

Wandsworth Council and Positive Parent Action

# What you need to know about the Special Educational Needs and Disability reforms

A Guide for Parents and Carers in Wandsworth to proposed changes to the Special Educational Needs system set out in the Children and Families Act.



## What is happening?

The Government is introducing a new approach to the way children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families are supported. The changes are due to take place from 1 September 2014.

The reforms aim to create a change in the way that education, health and social care professionals work with families and young people.

The changes are intended to give young people and their families greater say over what support and services are available to them.

Along with these changes, children's and adult services in Wandsworth Council have come together to become one department, from April 2014.

This will provide the opportunity to better organise services across the 0–25 years old age range.

This leaflet explains some of the changes but you can read more about them, what is happening in Wandsworth and across the country, by looking at the useful contacts section at the end of this leaflet.



[www.positiveparentaction.org.uk](http://www.positiveparentaction.org.uk)  
[www.wandsworth.gov.uk/pps](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/pps)



## After consulting families across the UK the government identified the following key aims:-

- The involvement of children, parents and young people in decision making
- The identification of children and young people's needs
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support
- High quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN
- Greater choice and control for young people and parents
- Successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment



## To meet these aims Special Educational Needs (SEN) processes and the law are changing. Key elements of this include:

**A simpler assessment process**, co-ordinated across education, health and care involving children and young people and their families throughout.

**An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) that replaces the current system of Statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments.** The EHC plan will reflect the child or young person's hopes for the future, as well as their current needs.

**Option of requesting a personal budget** for families and young people with an Education Health and Care plan.

**New statutory protections for young people aged 16-25 years old** in Further Education.

Children and young people between the ages of **0–25 years old** with special educational needs may be eligible for a plan.

**Academies and Free Schools** will have the same SEN duties as maintained schools.

## What is an Education, Health and Care assessment and plan?

The Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment is a new way of working for children and young people that puts you – children, young people and families – at the very centre of the process to make sure that you and your child's views are not only heard but also understood.

This is called person centred planning and is all about increasing your choice and control.

## Who is it for?

The EHC plan is for children and young people (0–25 years old) who are in education and have special educational needs and/or a disability.

You can talk to your child's or young person's educational setting or key worker about eligibility for an assessment. Your child's school special educational needs coordinator will also be able to offer advice.



## What are your statutory parental rights?

From the 1 September 2014, you will have the right to request an Education, Health and Care assessment.

However before then your right to request a statutory assessment for a Statement of Special Educational Needs remain.

The right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal if you have any concerns about the local authority decisions applies to both the Statement and Education Health and Care assessment process.

Information and Support is still available throughout the statutory assessment process from the Wandsworth Parent Partnership Service.

Please see the 'useful contacts' section at the end of this leaflet for their details.

## How will SEN support be delivered in Wandsworth?

Our approach has three main aims:

- To make resources available to those children and young people who need them in a timely way.
- To support schools and families to work together to decide how resources are used
- To enable every school to plan how it provides for each child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, whether or not they have an EHC plan and to ensure this is clear to parents and carers.

## Introducing Personal Budgets

- Some families, whose children will have an EHC plan, may want to have more flexibility in how their child's provision is made and will have the option to request a Personal Budget to do this.
- This may include the option to receive payments directly from the council, allowing families to choose services or may be a notional budget held by the council allowing families to decide how it's allocated

## What is the 'Local Offer'?

As part of the reforms, all local authorities must develop a 'Local Offer' for young people and families of children with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability.

The purpose of the Local Offer is to:

- Provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the support and opportunities that are available for all children and young people with SEND and their families (not just those who have an EHC plan); and
- Improve the services that are provided and make them more responsive to local needs and wishes.

Schools and services will be required to publish their 'Local Offer'. This will set out the support they provide for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

We are involving children and young people with SEND, parents and carers and service providers in the development and review of Wandsworth's local offer.

At the moment the local offer website is under development

## Summary

For children and young people going through the statutory assessment process now or who have a statement of SEN the new changes will be introduced gradually after the 1 September 2014.

Throughout this reform process we are working together with parents and carers in developing the new processes and in a “trial run” of the Education, Health and Care assessment and planning process.

We are also working closely with parent carer representatives from parent groups for a more strategic view. Positive Parent Action is one of these groups in Wandsworth.



## Useful contacts

### Positive Parent Action

‘Positive Parent Action (PPA) is Wandsworth’s parent forum – a group of parents and carers of children and young people (aged 0-25 years) aiming to improve provision for all local families with children with additional needs. [www.positiveparentaction.org.uk](http://www.positiveparentaction.org.uk)



### Wandsworth Parent Partnership Service

The Wandsworth Parent Partnership is a statutory impartial and confidential service for parent/carers of children with SEN who live in Wandsworth.

It offers information and support to help you understand how your child’s special educational needs are assessed, supported in school and your parental rights so that you can make informed decisions and give your views about your child or young person’s education. [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/pps](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/pps) or call 020 8871 8065.

### Other useful websites

Contact a Family [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

[www.sendpathfinder.co.uk](http://www.sendpathfinder.co.uk)

Read about what’s happening nationally and how the changes are making a difference across the country.

[www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send)

Read about why the government want to make changes to SEND services.

[www.cdc.org.uk](http://www.cdc.org.uk)

Council for Disabled Children

[www.wandsworth.gov.uk/fis](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/fis)

View the Family Information Service website for updates on the changes