

# The Quality Assurance Framework for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) in Sefton



## **Foreword**

The Sefton SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Partnership brings together all the agencies which provide SEND support and services for children, young people, their parents and carers.

The Partnership has a clear vision for the future, with high aspirations for the quality of services and a commitment to improve. Ensuring children and young people achieve their potential and ambitions is one of the five priorities of the SEND Strategy, and to support this we need high quality Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) which are consistent with the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

As a part of our improvement journey the SEND Partnership is embarking on an ambitious programme of moderating, described in the Quality Assurance Framework, which aims to achieve greater consistency, improve quality and celebrate good practice.

Chair of the SEND Partnership Board

## Introduction

The Sefton SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Partnership brings together all the agencies which provide SEND support and services for children, young people, their parents and carers. The Partnership brings all stakeholders together to deliver the best outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The Sefton (Education, Health and Care Plan) EHCP Quality Assurance Framework provides a structure through which managers, leaders and partners across education, health, social care, and most importantly parent carer forum, can analyse the quality of EHCP plans and compliance with statutory responsibilities specific to the EHCP framework and local and national guidance, so that children and young people with SEND in Sefton can achieve positive outcomes and pursue their aspirations successfully.

The EHCP Quality Assurance Framework describes the processes used to evaluate how effectively multi-agency processes and procedures are being implemented to ensure that:

- EHCPs include the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people, their families and carers, and their aspirations for the future.
- EHCPs are of high quality, clear, concise, understandable and accessible.
- EHCPs set out how partners will co-ordinate and work together to support the child, young person, parent and carers.
- EHCPs clearly identify need and include SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) outcomes.
- EHC Plans include appropriate health and social care information
- The partnership is compliant with the SEND Code of Practice.

- EHC Plans Identify and celebrate good practice and are aspirational.
- Services continue to learn and improve.

### **Outline of the Quality Assurance Framework**

All EHCPs will be measured against the Quality Assurance Toolkit (Appendix 1). The levels below describe the mechanism to ensure that all EHCPs meet the required standards, at an operational level, multi-agency level and strategic level to ensure a unified approach.

- Level 1 - Compliance
- Level 2 - Individual Agency QA
- Level 3 - LA SEN Team Senior Casework Officer QA
- Level 4 - Multi-agency QA

### **Level 1 - Compliance**

EHCPs are administered and monitored through the Sefton Local Authority SEND Team, comprising of 18 Casework Officers and 10 Casework Assistants who have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (2014).

The SEND Team collates a range of quantitative data in relation to EHCP activity, which will be further enhanced through the development of Capita during 2025.

An overview report (The Dashboard) detailing whole service activity and comparative data analysis with national, statistical neighbours and local data is presented to the SEND Partnership Board bi-monthly.

## **Level 2 - Individual Agency QA**

Individual partner agencies make arrangements to quality assure advice specific to their area of expertise, prior to submitting their reports to the SEN Team. This is to ensure that quality advice is available at the first point of writing or amending an EHCP so that everyone who is part of the SEND workforce has a role to play in improving the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans.

- **Social Care:** Where a social worker within the Sefton social care team writes specific Social Care advice for an EHCP, this is quality assured by the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) before it is signed off and returned to the SEND Team. (Appendix 2)
- **Health:** Clinicians write their own health advice, which is quality assured before leaving their organisations. Training has been delivered to ensure that health advice is compliant. Provider organisations also have SEND Champions and health advice QA groups, Designated Clinical Officers (DCO) attend a meeting in Alder Hey. At draft EHCP stage the DCO checks to ensure that health content is code of practice compliant, that health advice is restricted to 'health only' recommendations, is specific and appropriate in setting out the individual's health needs, and the provision required to meet those needs, with clear SMART outcomes. They will also ensure that the writer of the Plan has incorporated the health advice appropriately, detailing the specific amendments if this is not the case. (Appendix 3)

## **Level 3 - LA SEN Team Senior Casework Officer QA**

There are a number of quality assurance activities that take place on a regular basis within the SEND team:

- Three Senior Casework Officers moderate a random sample of the draft plans before they are finalised, using the Quality Assurance Framework. Feedback is provided

to the Casework officer who has written the plan. The aim each month is to moderate at least one plan per officer. In 2024, Sefton LA completed an average of 66 EHC plans each month. Quarterly data is reported to SENDCIB.

- When a new Casework Officer (CWO) joins the SEN team, they are provided with training and coaching in writing EHCPs and all their plans are moderated by a Senior Casework Officer, until they are able to independently write plans of a consistently good standard. New CWOs have an introductory meeting with the DCO and DSCO to build professional relationships and gain a greater understanding of the roles.
- On a termly basis, the team of CWOs participate in a peer moderation session, quality assuring a sample of each other's plans against the QA framework and engaging in meaningful discussion, to enable us to have a shared understanding of the expectations.

These activities will support the development of the Casework Officers' EHC Plan writing skills and develop consistency in plan writing.

#### **Level 4 - Multi-agency QA**

Multi-agency audits focus on newly finalised EHCPs to ensure that the plans, going forward, are of a consistent and high quality.

Three EHCP's are randomly selected to be moderated by multiple agencies from all Key Stages and Phases of education and are undertaken by different representatives from Health, Education, the Local Authority SEN Team, Social Care, Parent/Carer Forum and SENDIASS. Moderators are sent a MS Form (Appendix 4) to complete electronically, on which to provide their responses and feedback. The QA toolkit against which standards are measured is included later in this document. Each moderator provides a judgement relating to the quality of the plan and a summary of their findings, identifying areas of good practice and any recommendations for further action (as applicable). Individuals meet as a collective each month to discuss their findings. Feedback is provided to

individual Casework officers, to the SEN Team via their team meetings, to QA members and to the SEND Partnership Board. Actions are taken by the applicable agency for learning and practice development.

There may be a focus to the moderation each month, for example, children who are cared for, complex health needs, Post 16, quality of transition planning from primary to secondary and so on.

Next steps will include auditing annual reviews. This is because at a recent meeting, a number of Y6 transition plans were moderated and the quality was considered not as good as the plans that are being produced now.

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February 2025.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – [Sefton EHCP Quality Assurance Toolkit](#)

**Appendix 2** - [Final Flow Chart of New Social Care System](#)

**Appendix 3** – Health QA:

[C&M ICB SOP - EHCP DCO health QA Process - November 2024](#)

[EHCP Health Pathway - Sefton June 2024 v2](#)

**Appendix 4** – [Sample MS Moderation Form](#)