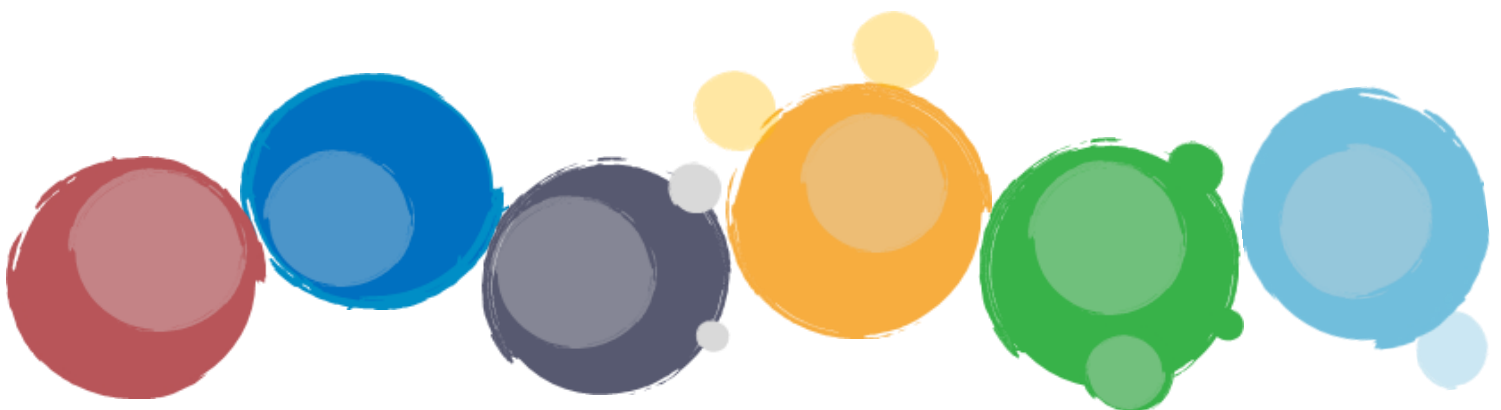




SENDIAS  
HERTFORDSHIRE

# What if I do not agree with decisions about SEN Provision?

*This booklet includes information about what you can do if your child has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability and you are unhappy about the help they are getting.*



# First Steps

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If you are not happy about the help that your child has at school the first step is to talk to their teacher, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) or the headteacher. If you think the school is doing all it can but your child needs even more help, you can ask the local authority for an Education Health and Care needs assessment.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care plan, you can also contact your SEN officer:

***St Albans & Dacorum:***

Email: [stadsendteam@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:stadsendteam@hertfordshire.gov.uk) or Telephone: 01442 454022

***Watford, Three Rivers & Hertsmere:***

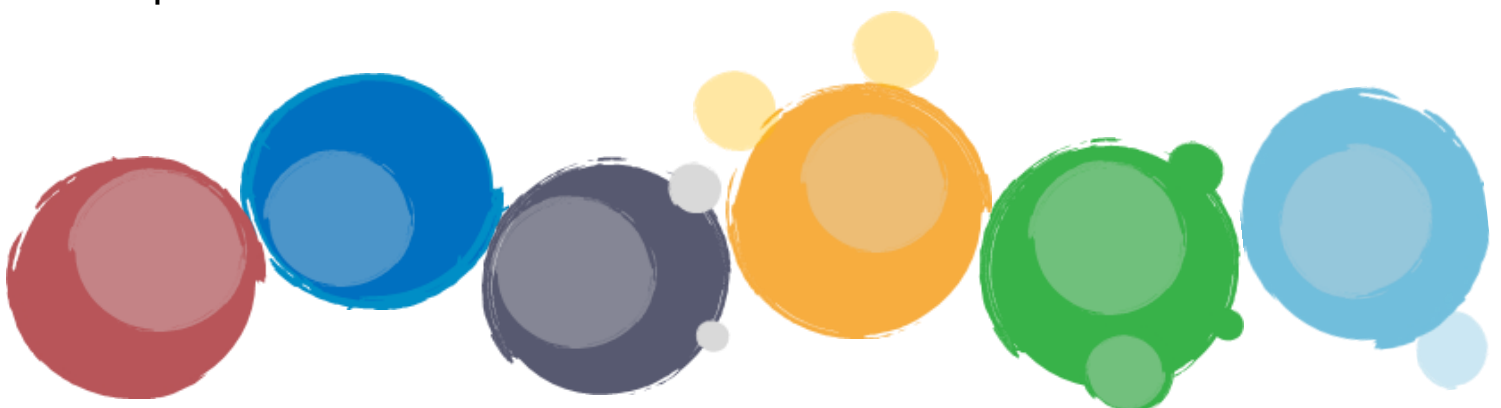
Email: [watfordthreerivers.senteam@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:watfordthreerivers.senteam@hertfordshire.gov.uk) or Telephone: 01442 454012

