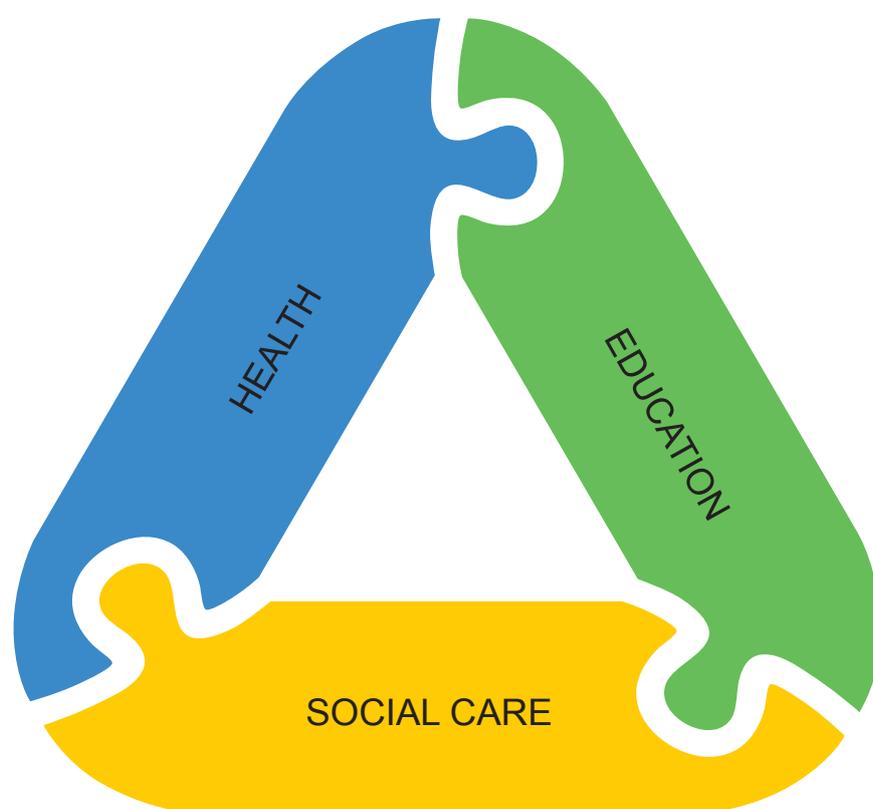


Completing the 'All about Me' Section of EHC Plans



A guide for parents



Introduction

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC) were introduced in 2014 to replace statements of special educational needs as part of the Government SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) reforms.

Information about Northamptonshire's EHC Plans can be found on the Local Offer pages here:

<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/localoffer>

Northamptonshire's Information, Advice and Support Service can support parents and young people who are going through the EHC assessment and transfer process. Their contact details are given in this booklet.

Within a plan there is a section A called 'All about Me'. This is divided into parts where the child or young person and their family can record their views. The parts cover the following areas:

- How have the child/young person and their family participated in the development of the plan?
- All about the child/young person's story (a brief history)
- All about the child/young person's views, interests and aspirations

- | | |
|---|---|
| – What is important to me? | – What do I like most at home? |
| – What am I good at? | – What would I like to achieve this year? |
| – What do I find difficult? | – What makes me happy? |
| – What do I like most about school/college? | – What would I like to achieve in the future? |

- The views of the child/young person's parents/carers/family

- | | |
|--|---|
| – What is important to them? | – How do they communicate with others? |
| – What is important for them (to keep safe and healthy)? | – How do others communicate with them? |
| – What do others like and admire about the person? | – Do they have any significant routines or rituals? |
| – What are their likes and dislikes? | – What places do they like to go to? |
| – What makes them happy or sad? | – Who are the important people in their life? |
| – What calms them when upset? | – What are their gifts, qualities and skills? |
| | – What would their perfect week look like? |

- How to communicate with the child/young person and engage them in decision making
- All about the child/young person's support network

Completing the 'All about Me' Section of EHC Plans – A Parents Guide

The information to complete section A can be obtained through different methods:

1. Information direct from the young person and family
2. Completion of a one-page-profile
3. Meetings between the child/young person and school staff or other professionals
4. Meetings between parents and school staff or other professionals
5. Parents and their son/daughter completing their own profile at home.

