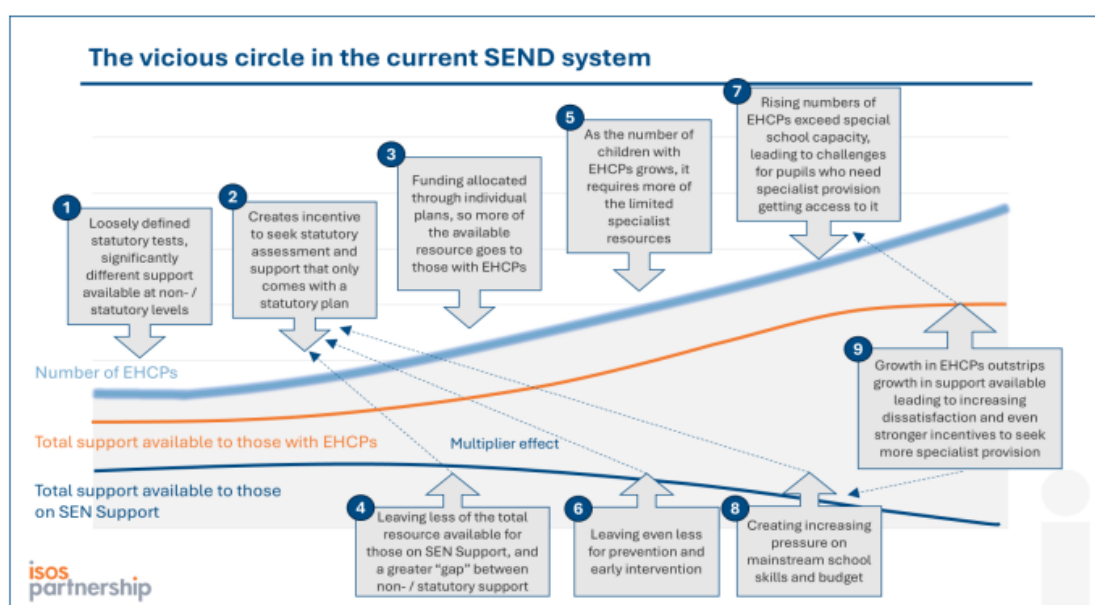


Inclusive Mainstream Provision, SEND Support and Education, Health and Care Plans

1. It is expected that the vast majority of children and young people have their needs met successfully through an inclusive mainstream provision, plus additional targeted support through SEND Support before an EHC Needs Assessment is considered. This is called the 'graduated approach' in the SEND Code of Practice (CoP 6.44).

2. Challenges in the SEND system are well known. The ISOS partnership (May 2025) identified the vicious circle in the current SEND system. The thicker blue line identifies the growth of EHCPs over the past ten years, with the orange line identifying the total support available to those with EHCPs and the dark blue line identifying total support available to those with SEN Support. The illustration identifies the risks of having a discrepancy between the support available with and without EHCPs.



3. Mainstream schools receive additional funding through a Notional SEND budget to provide support above that which is required by all children and young people up to an additional £6000. This is in addition to the individual pupil funding that each school receives annually. This is not a ring-fenced amount, and it is for the school to provide high quality, appropriate support from the whole of its budget. Further information is available here [The notional SEN budget for mainstream schools: operational guide 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

4. To help mitigate against the risks identified in the visual above, the expectations around what should be available through high quality teaching for all children and young people (universal offer, and what should be available through SEND Support, are outlined in the Shropshire Ordinarily Available Provision (SOAP) Inclusive Practice framework. The framework covers primary and secondary phases and was co-produced with the input of education settings during 2023. Further work is underway to develop the same framework covering the Early Years and Post 16

phases by the Education Quality Advisors (SEND and AP) who have commenced employment in September 24.

5. The SOAP framework is available on the Local Offer here [SEN support | Shropshire Council](#)

6. Since September 24, the Education Quality Advisors (EQA) have implemented a SEND and Inclusion newsletter for practitioners and professionals supporting Shropshire children and young people. The first edition was shared in October and will continue to be published on the Local Offer here [SEND and Inclusion Newsletter | Shropshire Council](#)

7. We are encouraged that the work already underway in Shropshire to support inclusive mainstream provision across all age ranges, appears to be strongly supported as the national direction of travel to address systemic challenges within the national SEND system. The recent speech from the Secretary of State for Education outlines this here [Bridget Phillipson's Speech to the Confederation of School Trusts - GOV.UK](#)

8. In addition, the National Audit Office also published a recent value for money report outlining the challenges present within the current national SEND system. The report is available here [Support for children and young people with special educational needs - NAO report](#)

Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment, Plans and Annual Reviews

9. Shropshire Council has a duty to consider requests for an EHC Needs Assessment where evidence is presented that a child or young person may have special education needs and/or disabilities that will have a significant and long-term impact on their education outcomes. This is defined as the 'two part' legal test whether to accept a request to undertake an assessment of a child or young person special educational needs.

