

EHC Plans – Statutory Timescales Update

November 2019

Progress Highlights

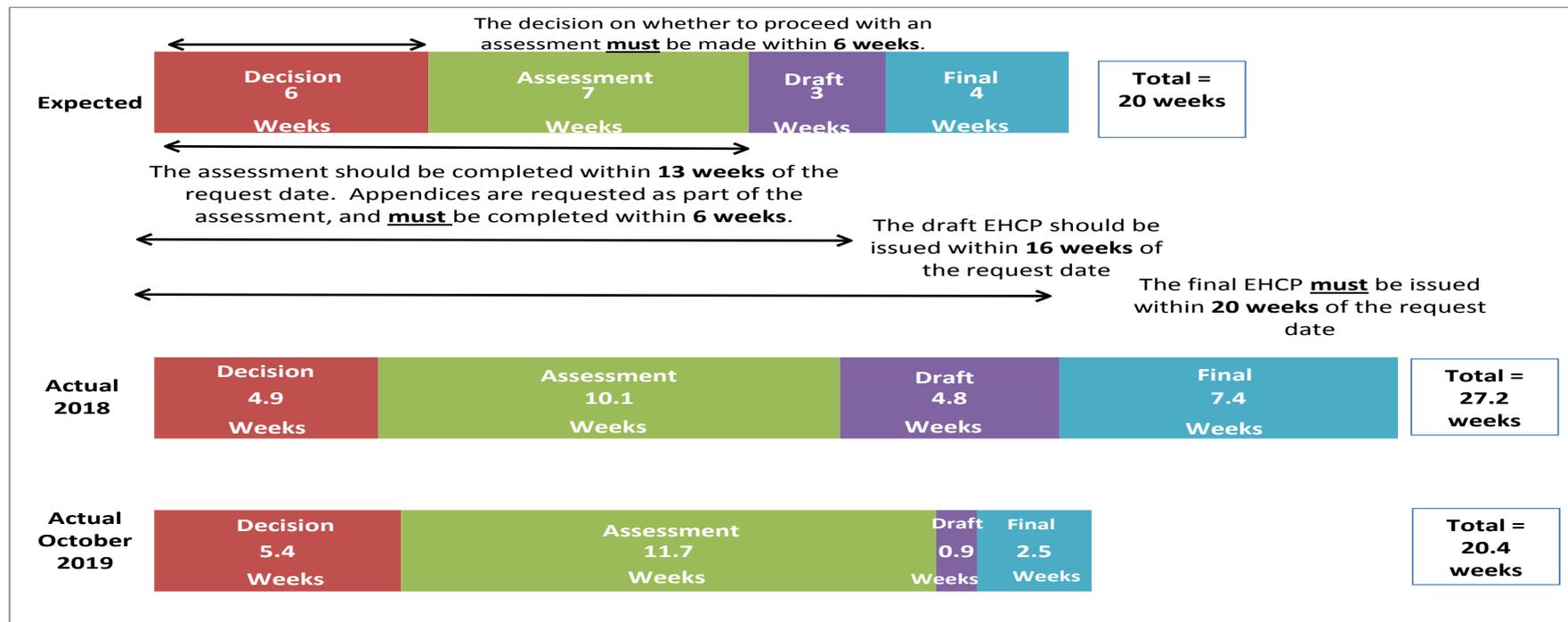
The table below outlines progress so far during this calendar year for Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within the 20 week statutory deadline.

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	October
Number of final EHCPs	34	36	26	70	137	53	51	59	40	71
Number of final EHCPs in 20 weeks	5	6	2	8	17	22	27	31	19	52
% in 20 weeks	14.7%	16.7%	7.7%	11.4%	12.5%	41.5%	52.9%	52.5%	47.5%	73.2%
2019 cumulative % in 20 weeks	14.7%	15.7%	13.5%	12.7%	12.6%	16.9%	21.4%	25.4%	27.1%	32.8%
Average length to complete (weeks) for month	27.3	26.4	29.5	31.3	28.1	22.2	20.5	21.2	21.1	20.4
2019 cumulative average length to complete (weeks)	27.3	26.8	27.6	29.1	28.6	27.6	26.7	26	25.6	25

The table clearly demonstrates significant improvements in the issuing of final EHC Plans, with 73.2% of EHC plans being issued within statutory timescales during the month of October. This has moved our cumulative total to 32.8% and we are working hard to achieve our end of year target of 40%. The national average for 2018 was 60%; our target is 40% due to the low performance at the start of the year and the clearing of the backlog during the months of April and May, when over 200 EHC Plans were issued.

Context

The statutory deadlines that we must adhere to as a Local Authority are in relation to the decision to assess (6 weeks) and the final EHC Plan being issued (20 weeks). The 'shoulds' that we have included in our 'expected' diagram below reflect the targets we have set ourselves to ensure all assessments are collated in time and that we issue a draft EHC Plan by week 16 of the process at the latest. This then allows enough time to make any amendments and secure an appropriate educational placement, which must be named on the final EHCP.



From the 'Actual' outlined above for 2018 and where we are to date, it can be seen that we have improved our overall timescales with plans now taking on average 20.4 weeks to issue within timescale, a significant improvement on previous performance. Further work is still required as we are taking longer to conduct the assessment than we should be. This is in part to gaps in the Educational Psychologists establishment within the service and is something we are actively tackling with a rigorous recruitment campaign.

Next steps:

- Caseloads are high and stand between 300 and 350 per officer. Shortly, we will be starting a campaign to recruit up to 12 additional officers which will help reduce caseloads to between 180 and 200, more in line with our statistical neighbours.

- We will be launching our Communication strategy this month which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the service to enable children, young people and their families to get the right support at the right time; this includes EHC Co-ordinators, Specialist Teachers and Educational Psychologists.
- Shortly, we will be introducing a multi-agency Quality Assurance process, alongside a training programme to ensure all officers understand what 'good' looks like. This will help improve the quality of assessments and plans.
- Before the end of the year, our Annual Review Strategy will be launched. Smaller caseloads for officers will have a direct impact on updating EHC Plans to ensure they are current and contain the right provision to meet needs, avoiding further complaints and tribunals and ensuring children are placed in appropriate settings in a more timely manner.