***North Herts & Stevenage:***

Email: [northhertsstevenage.senteam@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:northhertsstevenage.senteam@hertfordshire.gov.uk) or Telephone: 01438 843758

***East Herts, Broxbourne & Welwyn Hatfield:***

Email: [easthertsbroxbourne@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:easthertsbroxbourne@hertfordshire.gov.uk) or Telephone: 01992 588562



## What Next?

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If you still have a problem, you might be able to:

- seek some help to put your concerns forward
- make a complaint
- ask for independent disagreement resolution or mediation
- appeal against a decision

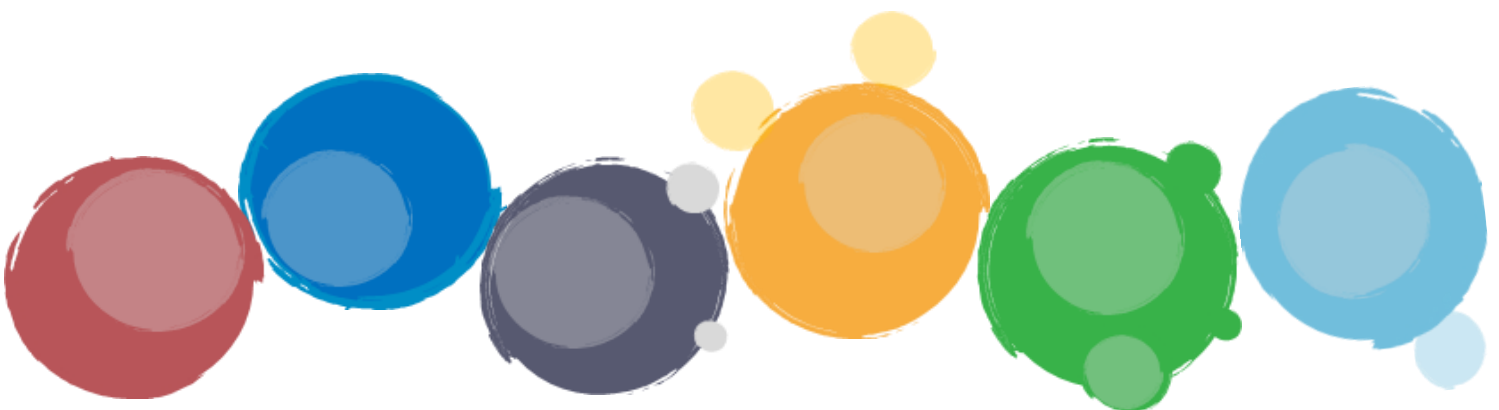
## Seeking Help

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It might be helpful to ask a friend or relative to attend a meeting with you. It is a good idea to keep notes or have records of what the school has done and has told you.

Hertfordshire SENDIASS can give you impartial information and advice about possible ways forward.

Hertfordshire SENDIASS might also be able to offer you independent support or tell you about local or national groups that provide information and advice.