The EHC assessment uses person centred practice and tools to ensure the child/young person and their family are at the centre of the assessment. More detail on person centred approaches are given on the next pages.

This guide is to explain the tools that are used to help gather this information so parents and the child/young person themselves can understand and take part fully in the process.

Examples from person centred plans are used to illustrate the tools. The names of the children/young people are changed but the examples are real.

Throughout this booklet we refer to support and information from other services. Your school can help you and will be helping your child with this process. Contact details for the other services are:

Northamptonshire's Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)

This service provides impartial and independent support and advice about the SEND processes in schools and the statutory process. They will be holding events to support parents and young people's understanding of the information included in this booklet. They can be contacted on:

Telephone: 01604 636111

Email: contact@npps.info

Website: www.npps.info

Helen Sanderson Associates

Many of the tools used in this booklet can be found on this website with more examples and explanation about the strengths of person centred practice.

Website: www.helensanderson.co.uk

Dimensions UK

Dimensions UK offer a person centred thinking e-learning course.

Website: <http://www.dimensions-uk.org/about-us/person-centred/>

Communication Matters

Further information to support person centred approaches.

Website: www.communications.org.uk

Education, Health & Care Team

The team in the local authority who facilitate and manage the statutory process.

Tel: 01604 367125

Email: EHCP@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Website: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/sendehc

What is person centred planning?

This is a way of planning that works for **everyone** but is particularly helpful for children and young people with learning disabilities as it helps us to plan in a more meaningful and structured way with them. For people who have more severe or profound disabilities this approach is vital as it helps us to understand the detail in their lives and what makes them 'tick' as individuals. It brings together the people who know them best to work together to ensure they achieve their best outcomes.

The tools used to help us identify what matters to the individual, what's important to and for them and how best to support them even if they cannot communicate these things vocally. They also give clear and simple methods of checking back and reflecting on what works and doesn't work, so we can retain the good things and lose the bad.

Most importantly for families this way of planning actively involves them. It draws on the in depth knowledge they have of their child and includes the perspectives of other family members, friends and people who know the person best.

Not only does an understanding of person centred planning help to make sense of the new EHC Plan as part of the SEND reforms. They are approaches for life.

'Person centred planning gave my son a voice. It helped us to see him as the unique individual he is and helped us lose the labels he'd been given throughout his childhood. It helped us plan for his future and working this way continues to ensure he lives the life he wants to lead'

(parent)

There are five key principles of Person Centred Planning:

1. The person is at the centre
2. Family members and friends are partners in planning
3. The plan reflects what is important to the person now and for the future, their capacities and what support they require
4. The plan helps build the person's place in the community and helps the community to welcome them. It is not just about services; it reflects what is possible, not just what is available
5. The plan results in ongoing listening, learning and further action. Putting the plan into action helps the person achieve what they want out of life

You can find out more about person centred planning by visiting Helen Sanderson Associates website:

<http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk>

These steps are not necessarily in the order of the questions asked in the 'All about Me' section but it may be easier to gather the information in this order. Use the tools and ideas in the way that suits you best. If you choose to only complete one of the steps described in this booklet, please choose Step 6. This step includes the core information required to complete part A of an EHC plan.

Step 1

What do people like and admire about your child?

Person Centred Planning always starts with an appreciation of the person. In this section it is a chance to say all the things you and other people like and admire about your child. By listing all the positive characteristics and personality traits about your child you are helping them, and those around them, see beyond any label or diagnosis they may have.

Example: What people like and admire about George

- He's caring and gentle
- He gives great hugs
- He's brave
- He carries on, even when he feels sad
- He's got a great smile
- He's great to have fun with

Tips:

Don't do it on your own, ask friends and family what they like and admire too.

