

# “Every challenge is a learning experience”

## EHCP - Our Journey

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The path to securing an EHCP (Educational Health & Care Plan) will be different for everyone. Your journey will be as unique as your child or young person, with ups and downs, frustrations, relief, and the odd “get in there” when things go right. Expect this... an EHCP is a legal working document for your child which should clearly set out all their needs including what support they may require for the rest of their educational life... you can do this! I did it and this is my story.

My grandson was in Key Stage One and had a diagnosis of ADHD. With behaviours escalating and exclusions coming thick and fast, I asked school to apply to the Local Authority for an Educational Health and Care Assessment of Needs. This is the starting point to obtaining an EHCP.

School refused! The reasons they gave was that my grandson was meeting his academic milestones, therefore had no special educational need so wasn't eligible for an EHC assessment. He was very bright but staff spent the whole day chasing him around school, trying to reset passwords on computers he'd cracked to remove work he didn't want to do. This meant that he wasn't accessing the curriculum at all due to his differences. Eventually they agreed to put together an application to assess and sent it off to the Local Authority (LA).

I trusted at this point that the school knew what they were doing regarding the quality of evidence needed to support the assessment process. Some do, some don't. It was a surprise therefore to receive a "refusal to assess" from the LA due to a "weak submission" from school, stipulating 'lack of evidence', 'no matrix of prior support' and 'missing reports'

I was naturally disappointed! Naively, I had presumed it was a forgone conclusion given the amount of evidence I knew was available from school. The decision was made to reapply with the promise of a more thorough submission. The application went in again with the same result "refusal to assess." for exactly the same reasons!

To say I was frustrated was an understatement, yet it just served to spur me on because I knew my grandson needed this. I was aware that I could put forward a "parental request" but at the time it was deemed an application from school held more autonomy! That is certainly not the case anymore as more families take this option now.

School were very open to working together, so we joined forces. I ensconced myself in the office of the SENDCO armed with my file to put together a joint third application. We put the application together using my own evidence as well as everything school had. I knew my grandson best and knew what needed to be included for this to go through. School would then sign it off.

I became familiar with the process, met with the Head and SEN Coordinator, produced an up to date file of evidence, anything I could get my hands on that was relevant. I knew what the school's responsibility was in terms of providing quantifiable evidence. I knew that without evidence of the school's prior support for my grandson, it was pointless applying.

I walked into every meeting proudly clutching this file for all to see. Eventually our combined submission was ready... it was an anxious wait but third time lucky the application was finally accepted. Now the process of getting a good EHCP for my grandson started.

It was tough to read the comments about my grandson in the draft plan, for example, 'he can be defiant and oppositional with adults.' However, that made me more determined to get this document right for him. This legal document will be a part of his life for possibly the next 15-20 years!

By this time, my grandson was still in key stage 1 in a mainstream primary school. The Designated Provision places in my area were all for children with cognitive and learning differences, but my grandson didn't have these difficulties. On the contrary, he was very bright. So he was to remain in his school for now with support. This included full time 1-1 support both in class and during unstructured times.

By Year 4, it became clear that my grandson and his mainstream school were outgrowing each other. His mental wellbeing was suffering and he had, by then, received a number of additional diagnoses, including Autism. Together with the school, we began to explore a managed move rather than a permanent exclusion.

Finding the right school was paramount, this needed to be the last time my grandson moved school. If that meant looking further afield, then so be it. It wasn't an easy process as you have to provide a good case, with evidence, as to why you are requesting an out of borough provision. Because I had been thorough with his EHCP, updating every change, every report, every piece of additional information documented at his Annual Reviews, I was able to prove without any doubt that there was no other provision in my area that could support his needs.

He's been at his current school for four years now and he is flying! His needs are ever changing but, through his EHC Plan, we are able to keep on top of that, ensuring he has the support he deserves every step of the way.

My passage to securing an EHCP was unique, like everybody's will be and there were stressful and frustrating times. However, the knowledge, skills, confidence, and positivity I gained from this journey far outweighed any negative feelings I had about the process. Good luck.

## About Witherslack Group

We are committed to sharing advice and support to parents, carers and professionals. Our webinars and online resources provide expert knowledge and practical support. If you would like to find out more information you can email [webinars@witherslackgroup.co.uk](mailto:webinars@witherslackgroup.co.uk) or visit [www.witherslackgroup.co.uk](http://www.witherslackgroup.co.uk).



## About ADHD Foundation

To find out more information about the ADHD Foundation please visit [www.adhdfoundation.org.uk](http://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk).

