

25 September 2014

Students with an LDA and additional support needs attending a course of further education

Dear Parents / Carers

Learning Difficulty Assessments – LDAs – the future

I am writing to you because my records show that you are the parent or carer of a young person who has a LDA and is attending a College course. He or she may be receiving High Needs support as well. High Needs support is where some students receive targeted individual support. He or she may have had a Statement of Special Educational Needs, when attending school. Statements and LDAs are being replaced by Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

I want to explain what this means for you and your child. The changes being made are intended to give you more involvement in how your child is supported. These changes will take time to put in place but be assured that in the meantime your child's SEN statement will remain with all of the current legal protections.

A change in the law from 1 September means that some LDAs will be converted to Education, Health and Care plans. We will start to convert LDAs to Education Health and Care (EHC) plans where this is necessary. It is necessary to transfer the LDA to an EHC plan where the young person receives a level of support through the LDA that is in excess of the normal offer available in the college.

What is the difference between a LDA and an EHC plan?

A Learning Difficulty Assessment records a young person's learning needs and the provision from which he or she will benefit in continuing education. It has no statutory force.

An EHC plan describes all the provision that the young person needs and sets out the outcomes that the provision will help the young person to achieve. The EHC plan is very outcome oriented and this is very important at this stage where future life opportunities are being considered.

The plan describes what special educational provision should be made. It also includes more information about the provision that health and social care may be making for your child or young

person. The plan is based on outcomes for your child or young person. As well as naming the school or education setting, it says:

- what provision should be made,
- how it should be made, and
- how it will contribute to the outcomes that your child or young person is working towards

Your child's views will be sought in relation to the outcomes he or she is aiming for, and to be more involved in decisions by explaining what is important to him or her. The EHC plan describes all of your child's needs, and then says what outcomes everyone should be aiming to achieve with your child.

What happens when my child converts to an EHC plan?

This is done through a "Conversion Review". A Conversion Review will be convened by the college/setting and supported by an SEN monitoring and management officer.

The SEN Officer will send information to you and to the College setting and discuss the process of the review. You will be asked if you would like any support or advice, or someone to help you. Rather than ask for new reports, we will see what reports are in place which already provide up to date information. If we need new reports they will be requested.

How will I know when it is time for my child's LDA to be transferred to an EHC plan?

There are too many LDAs to convert to EHC plans in one year. However, we must have completed all the LDA conversions by September 2016. If your young person is due to leave college in July next year, we may meet with him or her for a review and update the LDA but decide not to convert the LDA to an EHC plan.

If your young person is planning to remain in continuing education after September 2016, we will undertake the review and consider whether or not it is necessary to transfer the LDA to an EHC plan. In most cases, where the young person has high needs funding to enable his course of study, it is likely that a conversion to an EHC Plan be necessary.

We understand that you will want this completed as quickly as possible. However, it is important to us that the conversion to an EHC Plan is carried out in a way which ensures your involvement and the full involvement of your child. .

Who will be there to help me understand all of this?

During the conversion Review process we will make sure that a named person will act as a key-worker – co-ordinating matters and ensuring you are kept informed. You may like to have an independent supporter, and we will let you know who to contact.

From September you can see information on the Council's Local Offer web-site at <http://www.younglambeth.org/local-offer/landing-pages/local-offer.html>

All general enquiries regarding Lambeth's plan for transferring children and young people with Statements of SEN and LDAs should be made to:

Lambeth SEND Team

Tel: 020 7926 9460 / 67754

Email: aeracleous@lambeth.gov.uk or mreid@lambeth.gov.uk

Lambeth also offer an impartial and confidential advice and support service around education, health and social care - Lambeth's Parent Information and Advice Support Service (formally Parent Partnership Service). The service will also inform you about the local authority's services for resolving disagreements and for mediation. Contact: lambethiass@lambeth.gov.uk

Chris White - Parent Information and Advice Officer: 020 7926 9805

Anita Bey - Parent Information and Advice Officer: 020 7926 1831

Please do not worry about this. It is important that we let you know about these changes and that we will be in touch with you.

Yours sincerely,



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