**What is an individual healthcare plan?**

Individual healthcare plans are documents drawn up involving people who might be required to contribute to a child's care while at school. This could include the head teacher, the class teacher, care or support staff, other staff members who might need to provide medical or emergency care, you and your child. Other people from outside the school might also be involved, depending on the level of your child's needs, such as the GP or school health service.

The plan is intended to set out what sort of support your child needs to participate in school life just like other children. It's a written document that specifies what sort of help the school can provide for your child – for example, what medicines they can administer, and what to do in a medical emergency. Healthcare plans should be kept confidential, but your child's school will need to share the information with anyone who might need to deal with an emergency involving your child (for example, midday supervisors who monitor the dining hall and playground at lunchtime). The headteacher should discuss who will need to see the plan with you (and your child, if they are old enough to understand).

Individual healthcare plans are not the same as education, health and care (EHC) plans, which set out the support needed by children with special educational needs, although some children may have both types of plan.

You and your child's school should agree how often the healthcare plan will be reviewed. It's advised that this happens at least once a year, but it may need to happen more frequently if your child's condition is unstable or their medication changes, for example.

## **Who needs a healthcare plan?**

There's no specific guidance on what sort of medical conditions warrant an individual healthcare plan, and it's up to schools to decide if your child needs one. If your child has a severe or complex medical problem or needs specialist care, a healthcare plan is likely to be essential, but for less complicated conditions, it may not be necessary. Common conditions that might require an individual healthcare plan include asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, allergies and continence issues, although there are many other circumstances in which a child will need a healthcare plan.

Schools are advised to use common sense when deciding whether a child should have a healthcare plan, and should take your views into account. They must also consider each child's case individually – children vary in how they cope with medical conditions, and some may need extra help to manage a condition that another child is able to handle by themselves.

## **What does a healthcare plan include?**

Individual healthcare plans should be as simple and uncomplicated as possible. Schools are free to draw up their own plans, and the level of detail included will depend on each child's needs. However, a good care plan should include:

• Your child's personal details: name, date of birth, class, and ideally a photo to help staff identify them.

• The name of their condition.

• Contact details for both parents or other family members, the GP and their clinic or consultant.

• A description of their condition and the symptoms that affect them.

• Information about your child's daily care requirements: for instance medication (including dose, storage requirements and side effects), dietary requirements, special facilities needed in school (such as access to a disabled toilet), and social and environmental needs (such as extra time between lessons).

• What sort of support your child needs with their daily care, and who at school will administer it.

• What constitutes a medical emergency relating to your child's condition, and what action they should take if it occurs – for example, administering an epipen in the event of an anaphylactic reaction.

• The date of preparation of the plan, and the date when it should be reviewed.

If your child will need to be given medication at school, you should also be asked to fill in a form giving details of their treatment and your permission for staff members to administer it (or for your child to take it themselves, if they are old enough and able to do so).

Many of the charities for conditions that may affect children provide templates for individual healthcare plans, such as Epilepsy Action and Diabetes UK. These can be helpful for both you and your child's school in making sure their needs are identified correctly. You can also find out more about individual healthcare plans in the [Department for Education document, Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638267/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)