# Making a Complaint

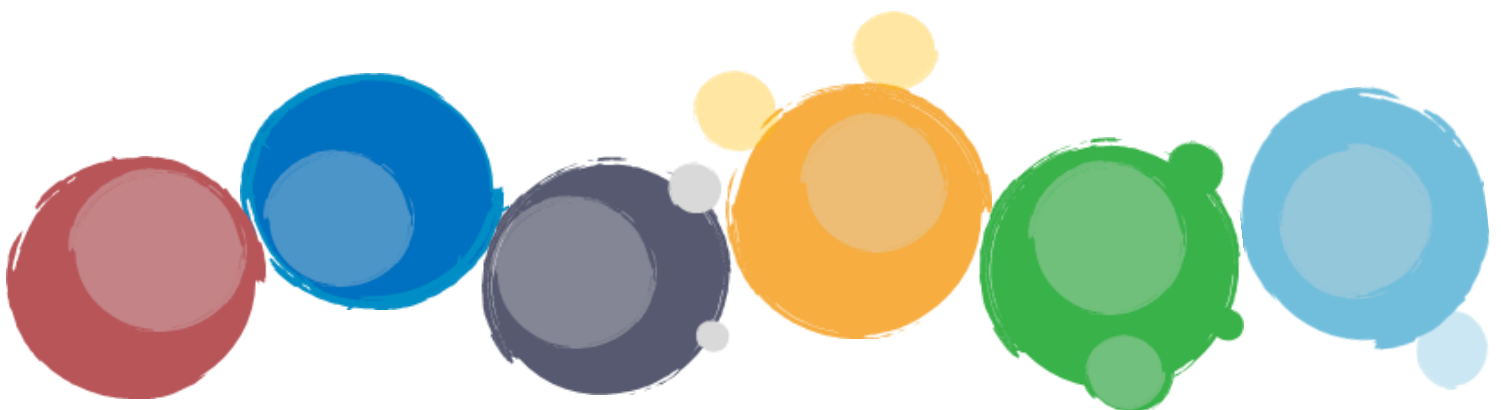
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If you think that the school, college or Hertfordshire County Council could do more, you can complain using their complaints procedure. They will send you a form if you ask for it. You will usually need to:

- have tried to resolve your complaint by speaking to the right people
- put your complaint in writing, using the word 'complaint'
- be clear about all the issues you want resolved
- state what you want to happen
- give a reasonable time by which you would like a response

If you are not happy with the outcome of making a complaint or feel that it has not been dealt with properly Hertfordshire SENDIASS can give you information on what to do next.

You can find out more about complaints procedures in the SEND Code of Practice sections 11.2 and 11.67 to 11.111. If you want help to understand the different procedures, or advice on which to use, please contact Hertfordshire SENDIASS.



# Disagreement Resolution

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Many disagreements can be sorted out by talking with the school, college, local authority, or, for health services, the Clinical Commissioning Group.

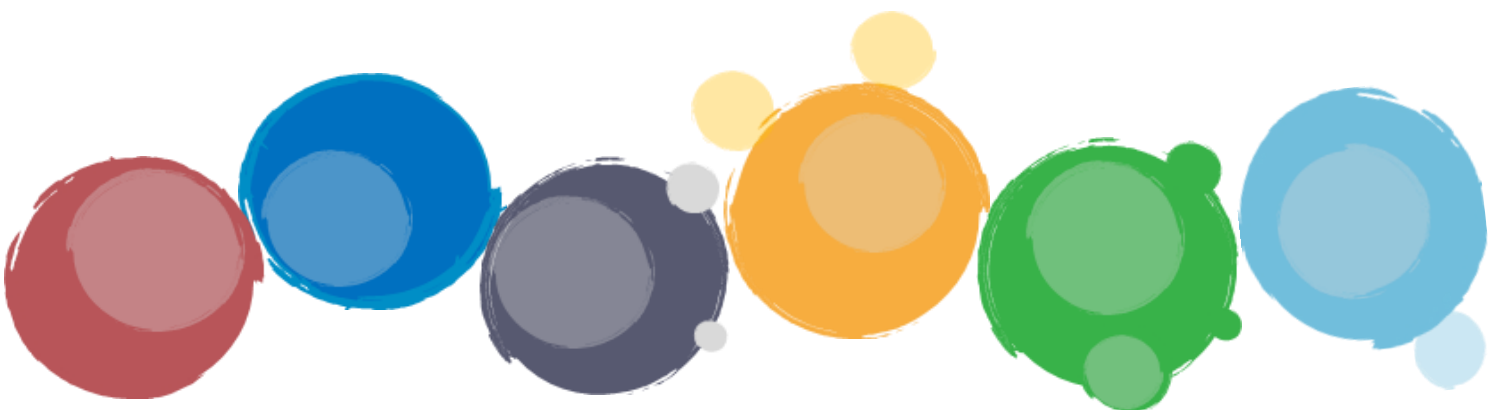
The **SEND Code of Practice** says:

