



“Continue. Be loving and be strong. Be fierce and be kind. And don’t give in and don’t give up”.

A Guide to Designing Your EOTAS Package

About Me:

Hi! I’m Heidi. My pronouns are she/her. I am a parent to a magnificent son who - due to mental health and SEND needs - was out of school for a period of over 18 months. Eventually, after securing an EHCP, we went to the SEN Tribunal to secure a fully-funded Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) package for my son. We won and my son is now thriving. EOTAS saved my son but I had to learn the hard way how to fight for EOTAS.

I now help other families who are trying to secure EOTAS for their children and young people. As a Neurodivergent parent to an Autistic child I am passionate about making sure our kids don’t fall through the gaps and Local Authorities are held to account in meeting their obligations. I wrote this guide to help families like mine. I hope you find it helpful.

About this Guide:

This guide outlines the process I follow when supporting families in securing EOTAS packages. It is certainly not the only approach but I hope it helps you with getting started on what can be a pretty daunting journey.

Before You Begin

Get a copy of your Local Authority’s EOTAS policy and familiarise yourself with it. You should be able to find this via your Council’s Local Offer online. If you are unable to find it, contact the LA’s SEND team and ask them to send it to you, if they have one. It can also be helpful to request a

copy of their Personal Budgets Policy. A note of caution - many LAs have policies around EOTAS which are unlawful and inaccurate when it comes to meeting the requirements in the SEN Code of Practice. It can be helpful to engage the services of an Advocate with experience of securing EOTAS to help you navigate the sometimes confusing and misleading information produced by LAs.

Areas of Need and Provision

- Consider your reports and pull out all the **needs** identified by professionals. If you already have an EHCP, these should be in Section B. Make a list of all the needs.
- Consider your reports and pull out any **interventions or support** suggested by professionals that will need to be included in your package. If you already have an EHCP, these should be included as provision to meet need in Section F. Make a list of all **provision** to meet need and cross reference it with your identified needs: every need should have a provision listed to meet it.
- If your professionals have identified the need for therapy sessions (ie SLT, Physio, OT or Mental Health) be sure to make sure these are detailed in Section F.
- Areas of need fall into 4 main categories: Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Physical and/ or Sensory Needs. Some needs and provisions may fall under more than one category. It can be useful to note against each need and provision which header they fall under if this has not already been done as part of your EHCP.
- If you feel there are areas of need that have not been identified, it may be useful to consider commissioning additional professional reports - SLT, OT and Educational Psychology reports can all be helpful in securing EOTAs provision.

Outlining Provision in your EOTAS request

- Make a note of any needs that are not already being met by provision, or any that are listed as being met by a provision in a school setting (since EOTAS is other than at school, this provision will need to be replaced in/ rewritten for your EOTAS package). These needs will need to be met by a different provision in your EOTAS.
- Make a list of any activities, tutoring etc that your child already engages in, that you would like to have included in your funded EOTAS package. This can include tutoring, group activities (such as art classes or sport), music lessons, 121 activities (including private lessons and tutoring) and voluntary or paid work (if applicable).
- Ask your existing providers to complete a Supporting Statement and a Budget for

Provision. I have a template you can use for this which is included in my EOTAS Advocacy Package.

- Make a list of any activities your child is interested in which you think would be useful additions to their timetable. Think about how these can be matched to meet the needs you have already identified.

Designing Your EOTAS Curriculum and Timetable

Costing Your Provision

- Begin with a 'dream' timetable. What would you like your child's day to look like? Think about how many hours of each activity would be best for your child. If professionals have already recommended this, use that as a guide. If the activity is new, think about what would best suit your child. Think about who will deliver these sessions - will your child be able to access group activities or do they need 1:1 support? If they are accessing group activities, can they do this without you or will they need to be accompanied by a trusted adult? Note: Although full time is 25 hours a week in a school setting, many children with EOTAS packages will not have or need 25 hours scheduled activity.
- Headings to consider in your EOTAS Curriculum and Timetable outline:

Academic Provision. This could be face to face or online; 1:1 or in a group setting. Depending on the age and needs of your child, you may want core subjects (Literacy and Numeracy) or other subject areas. Some children do not need any academic provision, especially if they are recovering from burnout or school trauma.

