



Introducing the Special Educational Needs Assessment Team

Who we are, what we do, and how we can help

By Karen Spencer, Principal Service Lead for SENAT



As the Principal Service Lead for the SEN Assessment Team (SENAT), I am very proud to lead such a hard-working and dedicated service. SENAT carries out the Authority's statutory duties to ensure that children and young people with special educational needs are identified and assessed as promptly and effectively as possible.

The West Sussex Special Educational Needs Assessment Team (SENAT) is far more than just an assessment team who oversees Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) and issuing of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

In between assessing and amending EHCP's, the team is responsible for liaison with parents/carers, children and young people for any concerns around provision, requests for changes of placement, funding, exclusions, general advice, as well as managing any movement in or out of a setting with an EHCP, usually resulting in making placements and transferring of EHCP's. Over the past few years, the team have adapted to the changes in needs and provision, and have to commission a wide range of alternative provision to support pupils whom needs may not be being met and or, are actively seeking more specialist placements.

We cover children and young people from 0-25, so each change in key stage brings its own challenges to adapt to and requires a wide range of experience. Our team includes colleagues with specific focus to target key areas of work, from Special Needs Officers who support in seatings, and for Post 16 facilitate the entire review process, to our SEND Tribunal, Finance, Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) and Elective Home Education (EHE) teams.

As a team, we are responsible for:

- Working with children and families to support with special educational needs, offering guidance when appropriate, and explanation of next steps
- Requests and assessments
- Review and monitoring
- Admissions for EHCP pupils
- Problem solving, including break down in placements and exclusions
- Funding to all settings
- Preparation for adulthood
- Working relationships with wide range of services covering Education, Health and Social Care
- Commissioning and making of placements or alternative provision (the identification as part of an EHCP)
- Mediation and appeals.



SENAT works in close partnership with parents/carers, schools, Health and Social Care, and the voluntary sector. There are 4 main strands that branch from SENAT, each with their own area of responsibility.

EHC Needs Assessment Team

This team is responsible for:

- Managing all requests and referrals for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (2349 in the past 12 months) which require decisions to be made within 6 weeks of receipt
- The requests and referrals process until the assessment is allocated to the appropriate team
- Coordinating the EHC needs assessment process up to and including finalising an EHCP for children and young people up to the end of year 9

Review and Monitoring Team

This team is responsible for reviewing and monitoring for children and young people with an EHCP, up to the end of year 9, including the age-phased transfer process and moves into West Sussex. The team is split into 3 geographical areas:

- Southeast
- Southwest
- North

Every EHCP finalised requires an annual review within 12 months, and then 12 months of that review every year until a plan is ceased either because outcomes have been met, or they reach the age of 25.

Preparation for Adulthood Team

This team looks after the EHCNA and reviewing and monitoring functions for young people attending mainstream schools and non-maintained special schools in years 10 and 11, as well as post-16 attending sixth form and specialist colleges.

College Team

This team is responsible for EHCNAs and reviewing and monitoring functions, including arranging and chairing the annual review for young people who are post-16 and attending further education colleges.

Service-wide teams

Operational Team

The Operational Team supports the requests and referrals process in relation to the EHCNA panel. They also hold Inclusion Planning meetings with parents, carers and schools, following a refusal to assess.