**“Decisions about provision for children and young people with SEN should be made as soon as possible. In most cases this will be achieved by early years providers, schools, colleges, local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) working closely together and agreeing what should be provided with parents and young people” (11.3)**

Sometimes it can be difficult to reach agreement. SENDIASS can help you by providing impartial information, advice and support.

The **SEND Code of Practice** says:

**“Local authorities must make disagreement resolution services available to parents and young people. Use of the disagreement resolution services is voluntary and has to be with the agreement of all parties. The service, while commissioned by it, must be independent of the local authority – no-one who is directly employed by a local authority can provide disagreement resolution services” (11.6)**



Kids Mediation is an independent service that will provide a trained mediator to facilitate a discussion. The purpose is to look for a way forward that all the parties accept. The service is free and confidential - and you can choose whether to use it.

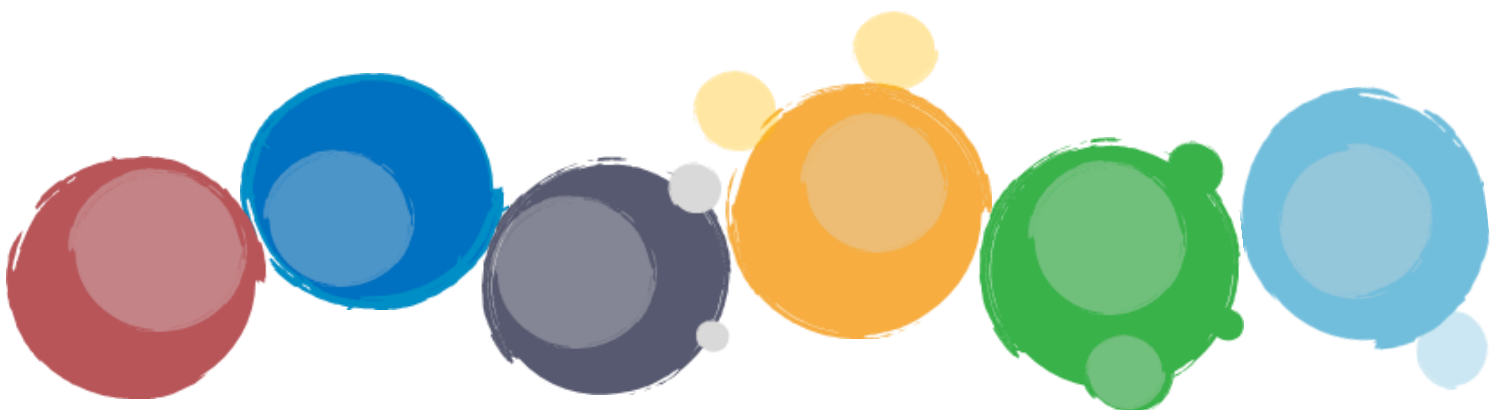
You can contact Kids Mediation by either email or telephone:

Email: [mediationlondon@kids.org.uk](mailto:mediationlondon@kids.org.uk)

Telephone: 0207 359 3635

The disagreement resolution service is there to help resolve three kinds of disagreement between parents or young people and the organisations that are responsible for making provision for children and young people with special educational needs. These are about:

- how early years providers, schools and further education institutions carry out their duties for children and young people with SEN. For local authorities this includes keeping education and care provision under review, assessing needs and drawing up Education, Health and Care plans. For governing bodies and proprietors of schools it includes using their "best endeavours" to meet children and young people's SEN.
- the special educational provision made for a child or young person by early years providers, schools or further education institutions. This includes children and young people receiving **SEN support** and those with EHC plans.
- health or social care provision when this part of an **EHC needs assessment**, while EHC plans are being drawn up, reviewed or when children or young people are being reassessed.