Aim to get at least 5 good positive statements.

Think about the things that make them proud of themselves and what makes you proud.

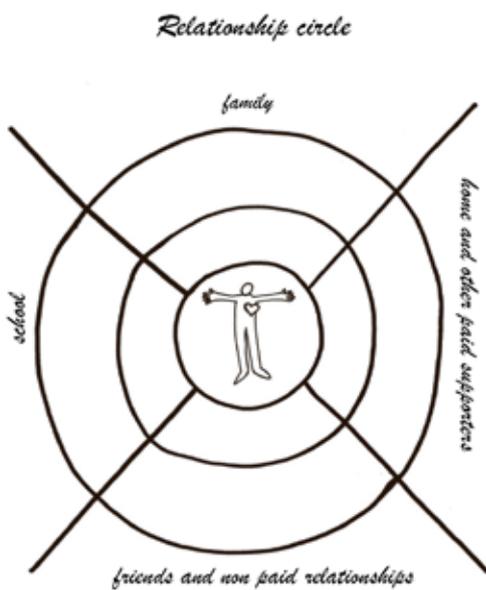
Use positive strong statements, try to avoid using words like 'generally' or 'usually' as this undermines positive characteristics you're trying to convey.

Be specific.

Step 2

Who are the important people in their lives?

The best place to start thinking about who the important people are in your child's life is by developing a 'relationship circle'. You can do this as a first step if you think it will help identify who the people are that can help you with the like and admire question.



What is important to someone will almost always include who is important to them. We can learn and record the important people in someone's life by having conversations and using the relationship circle person-centred thinking tool.

Remember:

It is important when you are filling in the names in the relationship circle that you make sure you do this from your son or daughter's perspective and not your own i.e. It is not people you think should be important to your child but the people who are really important to them.

A relationship circle is particularly useful for exploring: who your child knows, how they know them, and how these networks can help find them opportunities and support to live the life they want.

These relationships can be represented as a circle, or in columns, or as a spider diagram with the person at the centre. However it is represented, it is vital to be clear not just about who is in your child's life, but how important they are to them. Typically this is done by putting their name or photo in the middle and the names of the people most important in their life closest to them.

If people find that their relationship circle is not as full as they would like, then it can become a focus for action by asking: 'What would it take to increase the number and depth of your relationships?'

"I felt really bad not putting my Mum and Dad in Mark's 'most important people in my life' section of his relationship circle, because they are really important to me and I'd like them to be important to him. The fact is though, he rarely sees them and from his perspective they don't figure much in his life—so I put them in the next circle. It did make me think though—what can I do to make his relationship with them stronger?"

(Parent)

Further information on relationship circles can be found on the Helen Sanderson Associates website:
<http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk>

Step 3

How do they communicate with others? & How do others communicate with them?

A good way to gather this information is to develop a communication chart.

The communication chart is a simple but powerful way to record how your child communicates through his or her behaviour. While it is a critical tool to have when people do not communicate with words, it is also important to use when communication with behaviour is clearer than the communication with words or when what people say and mean are different.

The tool helps:

- As a way to help us to focus on your child's communication whether they use words to speak or not.
- To identify and clarify communication whenever what your child does communicate with their actions is different from what they say.
- It works by giving a snapshot of how someone communicates.

Example 1: Matthews communication chart			
When is this happening	Matthew does this	We think it means	And we should
Anytime he wants something	Clapping	Matthew wants something, could be a drink or food or the TV channel changed.	Ask him what he wants and take his hand to show you.
Anytime	Hits out at people	He doesn't want to do something. It is out of character for Matthew to be aggressive so could be feeling unwell.	Tell him not to hit but think about what he is being asked to do. If it is something he is usually happy to do then consider visit to GP as he could be unwell.
Anytime	Blows 'raspberries'	Matthew is playing a game; he thinks this is funny. He is not being rude.	Blow a raspberry back. This makes him laugh.
Anytime	Strokes his head	He is upset about something and comforting himself.	Offer him reassurance or comfort by chatting to him or looking at a magazine, book or ipad.