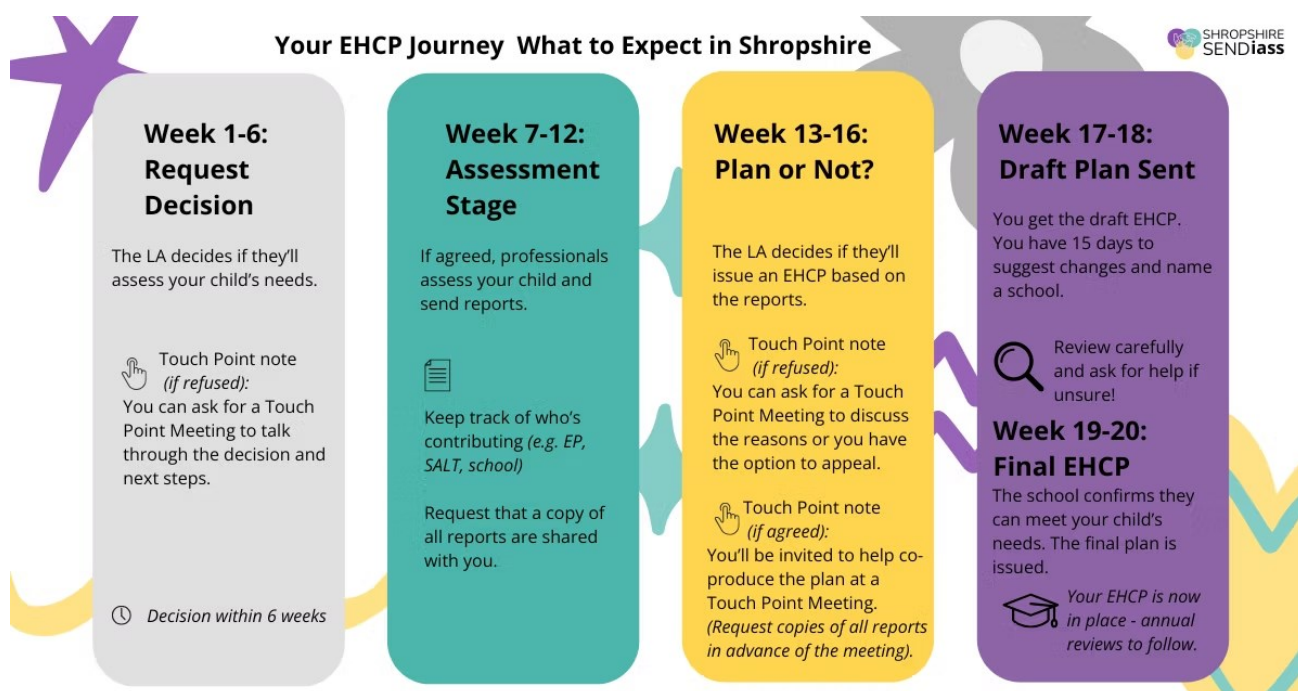
10. Evidence to support a request for an EHC Needs Assessment should include a graduated response - Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles in school. It should include evidence of all external assessments and advice that has been sought from appropriate services and implemented.

11. All requests for EHC Needs Assessments are considered through a multi-agency panel. Where it is agreed that an EHC Needs Assessment is necessary, Shropshire Council have a legal duty to complete the process within 20 weeks, including determining whether the special educational needs of the child or young person require special educational provision to be made through an EHC plan. Where an EHC plan is not agreed, following assessment, the education setting is expected to continue to meet the child or young person's special educational needs through SEND Support and the graduated above. A request for an EHC assessment can be made again, with further evidence of significant and long-term need.

12. Significant increases in demand over the last 3 years have impacted the ability of all Local Authorities to deliver their statutory duty to complete the EHC Needs Assessment process within 20 weeks, hence the national average of 50.3% in the latest national data release in July 2024. [Education, health and care plans, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

13. If an EHC plan is agreed then a draft is written and agreed. An EHC plan is a legal document which sets out the education, health and social care needs of a child or young person for whom extra support is needed in the educational setting, beyond that of which they normally provide. The plan will focus on the needs of the child or young person, the outcomes (what the child or young person wants to achieve) and what's needed to achieve those outcomes. Families and professionals work together to consider the outcomes they would like to see and how best to meet them. [What is an EHCP? | Shropshire Council](#)

14. The EHC Needs Assessment process includes the following steps, deadlines, and communication with families. [20-week educational health and care needs assessment \(EHCNA\) process | Shropshire Council](#)



15. When a request is received admin log and acknowledge. At the decision point of whether to proceed with a statutory assessment or not, the young person, family and referrer are informed by letter at the first touch point, and there is a phone call made by the Case Officer to explain the reasons if it is a 'no' to proceed and a meeting is offered. If there are delays in the assessment process, then an email is sent out to inform and explain the delays. The decision around writing a plan is informed via a letter from their Case Officer and phone contact is made if it is a 'no' to a plan and a touch point meeting is offered. At week 13 a touch point meeting is held to co-produce the plan with parents, child or young person and their education provider. Parents are then contacted with regards to consultation outcomes, and a final plan is issued. <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/media/11vdoz1m/ehcna-touch-point-chart.docx>

Annual Reviews

16. The Local Authority has a duty to ensure every EHC plan maintained by Shropshire Council has received an annual review (within 12 months) of the date of issue, and either agree to maintain the EHC plan, amend the EHC plan or cease the EHC plan ensuring this is communicated clearly to parents, carers and young people.