families where assessments are not agreed, or where it is not agreed that a plan is required following assessment.

The SEND implementation and support officers will also promote good inclusive practice, supporting early intervention, building relationships with schools/settings and families to give them the confidence to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND through whole school SEND and good SEND classroom practice.

### **Levelling (Banding)**

When a draft EHC plan is issued, it will be given a level using the Hertfordshire Descriptors of Need. The process for this is as follows:

- All professionals in ISL will undertake levelling when they provide a report for the assessment.
- The Educational Psychology and individual SENDSAS advisory teachers will complete the levelling process and submit with their report.
- The Education Health Care Co-ordinators (EHCCo's) within the SEND service will carry out the levelling process after they have drafted the EHC plan.
- Schools and parents will provide a level using the draft EHC plan.
- All levels submitted will be triangulated to provide a final level for the EHC plan which will be confirmed to the school.



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