



FULL PARENT GUIDE

SEND Tribunal Appeals

A parent's guide to using the EHCP Working Document

About this guide

If you are appealing the contents of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you and the Local Authority (LA) will usually work on a Working Document. This guide explains the process in simple steps.

The purpose of the Working Document

It helps everyone see the changes being requested, the evidence for those changes, the wording that is agreed and the points the Tribunal may still need to decide.

1. Ask for a Word version

As soon as possible, ask the LA Tribunal Officer to send the Working Document in Microsoft Word format. This makes it easier to add and review changes.

2. Ask for reasonable adjustments

Tell the Tribunal Officer early if you need support to take part. This could include larger text, a coloured background, extra time to read documents or other support linked to a disability, health condition or learning need.

3. Gather your evidence

If you want the EHCP to say something different, find evidence that supports the change. Useful evidence may come from an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, doctor, school, college or another professional involved with your child.

4. Review the evidence

Read each report and highlight information that is missing from the EHCP, incorrect, unclear or needs more detail.

5. Add your suggested changes

Add your suggested wording in bold. Next to it, write the report name, report date and page number. This helps the LA and Tribunal find the supporting evidence.

Example: Section B: needs

CURRENT WORDING

Sam has some difficulties with communication.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS

Sam has significant expressive language difficulties and struggles to understand and follow two-step instructions independently.

Source: Speech and Language Therapy Report, June 2026, page 4

SUGGESTED WORDING

Sam has significant expressive language difficulties and struggles to understand and follow two-step instructions independently.

Source: Speech and Language Therapy Report, June 2026, page 4

Why this is clearer

The suggested wording gives a clearer description of Sam's needs.

Example: Section F: provision

CURRENT WORDING

Sam will have access to speech and language support.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS

Sam requires direct Speech and Language Therapy for 30 minutes each week, alongside a programme delivered by school staff.

Source: Speech and Language Therapy Report, June 2026, page 7

SUGGESTED WORDING

Sam will receive a direct Speech and Language Therapy session for 30 minutes each week, delivered by a qualified Speech and Language Therapist. School staff will also deliver a speech and language programme for 15 minutes, three times each week.

Source: Speech and Language Therapy Report, June 2026, page 7

Why this is clearer

The wording says what support must be provided, who will provide it, how often it will happen and how long it will last.

6. Save and send your version

When you have finished, save the document with the next version number, keep a copy and send it to the LA.

7. Review the LA's response

The LA will consider your wording and send the document back. Check what has been agreed, what new wording has been added and what is still not agreed.

8. Keep updating the document

The Working Document may go backwards and forwards several times. For example, you may send Version 2, the LA may return Version 3 and you may reply with Version 4.

9. Work towards agreement

Try to agree as much as possible before the hearing. The Tribunal can then focus on the parts that are still in dispute.

Understanding the formatting

- Bold text usually shows a parent's suggested wording.
- Italic text usually shows new wording added by the LA.
- Underlined text usually shows wording both sides agree with.

Important

Check the Tribunal's directions and the key at the start of your Working Document. They may set out the exact formatting, version process and deadlines for your appeal. Follow those instructions if they are different.

Making Section F clear

When reading each item of provision, check whether it answers these questions:

- ☐ What support will be provided?
- ☐ Who will provide it?
- ☐ How often will it happen?
- ☐ How long will each session last?
- ☐ Will it be one-to-one or in a group? If it is a group, how large?
- ☐ Which need in Section B does it support?

Parent checklist

Before you start

- ☐ I have asked for the Working Document in Word format.
- ☐ I have asked for any reasonable adjustments I need.
- ☐ I have gathered the relevant professional reports.
- ☐ I have read the reports and highlighted important evidence.

Check Section B: needs

- ☐ The wording clearly describes my child's needs.
- ☐ Each suggested change is supported by evidence.
- ☐ I have added the report name, date and page number.
- ☐ My suggested wording is shown in bold.

Check Section F: provision

- ☐ It says exactly what support must be provided.
- ☐ It says who will provide the support.
- ☐ It says how often and for how long support will be provided.
- ☐ The support links to a need in Section B.
- ☐ I have added the report name, date and page number.

Before sending it back

- ☐ I have checked my changes.
- ☐ I have saved the document with the correct version number.
- ☐ I have kept a copy for my records.
- ☐ I have sent the latest version to the LA.

When the LA returns it

- ☐ I have checked what the LA has agreed.
- ☐ I have reviewed any new wording from the LA.
- ☐ I have noted what is still not agreed.
- ☐ I have considered whether any more evidence is needed.

Before the hearing

- ☐ I know which parts are agreed.
- ☐ I know which parts are still in dispute.
- ☐ I have evidence for the changes I am asking for.
- ☐ I have copies of the reports and each Working Document version.

Final check

Would someone who has never met my child understand their needs and exactly what support must be provided by reading this EHCP?

Remember

The Working Document is not about winning or losing. It is a practical way to show what is agreed, what is still in dispute and what evidence supports each suggested change.

This guide gives general information and is not legal advice.

Contact us:

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