Disagreement resolution services can also be used:

- during EHC needs assessments
- while EHC plans are drawn up
- while waiting for Tribunal appeals
- at review
- during reassessments.

SENDIASS or Kids Mediation can help you decide if independent disagreement resolution is the right way forward. You can find out more about disagreement resolution services in the **SEND Code of Practice** sections 11.6 to 11.10.

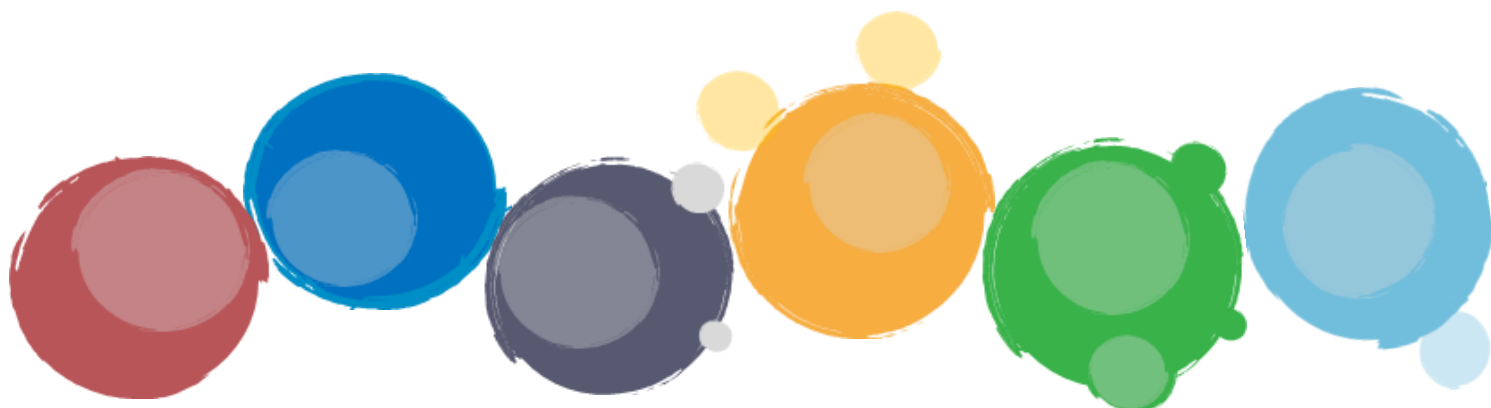
## Disagreement Resolution

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Mediation is a type of disagreement resolution for disagreements that can be appealed to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. The service is free and confidential.

The **SEND Code of Practice** says:

**“If parents and young people want it to, mediation can take place following decisions by a local authority not to carry out an EHC needs assessment, not to draw up an EHC plan, after they receive a final EHC plan or amended plan, following a decision not to amend an EHC plan or a decision to cease to maintain an EHC plan” (11.13)**



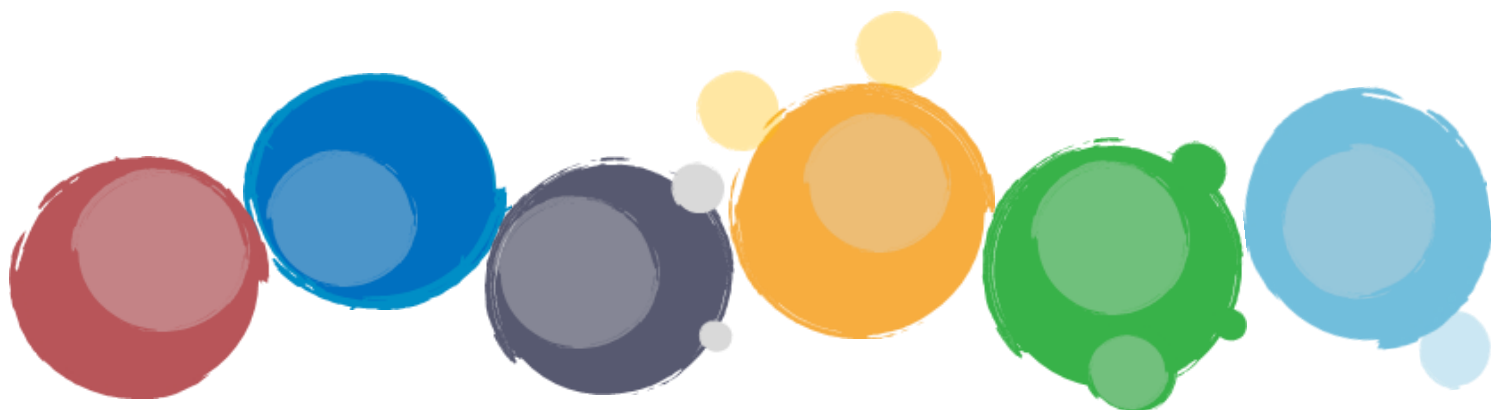
If you wish to register an appeal with the **First Tier Tribunal (SEN and disability)** you first have to consider whether to enter mediation and obtain a certificate saying you have considered it. This is called **mediation advice**.

