



## What to expect from a Way Forward Meeting

### When is a Way Forward Meeting offered?

Essex County Council (ECC) offers a Way Forward Meeting to families if it decides not to proceed with an Education Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) when one has been requested for a child or young person.

ECC must communicate the decision not to proceed with an EHCNA. This is set out in the SEND Code of Practice. Families will receive a phone call and a letter to explain the decision. As part of good practice, a Way Forward Meeting (WFM) is also offered. Families can decide if they would like a meeting. A WFM does not impact a family's right to go to Mediation and lodge an Appeal with the SENDIST Tribunal.

### What is the aim of a Way Forward Meeting?

The aims of the meeting are:

- to understand the decision and why the panel made the decision
- plan the next steps and provision for the child and young person, without an EHCP

The WFM cannot change the decision. The decision to proceed with an EHCNA can only be made at a multi-disciplinary panel. The WFM is not a multi-disciplinary panel. If new information is available after the WFM, anyone can make a further request for an EHCNA.

### Who can attend a Way Forward Meeting?

The following people can attend:

- parents/carers/family, including the child or young person
- someone from the educational setting (if there is one)
- a facilitator from ECC SEND teams

Families can invite a representative to support them in the meeting if they wish.

### Who facilitates a Way Forward Meeting?

A range of officers from ECC SEND Teams could facilitate the meeting. This depends on the child or young person's circumstances. The facilitator may be a member of the team already involved with One Planning for the child or young person. If the facilitator is not already involved, their role may simply be to chair and record the meeting. It does not mean they will become part of the One Planning team after the WFM.

### What to expect at a Way Forward Meeting

A meeting would typically last between 30 and 60 minutes. Meetings are usually virtual, e.g., via Microsoft Teams video call, but it may be in person.

The facilitator will remind attendees of the LA decision and ensure everyone understands it. They will invite people in the meeting to contribute any new or changed information that was not included in the original request for an EHCNA. They may also suggest where information was missing but could now be gathered.

- The facilitator will ask questions of the group to think about:
- how the child's needs can be understood and provided for in their setting
- if there is anyone else who might need to be involved in next steps

The facilitator will share a summary of the meeting and actions once it is completed. This is called a Record of Involvement and will be stored on the child or young person's record.