

Parent's Guide to writing a Parental Contribution

Advice Guide

The Local Authority has decided to carry out an EHC needs assessment for your child. As part of the assessment process, they will send you a form to complete. This advice guide takes you through filling out the parental contribution form specifically for Portsmouth City Council, titled 'Our views for the EHC Needs assessment'. (A copy of this can be found [here](#)).

Does the LA have to involve myself and my child in the assessment process?

The overall principles for which the LA must have regard are defined in Section 19 of the **Children and Families Act 2014**:

- (a) the views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parent, or the young person;
- (b) the importance of the child and his or her parent, or the young person, participating as fully as possible in decisions relating to the exercise of the function concerned;
- (c) the importance of the child and his or her parent, or the young person, being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions;
- (d) the need to support the child and his or her parent, or the young person, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help him or her achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes.

This recognises that you know your child better than anyone else and that you have valuable information that the Local Authority needs in order for them to make a good decision about your child's education. They must involve you in decisions as fully as possible and take your views into account.

How will my parental contribution be used during the EHC needs assessment?

This parental contribution will be considered along with the evidence that the Local Authority receives from the school and other professionals involved with your child or young person, to help them to make a decision as to whether to issue an EHC plan and the content of the plan.

Although Portsmouth City Council send out this 'Our views' form, you can provide your views for the assessment in any format that suits you.

Tips on Writing an Effective Contribution

- 1. Remember this is an important document**

It is your chance to share your views of your child or young person and his/her needs and your aspirations for their future
- 2. Think carefully**

What you are going to say about your child and their life
- 3. Only include necessary information**

Demonstrate the areas of your child's needs
- 4. Talk to your partner, friends, relatives**

Anyone who knows your child might have some useful suggestions
- 5. Make notes first**

When thoughts come to mind, make a written note, if possible. It may be helpful to use post-it notes
- 6. Try not to repeat yourself**

It's important to be as detailed, and as concise as possible
- 7. Organise your writing**

If you have a lot of information, using headings, bullet points and summarising key points can be helpful
- 8. Write a draft & check it**

It may help to write your views out in draft to begin with before completing the form
- 9. Format**

Your contribution can be typed or handwritten. You can continue on additional sheets of paper if needed. Make sure it is legible
- 10. Use evidence from professionals to support your position**

Wherever possible. You can do this by using an appendix system and including a photocopy of the professionals report with your contribution – avoid sending originals. (Although these reports will also be included in the assessment information.)
- 11. Be honest**

As a parent you will want to celebrate your child's successes and it is important to include these. However, it is equally important to include all the areas of difficulty. After all, if no one knows about these, how can your child receive the right support?
- 12. Child or Young Persons views**

Your child will be asked to fill in a 'This is me' form, either the younger or older version. Links to these documents are here: [This is me - younger version](#) or [This is me - older version](#)
You may wish to comment on your child's view of their difficulties and how they would like to be helped, when filling in your contribution.

Filling in the “Our Views” form sections

The form is clearly laid out with 6 areas for you to fill in with your information about your child. Over the next few pages, we give examples of the sorts of questions that you may want to consider in each section as prompts for the sort of things that may be relevant for you to write in your answers. These prompts are to help get you started and do not cover every aspect, so you may have other points you wish to add that are specific to your child.



Our child's early years (up until starting pre-school) -

- Were there any issues during pregnancy and/or at birth?
- What was your child like as a baby?
- Were you happy about progress at the time?
- Were there any changes that affected your child?
- When did you first notice a problem/something different?
- What advice or help did you receive - from whom?

What is your child like now in preschool/ school / college?

What is going well?

What needs to change?

- What is your child good at/ most interested in? (e.g. tactile play, being outdoors/ inside, not getting messy, books, making things, jigsaws, numbers, words, etc)
- What are your child's relationships like with other children, teachers and other adults at school?
- How much progress has your child made with reading, writing, number, other subjects and activities at school?
- How has the school helped / not helped and which help has worked or not worked ?
- How does your child learn best and how much is remembered? (e.g. repetitive tasks, instruction, visual cues, talking, doing or being shown)
- How willing is your child to take part in learning activities?
- What does your child find easy or difficult? (e.g. lessons, playtime, changing class, school transfer)
- Are your child's difficulties getting worse?
- What help do you think your child needs?