Sometimes people's behaviour can be misunderstood, seen as challenging and down to the fact they have a learning disability when actually, more often than not, they are simply trying to tell us something. So, knowing how they communicate is essential.

Example 2:

Aidan is refusing to wear anything over his head (t-shirt, jumper, top) he pulls it off straight away and pushes helpers away. This is not his usual behaviour but staff supporting him are concerned because he can't go outside (and he loves going out). Aidan is taken to the doctor for a check-up and it shows he has a nasty ear infection. Aidan was telling us something was hurting him. This was his way of communicating to us because he cannot verbalise it. Aidan now has this written down in his communication chart so if he does this again his support staff now know to take him to the doctors straight away.

Example 3: Alex is 3 years old—this is his communication chart

When is this happening	Alex does this	We think it means	And we should
When Alex is thirsty	He will shake his hand in front of his mouth	He wants a drink	Give him water or milk in a cup with a lid
Alex wants to watch TV	He says 'Bumble'	He wants to watch Mr Tumble	Pull up an episode for him on SkyPlus
He is tired	He will walk to the stairs and say 'Bye'	He wants to go to bed	Help him to get ready for bed
He wants something to eat	He will either tap his hand in a B shape or put one hand on top of the other	The 1st means he wants a biscuit, the 2nd means he wants a cake	If it is appropriate, offer him what he wants
When he has been asked a question (e.g. What is the animal? Where is the car?)	He shakes his head in a 'giddy fashion' and grins or hides his face with his hands	Alex is unsure what is wanted of him or what he is meant to do/say and is trying to deflect by making you laugh	Rephrase the question and give him a verbal and signing prompt to help him remember the answer
Alex is bored and wants your full attention	Alex starts going into cupboards and pulling things out or pushes objects off tables	Alex is bored	Redirect his attention (and yours) to something you can both do together

More details of communication charts can be found on the [Helen Sanderson Associates website](#).

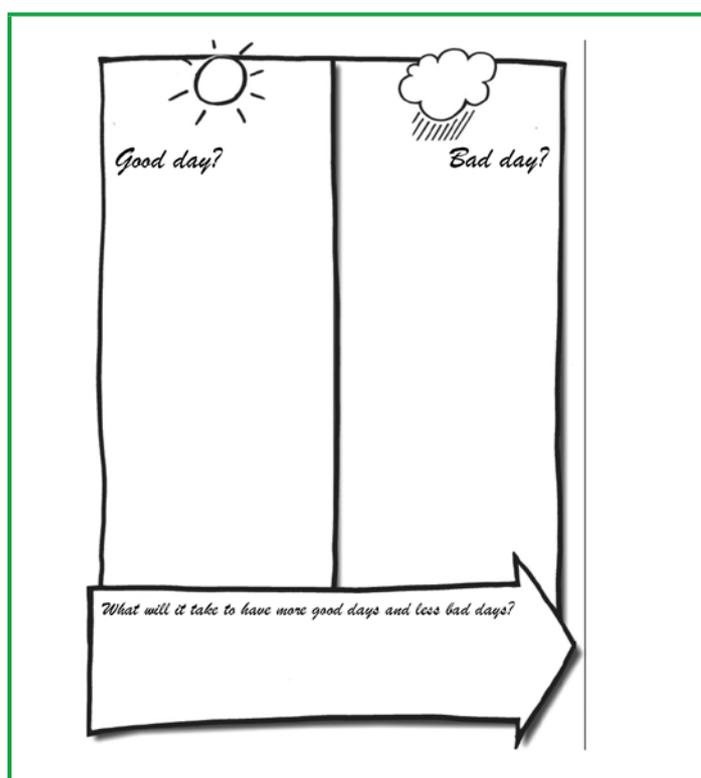
Step 4

Good day/bad day

Start completing this section by thinking about what your son or daughter likes and dislikes and the things that make them happy and sad. This will usually include places they like to go and people they like to spend time with but can also include a favourite toy, TV programme or food or anything else they like/dislike.

