

EHCP phase transfer annual reviews

A practical guide for schools and colleges

When a child or young person with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is moving to a new phase of education, their EHCP must be reviewed and, where necessary, amended to reflect their needs and the provision and placement required for the next stage.

Phase transfer reviews are an important part of ensuring that children and young people receive the right support from the point at which they move to their new setting. Schools and colleges play a key role in this process by providing current, detailed information about the child or young person and working closely with families, the Local Authority and, where appropriate, the receiving setting.

This guide sets out the key statutory deadlines and provides practical guidance to help schools and colleges plan for phase transfers and support successful transitions.

Key statutory deadlines

The statutory deadline refers to the date by which the **final amended EHCP must be issued**. Early planning is therefore essential. It is important that the annual review meeting and subsequent information-sharing take place early enough for the Local Authority to complete the amendment process within this timeframe. Schools may also want to consider leaving themselves enough time after the annual review to upload the required paperwork.

Phase transfer	Final EHCP deadline
Early Years → Reception	15 February
Infant → Junior	15 February
Primary → Secondary (Year 6 → Year 7)	15 February
Other phase transfers, excluding post-16	15 February
Year 11 → post-16 education	31 March

Planning for a phase transfer

Autumn term – the year before transfer

The phase transfer process should begin during the autumn term of the year prior to the transfer, giving everyone enough time to understand the child or young person's needs, consider the next phase of education and plan for a successful transition.

The annual review should provide a clear and up-to-date picture of the child or young person's current needs, progress and provision. It should also look ahead and consider what may need to change as they move into their next phase of education.

Schools should consider whether the outcomes in the EHCP remain appropriate and whether there have been any changes in the child or young person's special educational, health or social care needs. The review should also consider the provision that will be required in the next setting, including any specialist support, adaptations, equipment or accessibility arrangements.

The views of the child or young person and their parents should be central to this process. Where appropriate, updated advice from relevant professionals should also be considered.

The information provided by the school should be **current, specific and evidence-based**. It should explain not only what support is currently in place, but also the impact that support is having and what may be needed in the next phase.

Please note that if any changes are needed to Sections B and/or F, or if it is felt that a change of placement is required, this must be supported by a professionals report and that this report should be uploaded with the annual review paperwork. Any changes to Sections B and/or F made by schools without a report will not be actioned.

What information should the school provide?

A useful phase transfer review should provide a comprehensive picture of the child or young person's strengths, needs, progress and support requirements.

This does not need to be a list of everything that has ever been tried. Instead, schools should focus on the information that will help the Local Authority and the receiving setting understand the child's or young person's current presentation and future needs.

Information may include the child's current attainment and progress, areas where they experience significant difficulty, changes in their presentation or level of need, and the support they currently require accessing learning.

It is particularly helpful to explain which strategies and interventions have been successful, which have been less successful, and the impact of the provision currently in place.

Communication and interaction

Where relevant, schools should provide information about the child's communication profile, including their understanding and use of language, social communication and any communication systems or adaptations they use.

Consideration should also be given to the support they need to access teaching and learning and communicate effectively within the school environment.

Cognition and learning

Information should describe the child's current learning profile, including attainment, barriers to learning and any curriculum adaptations or additional adult support they require.

It is also important to consider their developing independence and what support they may need to manage the increased expectations of the next phase.

Social, emotional and mental health

Where social, emotional or mental health needs affect education, schools should describe the relevant needs and the strategies or interventions currently in place.

This may include information about regulation, engagement, relationships, environmental factors that support successful learning and any particular transition needs. The level and type of adult support required should be clearly explained where this is relevant.

Sensory and/or physical needs

Schools should provide information about any sensory or physical needs that affect access to education. This may include equipment, adaptations, accessibility requirements, personal care arrangements and any specialist support or staff training required.

Following the review

Following the annual review, the Local Authority will consider the information provided and decide whether to maintain the EHCP, amend it or cease the plan.

Where amendments are required, schools should respond promptly to requests for further information. Clear and timely information from the school helps the Local Authority understand what needs to change and supports the development of an accurate amended EHCP.

Where a change of placement is being considered, the Local Authority will also need to identify an appropriate setting and, where necessary, consult with proposed schools, colleges or other settings.

Placement consultation

When a school or college is consulted about a potential placement, the setting should consider the child or young person's individual needs and the provision identified in their EHCP.

A consultation response should provide clear, specific and evidence-based information. It should explain whether the setting can meet the identified needs and, where relevant, what provision, reasonable adjustments, specialist resources or staff expertise would be required.

The setting should also identify any additional information it needs in order to make an informed response.

Consultations should be considered on an individual basis. A diagnosis or the type of EHCP should not, in itself, determine whether a placement can meet a child's needs.