What is your child like now at home?

What is going well?

What needs to change?

- What does your child enjoy doing at home? (e.g. watching TV, reading, hobbies, favourite toys and activities, playing alone or with others, belonging to clubs, sporting activities)
- How independent is your child at home? (e.g. dressing, feeding, toileting, washing, keeping room tidy, day to day routine, pocket money, responsibility for their own possessions, going out or attending clubs on their own)
- When is your child most vulnerable and at risk? (e.g. awareness of danger, running off, strangers, traffic, personal safety, being alone)
- How would you describe your child's mood at home? (e.g. mostly happy/ sad, good/ bad, sulking, temper tantrums, affectionate, anxious, aggressive, frustrated - use examples to highlight your answer)
- What makes your child most anxious? (e.g. change in routine, new environments, new people, noises, animals, being in the car, crowds, Christmas, difficulty at school, homework, feeling different from peers/siblings)
- How does your child communicate? (e.g. single words, phrases, sentences, gestures, noises, smiles, eye contact explains/describes events, conveys messages, joins in, listens, understands and responds to others)
- How does your child show feelings? (e.g. talking, hugging, writing, touching, being quiet, tantrums, shouting, breaking things, being physically aggressive)
- How would you describe your child's behaviour at home? (e.g. do they co-operate, concentrate, share, listen to and carry out requests, help in the house, offer help, fit in with family routine and 'rules')
- What causes the most stress in your family? (e.g. changes in routine, illness, sleep patterns)
- Who (or what) supports you and your family?(e.g. family, friends, health visitor)
- Describe a typical weekday.
- Describe a typical weekend day or school holiday day.

Our views on friendships and relationships now (at pre-school, school or college and home) -

What is going well?

What needs to change?

- Does your child have strong bonds with you as a parent, what sort of things do you like to do together?
- Does your child have strong bonds with others in your family? (eg. siblings, aunts, uncles, step relations, grandparents, cousins)
- Does your child have friendships and relationships outside the home? (eg. adults at school, neighbours, outside agencies, clubs and groups)
- Does your child have relationships with other children? (e.g. mixes well or prefers to stay on own/observe)
- Are there any examples of interactions you have noticed? (e.g. sharing, talking, imaginative play, types of games, length of time spent together, playing apart, any anxieties caused by playing with others)

Our views on current health and wellbeing-

What is going well?

What needs to change?

- What are your main concerns about your child's health?
- Does your child have any specific diagnoses?
- Has your child had any serious illnesses or accidents or periods in hospital?
- Has your child had absences from school or minor illnesses?
- Does your child require any regular medicine, treatment or special diet or have any allergies?
- Does your child sleep well? What is their sleep pattern? How is it affected by changes or disruption?
- How is your child's appetite? Do they eat well/ eat a variety foods/ have a reaction to certain foods?
- How is your child's general fitness?
- How are your child's physical skills such as walking, running, climbing, riding a bike, playing ball games, drawing, building bricks, doing jigsaws, using scissors and cutlery?
- Does your child's health condition or medication affect their development, learning or behaviour? Are there any tasks your child is unable to do or finds difficult for periods of time?
- Have you made adaptations to your home because of your child's health needs? Changes may include rails, ramps, grab handles, stair gates, specialised toilet equipment, specialist bed.

Our hopes and aspirations for the future:

- Should your child go on to have an EHC plan drawn up, these hopes and aspirations will form the basis of the support your child will have put in place.
- Assuming that your child's needs are recognised, and suitable provision is made, what do you hope for in their future?
- What changes do you hope to see in your child's education, health and care, as appropriate, over varying timescales e.g. the next term, the next year and beyond?
- What plans do you and your child have for key changes in their life, such as changing schools, moving from children's to adult care and/or from paediatric services to adult health, or moving on from further education to adulthood?
- What are the child or young person's aspirations and goals for their future, including aspirations for further education, paid employment, independent living and community participation?
- What plans do you and your child have for preparing for their transition into adulthood?
- What are your fears for the future if your child's needs are not recognised and suitable provision is not made?

Once completed, give your contribution to someone who knows your child well and ask them if they feel it is an accurate representation of your child. Remember – it is your contribution so make sure you are happy with it.

If you would like further support with writing this, then please feel free to **contact us**.