Capturing this information will help you complete what is important to and important for them. Significant rituals and routines should also be included in detail so others can really understand your child.

The Good day/Bad day person centred thinking tool simply asks the person what a typical day is like, starting with waking up and continuing until they go to bed. Questions are then asked to get detailed information on what an especially good day is like and a particularly bad day. This helps to understand what needs to be present for them in their day-to-day life and what needs to be absent.



Questions you could ask:

If you had a magic wand and were going to create a really good day for your child – what would happen? What would they be doing? Who else would be there?

Ask a similar question for a bad day.

What would you do if you wanted to make it a good day?

This teases out what is important to and for them and can be used to make changes by asking “What would it take to have more good days than bad days?”

What about children/young people with more severe or profound disabilities?

Just because people do not use words to communicate it doesn't mean they don't have anything to say. Arguably it is more important that people try to understand these children/young people better as they cannot make themselves heard as easily. Learning about how they communicate (by making sounds, vocalisation, gesture, body language and/or their behaviour) we can get a good picture of what a person likes and dislikes and what is important to them when they are telling us these things. As parents you will have instinctively developed understanding of your child but it is important this is shared with others to effectively support them.

Step 5

Gifts, Qualities and Skills

We tend to think of gifts and talents as being exceptional things people can do like being an excellent artist etc. This does not have to be 'big' stuff—we all have gifts and talents! A gift can be anything a person does that creates an opportunity for meaningful interaction with another person.

'Aidan has the most infectious laugh—it's impossible not to laugh with him'

(Aidan's sister)

'Matthew has an amazing memory, he remembers where every biscuit tin is in every house he has visited'

(Matthew's mum)

Look again at step 1 and think about what others have said they like and admire about your child. We can see from George's like and admire comments that his friends and family think he has a real skill for making people laugh and he has some lovely qualities such as being brave and carrying on even when feeling sad.

You could ask your son or daughter about a time when they achieved something that made a positive difference to someone else and gave them a 'feel good factor'. If they can't tell you themselves, then ask others who know them really well. You can build on this with stories about when your child is at their best. What does that tell you about their gifts and qualities?

Remember

You are talking about gifts, qualities and skills.

Keep it positive.

Example:

'Joe is a strong and determined child, who knows what he wants. **Although he does have a tendency to 'kick off' if he doesn't get his own way'**

Although this might be true.

It is instantly turning a positive quality about Joe into a negative. While people need to be aware how Joe can react this should be in the how to support him (important for) section.

Step 6

What is important to them? & What is important for them?

A fundamental person centred thinking skill is to be able to separate what is important to someone from what is important for them.

- **Important to** is what really matters to the person from their perspective. This should include only what people are saying with their words and behaviour, the things that really matter, things that make them feel happy and content, fulfilled and things they look forward to enjoying.
- **Important for** is the help and support a person needs to stay healthy, safe and well. While this is clearly essential, families and professionals often put the main focus on important for and sometimes fail to ensure that there is an equal balance between the two.

Getting the right balance is key.

If we only focus on keeping people healthy and safe we may ignore the things that are important to them and life can become unhappy and frustrating. Equally if we on focus on important to then it becomes all choice and no responsibility.

What support is needed to stay healthy and safe—this should describe what is important for the person to stay healthy and safe and what others need to do.

- So he/she has what is important to them and will stay healthy and safe.
- It should not include the things they can do for themselves.

Tips:

Be specific, think about the detail. If your child likes music - say what music. It is no good playing ACDC if they like One Direction. If they like crisps say what flavour.

Tips:

Keep in mind that the vital issues of health (and safety) may not be important to your child. Where this is the case they should be listed under 'what support and help they need. It is important for them not to them.'