The receiving setting should normally respond to the consultation within the required 15-day timeframe. A timely response is important because delays can affect the wider phase transfer process and the Local Authority's ability to issue the final EHCP within the statutory deadline.

If a setting considers that it cannot meet a child's or young person's needs, the response should clearly explain the specific reasons and provide supporting evidence. Statements such as "the

school is full", "we cannot meet SEN" or "there is no funding" are unlikely to provide sufficient information on their own. The response should relate specifically to the individual's needs, the provision required and the relevant legal framework.

Planning for a successful transition

A phase transfer should be much more than an administrative EHCP process. The aim is to make sure that the child or young person is able to move into their new setting with the right support in place.

Transition planning should begin early enough for the current setting, receiving setting, family and other professionals to work together.

Depending on the individual needs of the child or young person, transition arrangements might include visits to the new setting, meetings between current and receiving staff, transition booklets or photographs, additional supported visits or opportunities to become familiar with the new environment.

It can also be helpful to identify key adults, share successful strategies and consider practical arrangements such as transport, accessibility, equipment, personal care and specialist resources.

Relevant reports and records should be shared appropriately and securely so that the receiving setting has the information it needs before the child or young person starts.

The child or young person and their family should remain involved throughout this process. Their experiences, preferences and concerns can provide valuable information about what will help make the transition successful.

Working with parents and young people

Parents and young people should be involved throughout the phase transfer process and should have opportunities to contribute their views.

Schools can support this by explaining the process clearly, using accessible language and ensuring that parents understand what will happen next. The views of the child or young person should also be actively sought and reflected in the review.

Where there are concerns or disagreements about the transition, it is helpful to identify these early and work with the family and relevant professionals to understand and address them.

Professional advice is an important part of the process, but it should not replace the views and experiences of the child, young person or their family.

Before the statutory deadline

Once the review and consultation process has been completed, the Local Authority will finalise the amended EHCP.

For most phase transfers, the final amended EHCP must be issued by 15 February.

For young people transferring from Year 11 into post-16 education, the final amended EHCP must be issued by 31 March.

Where applicable, the final EHCP should identify the agreed placement in Section I.

It is important that schools and colleges submit information and respond to requests within the required timescales. Where the review meeting takes place too late, or information is submitted late, there may not be sufficient time to complete the process before the statutory deadline. The Local Authority will monitor phase transfer timescales as part of its reporting and quality assurance arrangements.

What happens if the final EHCP is delayed?

If the final amended EHCP has not been issued by the relevant statutory deadline, the school or college should contact the relevant SEND Inclusion Officer to establish the current position and any actions required.

Transition planning should continue wherever possible rather than waiting for the final EHCP to be issued. This helps to minimise delays and ensures that practical arrangements can continue to be put in place for the child or young person's move to their new setting.

A practical checklist for schools and colleges

Use this checklist to help make sure key actions are completed throughout the phase transfer process.

Phase transfer review

- The transfer year has been identified and the review has been scheduled in good time.
- The views of the parent/carer have been gathered.
- The views of the child or young person have been gathered.
- Current attainment and progress information has been updated.
- Current SEN needs and provision have been reviewed.
- The impact of current provision has been considered.
- Relevant professional advice has been obtained, where required.
- Any changes to needs, outcomes or provision have been identified.
- Clear recommendations have been provided to support the Local Authority in considering whether the EHCP needs to be amended.

Placement consultation

- The consultation information has been reviewed carefully.
- The child or young person's individual needs have been considered.
- The provision required to meet their needs has been considered.
- Accessibility and reasonable adjustments have been considered.
- Staffing, specialist expertise and resources have been considered.
- The consultation response has been completed within the requested timeframe.
- Any concerns about the placement are specific and supported by clear evidence.

Transition

- The current and receiving settings have communicated with each other.
- Relevant reports and information have been shared appropriately and securely.
- Transition visits have been considered and arranged where appropriate.
- Key adults have been identified.
- Successful strategies and approaches have been shared with the receiving setting.

- Equipment, specialist resources and accessibility requirements have been identified.
- Parents/carers have been involved in transition planning.
- The child or young person has been involved in transition planning.
- Arrangements for the start of the new placement have been confirmed.

Working together for a successful transition

Effective phase transfer planning relies on good communication between the child or young person, their family, the current setting, the receiving setting, the Local Authority and any relevant professionals.

Providing clear information early, responding to consultations promptly and starting transition planning well in advance can make a significant difference to the experience of the child or young person and their family.

The aim is for every child and young person to move into their next phase of education with a clear understanding of their needs, the right provision identified and appropriate support in place from the start.