If you decide not to go into mediation and tell the mediation adviser, they will send you a certificate within 3 working days and you can then register your appeal. You do not have to go into mediation if you do not want to – you only have to consider whether to or not.

Your local authority must tell you about mediation and who to contact for the initial advice when they send you their decision. You must contact the mediation adviser within two months of getting the decision. Your time limit for appealing to the Tribunal is two months from the date of that decision, or one month from the date of the mediation certificate, whichever is the later.

There is one exception to this rule. You do not need to seek. You can register an appeal without considering mediation first if the appeal is only about the name of the school, or college, named on the plan, the type of school or college specified in the plan or the fact that no school or other institution is named.

If you choose mediation the local authority (or Clinical Commissioning Group) must take part. The meeting will be arranged within 30 days.



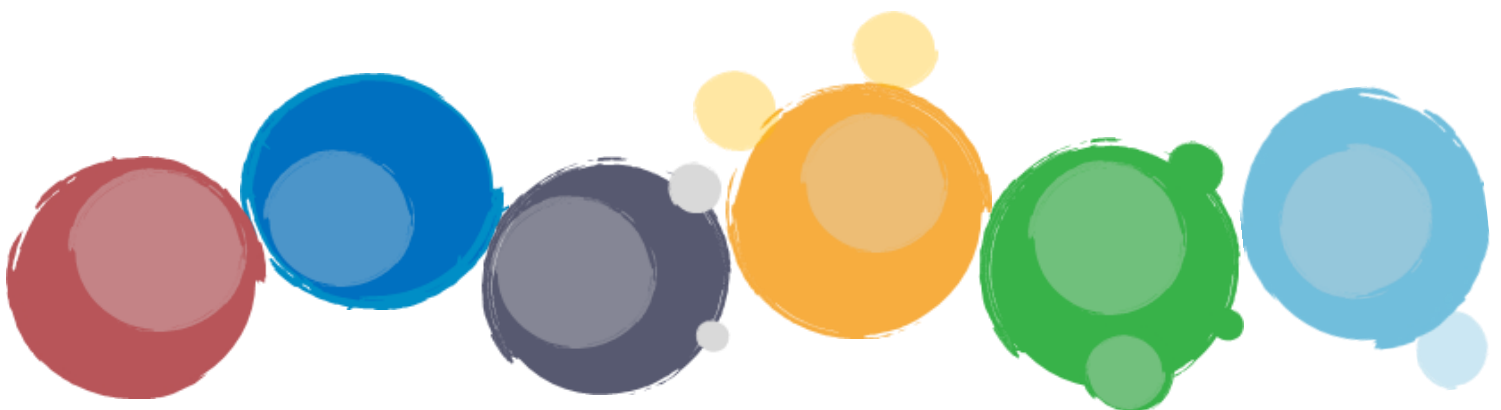


An independent mediator runs the meeting. When the meeting has finished the mediator issues you with a certificate within 3 working days. You need this certificate if you still want to register an appeal with the First Tier Tribunal. Your time limit for appealing to the Tribunal is two months from the date of the decision you disagree with, or one month from the date of the mediation certificate, whichever is the later.