The following example for George tells us an awful lot about him and answers lots of the questions in the 'all about me' section of the EHC plan. It importantly tells us how best to support him as well as his favourite places, people etc and how best to communicate with him.

For Matthew (step 3) who doesn't use words to communicate it is very important that people know what he is communicating with his gestures and behaviour. It is important for him that people read his detailed communication chart so they know how to support him well.

Example 4: What is important to & important for George?

What's important to George	What's important for George
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying in touch with his friends (Jack, Joe and Amy) and making new ones. • His Xbox—He loves gaming and watching movies, going on Facebook and keeping in touch with friends. • His mobile phone. • His electric guitar. • He loves listening to and playing music (Rock music, U2 etc). • To choose what he eats. • To know what is available to eat. • To be able to make choices about what he wants to do. • To do things in his own time and not be rushed. • To know when something is going to start and what time it stops. • Wearing the clothes he chooses to wear—he's very fashion conscious. • Meeting up with friends and knowing where, when and for how long this will be for. • Going to the game store to choose and buy new games. • Roast dinners with his family (especially when Grandma comes or Auntie Jane with cousins, Jamie & Lewis). • Staying fit, so he likes swimming and football. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George needs to know when things are going to happen like a trip or a visit. • Explain clearly how long the activity/visit will last, who will be there and when it ends. • Offer him choices—what he eats, where he goes. • Give him plenty of warning when he needs to go somewhere so he doesn't feel rushed. • He gets anxious so when he's worried or shaky let him have some time alone. • Talking helps him but he needs to do this when he is ready—don't ask him lots of questions. • He needs a timetable that is stuck to or be given time to adjust if something is going to change. • He finds eating tricky and needs to be reminded to eat the right amount of food—needs support to stay healthy. • When there is a lot of noise, bangs or shouting, he gets scared and it hurts his ears—he needs to get away from the noise and go to a quiet place. • He loves going swimming but needs support to get there and help to pay and get a locker.

What's working/not working

Another tool to help understand how best to support a person is to complete a what's working/not working template.

About	What is working well that we want to build on?	What is not working well that we want to change?
Learning skills and moving towards employment		
Home and independence		
Health and wellbeing		
Friends, relationships and community		

Gather information from different perspectives
 •Child/young person •Family •School •Others involved

This should be completed from different perspectives to get a complete picture of the person and how to support them. This will help the development of other sections of the EHC Plan.

Example 5: What's working/not working for Robert

About	What is working well that we want to build on?	What is not working well that we want to change?
Learning skills and moving towards employment	Robert's classroom assistants know him well. He is provided with ample opportunity to take rest breaks when he needs to	Robert loves Music but does not have much of this on his timetable. He has to travel quite a distance to the nearest pool
Home and independence	Robert has lots of people he is familiar with around him; this makes him feel comfortable	Robert does not yet have a hoist system in place in his room; this means it is difficult and uncomfortable for him to move
Health and wellbeing	Robert has some occupational therapy support and has been supplied with a walker that helps him to be more mobile	Knowledge of Robert's CSW/other support workers, particularly around his MSI needs
Friends, relationships and community	Robert loves to spend time with his family and does this regularly. Robert enjoys his respite and has some CSW hours he takes advantage of. His CSW drives him to events etc.	Robert is often at home and does not get much opportunity to go out and about. More CSW hours would be beneficial to him, in order to support his social skills

Gather information from different perspectives
 •Child/young person •Family •School •Others involved

