

The Next Steps meeting



What is the next steps meeting?

This is a meeting held with you and your casework officer once the assessment part of the process is complete. There are two types of next steps meeting, one where we have decided to write an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan, and the second, where we have decided not to write an EHC plan.

Who attends the next steps meeting?

The meeting is primarily between the local authority and the parents/young person, but we will also invite the people who have contributed to the assessment of the child/young person.

Although you don't have to tell us the name of the school that you would like your child to attend until the next steps meeting, it is very helpful if we know before this time and if possible we will arrange for them to also attend the meeting.

Where is the next steps meeting held?

If possible we try to hold the meeting in the school or educational setting that your child/the young person attends. If this is not possible, we can arrange meetings elsewhere such as at Leeds City Council premises or your home.

How long will the meeting last?

This is very dependent on what we need to discuss, but it is expected that most meetings will last at least an hour and a half. It is very helpful for us if you contact your casework officer before the meeting to tell them about what you would like to discuss at the meeting so they are able to prepare a clear agenda.

What happens in the meeting?

If we have decided not to write an EHC plan, we will discuss the reasons why we made this decision and plan with you the support that needs to be put in place to ensure your child's needs are met. We will also discuss with you your options such as disagreement resolution or an appeal to the SEN and Disability First-Tier Tribunal if you are not happy with the decision that we have made.

If we have decided to write an EHC plan for the child /young person, we will send you a draft version for you to consider before the meeting is held. At the meeting we will go through with you any specific points of concern or disagreement that have been raised by you or those who contributed to the assessment.

We will also discuss the education setting at which the child/young person will receive their education. If you have made a preference for a setting which is different to the one that they currently attend, then we will discuss whether that setting can meet their needs and whether it can be named in the final plan.

If you have requested information about a personal budget, this will also be discussed at the next steps meeting, including discussion about how the money can be spent, who will have control of the budget and what monitoring arrangements will be in place.

Will you make changes to the draft plan at the meeting?

Yes - we can make changes to the draft plan at the meeting. If they are minor changes we can agree them at the meeting and they will be included in the final copy of the plan. If the changes are more substantial we will write them up after the meeting and circulate an amended copy of the plan to you and the professionals who provided advice for the assessment. This may also include

sending a copy of the plan to a new school/educational setting if this hasn't been done earlier in the process.

The casework officer may also need to ask professionals for further clarification on specific aspects of the plan following the next steps meeting if there are some areas that cannot be agreed at the meeting.

What happens if we don't agree with the contents of the plan after the next steps meeting?

You will have an opportunity to consider any further substantial amendments when you receive a copy of the amended plan. We aim to write a plan that you are in agreement with. However if you are still not satisfied with the educational elements of the content of the plan you are able to use disagreement resolution services to resolve any issues. If you are still unhappy with the content of the plan you can appeal to the SEN and Disability Tribunal.

What happens if parents can't attend the meeting

All attempts will be made to work around a family's circumstances to be able to involve them as fully as possible. If parents or young people do not wish to attend then there is no requirement on the officer to hold a meeting.

When will the plan be made final?

The assessment will be completed and a plan issued within 20 weeks from the start of the process, unless there are some specific exceptional circumstances where this cannot be done. Your casework officer can advise you of these circumstances.