Mediators must be trained and accredited and are independent of the local authority and Clinical Commissioning Group. If you go over the two month deadline for considering mediation, or want to appeal without a certificate, the law says you can still approach the Tribunal to see if you can register your appeal.

SENDIASS or Kids Mediation can help you decide if mediation is the right way forward. You can find out more about mediation in the **SEND Code of Practice** sections 11.13 to 11.38.

Usually you can follow more than one route. For example, you can still make a complaint if you have already tried disagreement resolution. SENDIASS can explain your rights and the different procedures.



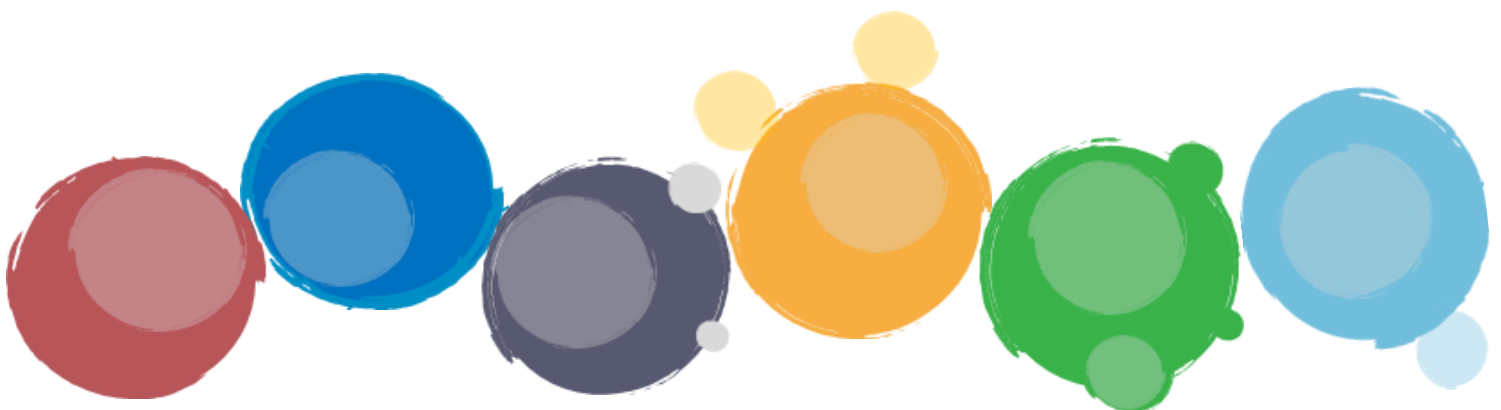
# Appeals

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The **SEND Code of Practice** says that parents and young people can appeal to the Tribunal about:

- “a decision by a local authority not to carry out an EHC needs assessment or re-assessment
- a decision by a local authority that it is not necessary to issue an EHC plan following an assessment
- the description of a child or young person’s SEN specified in an EHC plan,
- the special educational provision specified, the school or other institution or type of school or other institution (such as a mainstream school/college) specified in the plan or that no school or other institution is specified an amendment to these elements of the EHC plan
- a decision by a local authority not to amend an EHC plan following a review or re-assessment a decision by a local authority to cease to maintain an EHC plan” (11.45)

You can find out more about appeals to the Tribunal in the **SEND Code of Practice** sections 11.39 to 11.55. SENDIASS can explain the appeal process to you and provide impartial advice and support.



# How can SENDIASS support me?

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## **We can:**

- listen to your views and concerns
- work with you to explore your options
- help you prepare for meetings
- support you to find the confidence to express your views
- support you with the Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment and planning process
- help with forms, letters and reports
- work in partnership with schools and the local authority to develop positive relationships
- provide information on local policy and practice, personalisation, Personal Budgets, the law on SEN and disability, health and social care
- support on exclusions
- support in resolving disagreements, including mediation and tribunals
- signpost to local or national sources of advice, information and support and the local offer
- provide links to local parent support groups and forums
- provide training on the law relating to SEN and disability

You can contact us on: **01992 555847** or email us at **[sendiass@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@hertfordshire.gov.uk)**