Step 7

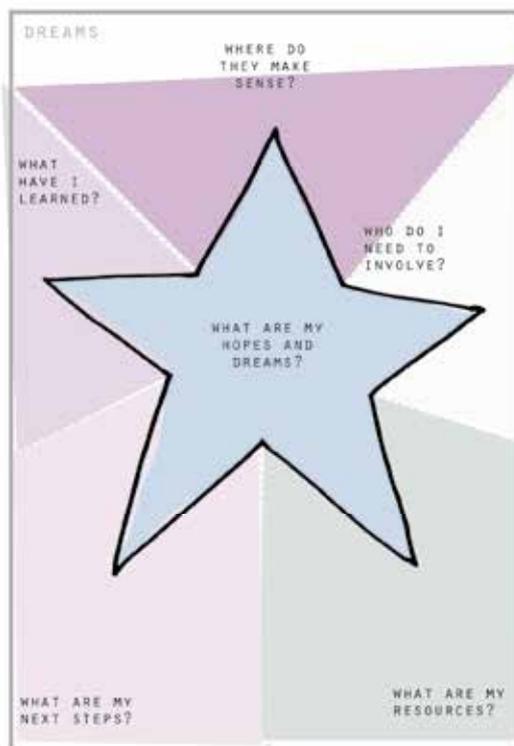
What are their aspirations? What would they like to achieve in the future?

This section is included in the child/young persons section of 'all about me' but it is helpful for parents to think about this too and how they can help them think about their ambitions and aspirations.

Practical barriers and the limiting ideas of society can get in the way of children, young people and families having the same opportunities as everyone else and having the opportunity to discover the possibility of dreams of a different future.

We all have dreams, some say these are pointless and lead to unrealistic expectations and disappointment, but dreams contain seeds that can be nurtured and built into practical and possible outcomes and daily activities.

It is important to remember that many children and young people come up with ideas about what they want to do when they are older based on the jobs they know about or see on TV or in films. It is up to us to think creatively and help them explore all the other options available that might lead them to having a happy and fulfilled future, doing something they love.



'As parents it is easy for us to dismiss our child's dreams and ambitions because we see them as unachievable... "Andrew wants to be a famous actor—he's never going to do that!" We worry about encouraging them in something that we think we will never be possible and the impact that could have on them. Instead we need to unpick the dreams and think about the elements within it and what it tells us about the individual. Would Andrew like to join a youth theatre, do an acting/drama course? Does he like performing? Could he join a local group that does training and role plays. He may never be famous but, the reality is, few actors are—he may still be able to enjoy working in that area as an actor or another role.'

Completing the 'All about Me' Section of EHC Plans – A Parents Guide

For those with profound and multiple learning disabilities this is a difficult question. We may only be able to 'best guess' based on what we know is important to them. Use the perfect week tool (below) and the good day/bad day to help you.

	Mornings	Afternoons	Evenings
Mon			
Tues			
Wed			
Thurs			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

You should now have all the information you need to fill in your section of the 'All About Me' part of the plan.

- Go back and check. Is there enough detail? Does it make sense to some-one else reading it? Do they know what is important to and for your child and would they feel confident to support them given this information?
- List everyone who has been involved in writing this section, yourself as parents, the wider family and friends.

As families you have most of this information in your heads. You know your children well but it can be missed if not written down.

Just one more thing...

Step 8 (optional)

One Page Profiles

A One Page Profile is a short introduction to a person—it is not a person-centred plan, more like a 'beginners guide'. One of the reasons they are effective is that they are 'to the point' and easy to read.

Northamptonshire schools have been starting to use one page profiles since September 2014, many before this. Hopefully you will have already seen one for your child. The local authority expects that a one page profile is included in any request for a statutory assessment and at each annual review. One will therefore be created, or the existing profile will be updated, for the transfer to an EHC Plan.

There can be different one page profiles for use in different situations, for example, school, youth club, baby-sitters, going to hospital—the possibilities are endless. You can also use them in families, in the workplace and when meeting new friends—they are for everyone.

Further information can be found on a Webinar, developed by Alex and Jacob's mum for Helen Sanderson Associates.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtrmlBZIW2I>

This video explains how schools have used one page profiles and explains how they can fill in the like and admire section.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8aZp8wiHdY>

This website shows the many uses of one page profiles and their stories from birth.

<https://onepageprofiles.wordpress.com/>

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