Physical activities. These can be a useful addition to an EOTAS package - especially for children who have Sensory or Physical needs. Activities might include team sports and / or solo activities like wall climbing, horse riding or boxing. When thinking about Physical activities it is important to be able to link these to identified needs.

Therapy. This can include provision to meet Speech and Language needs, sessions with an Occupational Therapist, Mental Health therapy and Physiotherapy as recommended by professionals.

Preparation for Adulthood. From year 9 (age 13) children and young people should be encouraged to set the outcomes they want to achieve in the future. These outcomes should be reviewed regularly as someone approaches adulthood and there should be provision for 'Preparation for Adulthood' included in any plan - this falls under the following categories:

Employment - There should be clear, evidence-based employment pathways with opportunities for volunteering, supported internships, traineeships and apprenticeships and good careers advice and guidance to help young people with their decision-making.

Friends, Relationships and Community so that young people have opportunities to spend time with peers and are supported to develop and maintain friendships and relationships.

Independent Living which may include such things as training for independent travel and being able to prepare meals.

Good Health Young people should be supported to manage their own health as they move into adulthood.

Equipment and other costs

Make sure you consider the other things your child will need in order to support their EOTAS package - for example: do they need a Laptop or other technology? Will they need a workspace in the home (desk, chair etc); Equipment needed to access activities? Sensory/ physio equipment for home use? Consumables (ie paper and ink)? Books and other resources? What about Travel? Does your young person need a trusted adult to support them to attend provision outside the home? EOTAS should NOT be delivered by a parent but by trained professionals. Think about anything that has a cost associated (even if you already have these things) and consider requesting a personal budget for this - you can remove it later if needed.

Presenting Your Proposed Plan to the LA

When you have fleshed out the details of the plan you want the LA to consider, it can be helpful to collate a document which includes statements from providers, quotes for provision and a breakdown of the provision you are requesting, although this is not essential. If your request for EOTAS is part of an Annual Review or SEN Tribunal Appeal, ENSURE YOU POPULATE YOUR WORKING DOCUMENT with all of the Provision you are requesting. This should be detailed fully in Section F and the Personal Budget costs should then also be included in Section J. Whilst a Tribunal will not comment on or make rulings on Section J, it is important that costs are detailed and agreed in this section of the Working Document to ensure provision is fully documented and costed in your final plan. Anything you add to the Working Document, needs to be in bold to indicate it as a parental addition.

Negotiating with your LA

Once you have provided the LA with your plan and / or your Working Document, they will give feedback on your requests. Things to know:

- The LA may suggest alternate providers to those you have selected - in this case, it is useful to consider the alternative being offered and consider whether this provider could meet all of the needs outlined.
- Section I of an EHCP should be left blank where an EOTAS package is being awarded.

- An LA may offer a Personal Budget, to be managed by the parent or carer for EOTAS provision, or may make arrangements to pay Providers directly (Direct Payments). Direct Payments do not need to be detailed in Section J.

It can be helpful to have an Advocate support you during this process - EOTAS can feel overwhelming and often by the time parents and carers are at the stage of requesting EOTAS, they have been in the exhausting EHCP process for some time.

A note on Tribunals

It is common that some details of EOTAS plans will need to be decided at the Tribunal. Although this may seem overwhelming, the Tribunal is set up to support families and to hold LAs to account. It can be a stressful process and having the right support is vital.

IPSEA

Ipssea has some very good guides for families, including a section on EOTAS. This is a free resource: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/home-schooling-and-education-otherwise>

Need more help?

Visit my website at www.heidimavir.com for links, resources and information on how EOTAS Matters can support your family.

Take a look at the low cost Webinars we have available at:
<https://eotasmatters.kartra.com/page/webinars>

The Small Print

Please note, I am an Advocate, with extensive experience of supporting families with Neurodivergent children. My area of interest and experience is Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS). I am also passionate about inclusion for LGBTQIA+ Young People. I am not a trained Solicitor or Legal Professional. My role is to help families make informed decisions and become powerful Advocates for their own children. Any guidance or information is offered on this understanding.

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