

Guidance about what is acceptable as ‘up to date’ information to be included in reports to capture the current level of need and what constitutes health information.

[The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years](#) is clear that

9.47 The local authority should consider with the child’s parent or the young person and the parties listed under paragraph 9.49 the range of advice required to enable a full EHC needs assessment to take place. The principle underpinning this is ‘tell us once’, avoiding the child’s parent or the young person having to provide the same information multiple times. The child’s parent or the young person should be supported to understand the range of assessments available so they can take an informed decision about whether existing advice is satisfactory. **The local authority must not seek further advice if such advice has already been provided (for any purpose) and the person providing the advice, the local authority and the child’s parent or the young person are all satisfied that it is sufficient for the assessment process. In making this decision, the local authority and the person providing the advice should ensure the advice remains current.**

9.49 In seeking advice and information, the local authority should consider with professionals what advice they can contribute to ensure the assessment covers all the relevant education, health and care needs of the child or young person. Medical advice and information from healthcare professionals with a role in relation to the child’s or young person’s health.

9.52 Advice and information requested by the local authority **must** be provided within six weeks of the request, and should be provided more quickly wherever possible, to enable a timely process. (This is subject to the exemptions set out in paragraph 9.42.)

The Council for Disabled Children published guidance: [Requirements to provide health advice within 6 weeks.](#)

The following points should be considered in relation to health reports and what constitutes health information

- When requesting advice from health professionals, the local authority should share the person-centred information obtained from their discussion and meeting with the child or young person and parents. Having this person-centred information means health professionals are able to provide advice about how the child or young person’s health needs impact on their ability to make progress towards their identified outcomes and aspirations rather than providing a diagnosis/summary of involvement.

A health professional is defined as someone regulated by the relevant professional council. They can be employed by a community provider, acute trust or a mental health trust, in paediatric or adult services.

- There should be a clearly established contact point to which requests for Health advice are sent so that the relevant health professionals can be identified. Where a number of health professionals are involved there should be a process to coordinate their health advice.
- Many children will enter an EHC assessment process already known to health services. There may not be any need for a further assessment to be made, and the health advice can be provided based on the existing evidence about the child. This evidence must be able to support the relevant health professional to give advice as to the child's needs, the provision required to meet those needs and the desired outcomes.

New assessments should be completed as part of the EHC needs assessment process only where existing evidence is inadequate to provide appropriate advice on needs, provision and outcomes.

- Health advice must recommend health provision that will meet the young person's needs and support them to achieve holistic outcomes, setting out how the impact of the provision in supporting the achievement of these outcomes will be measured. Health advice should be as clear as possible about health provision, specifying what will be done and quantifying how frequently it will happen. Health advice should not make recommendations about specific educational provision
- Health professionals who have provided advice should have the opportunity to see how their advice has been incorporated into the plan to ensure it is accurate, and have an opportunity to suggest amendments where required when in draft.

Where a referral for a diagnostic pathway is made following this assessment, clear information should be submitted in the health advice that specifies when the child or young person will be seen, by who, and by when the EHC Plan will be updated to reflect this.

There will be instances where health advice is being sought in relation to a child who is thought to have a condition that has not been formally diagnosed and where the diagnostic pathway exceeds six weeks. In these instances, it is important to keep in mind that the provision of health advice does not require any formal diagnosis. What is required is informed advice as to the child's needs, the provision required to meet those needs and the desired outcomes. What will be important is that the chosen health professional to give advice for the purposes of regulation 6(1)(c) has sufficient information to give reasonable and informed advice. This should not require expedited completion of a diagnostic process in a way which may be clinically inappropriate.