Step-by-step EHCP process (North Northamptonshire Local Offer)

Below is a clear, practical step-by-step process based on the North Northants Local Offer and national guidance — ready to follow or copy into an email/letter when you're ready.

1) Talk to school / SENCo first

Before you request a statutory EHC needs assessment, speak to the school's SENCo (or the Virtual School / Designated Teacher if relevant). This helps make sure current SEN support is recorded and that the LA sees the evidence of what's already been tried.

2) Who can request an assessment & how to do it

Parents, carers, the young person (if aged 16–25), the school or another professional (doctor, health visitor etc.) can request an EHC needs assessment. Requests are usually made in writing or by using your local authority's online form — include as much supporting evidence as possible.

3) Prepare and attach supporting evidence (before you submit)

Useful documents to include:
• Recent school reports, Individual Education Plan (IEP) / provision maps, Personal Education Plan (PEP) if relevant.
• Any professional reports (Educational Psychologist, SALT, OT, CAMHS, paediatrician).
• A brief parent/carer letter describing: the child's strengths, difficulties, what's been tried, and desired outcomes.
Uploading these with your request will speed things up and reduce delays.

4) LA acknowledgement & first decision (Weeks 0–6)

Once the LA receives your request they will check it and submit it to their assessment panel (SNAP / SEND decision panel). You should be notified of the outcome within **6 weeks** (whether they

Step-by-Step: Applying for EOTAS

1) Start with the EHCP
• Your child must have (or be in the process of getting) an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**.
• EOTAS is only agreed as part of an EHCP because it is an *educational provision*.

2) Gather evidence that school is not suitable
• Keep records of why school (mainstream or specialist) has not worked:
• Attendance issues (e.g. anxiety, refusal, exclusions).
• Reports from CAMHS, Educational Psychologist, GP, therapists.
• SENCo or Headteacher's written reports on why reasonable adjustments have not enabled access.
• The evidence must show that **school is not able to deliver the provision your child requires**.

3) Make a formal request to the LA
• Write to the **SEND team at your Local Authority** (North Northants, in your case).
• State clearly:
"I am requesting EOTAS for my child [name, DOB], under Section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014, on the basis that it is inappropriate for their special educational provision to be made in a school setting."
• Attach your evidence (medical reports, school correspondence, your parent statement).

4) LA considers the request
• The LA must consult with professionals and review whether any school could meet need.
• If they agree, the EHCP will be amended to name **EOTAS provision instead of a school**.
• The EHCP will then specify exactly what the EOTAS looks like (e.g. home tutoring, therapies, online learning, specialist interventions).

5) Final EHCP with EOTAS
• The final EHCP will:
• State **"education other than at school"** in Section I (placement).
• Detail the provision in Section F (the legally binding part).
• Funding will be allocated to deliver the specified provision.

6) If the LA refuses
• Families can:
• Use **mediation** with the LA.
• Appeal to the **SEND Tribunal**, which can order the LA to name EOTAS if the evidence shows no school can meet need.

Evidence statement

Parent Statement Template (for EOTAS request)

Child's Name: [Insert]
Date of Birth: [Insert]
EHCP Reference Number (if known): [Insert]
Parent/Carer Name(s): [Insert]
Date: [Insert]

1. My child's strengths and interests
• [Describe your child positively – e.g. creative, kind, strong memory, good with technology, enjoys art, loves animals, etc.]
• [Mention what helps them feel calm, safe, or motivated.]

2. My child's needs and challenges in school
• [Describe difficulties your child faces in the school environment – e.g. sensory overload, anxiety, meltdowns, refusal, medical issues, bullying, inability to cope with transitions.]
• [Give specific examples of incidents or patterns, such as long periods of absence, exclusions, or deterioration in mental health.]

3. What has already been tried in school
• [List interventions or adjustments attempted – e.g. 1:1 support, quiet space, reduced timetable, specialist unit.]
• [Explain why these did not enable your child to access learning or feel safe.]

4. Impact on my child
• [Describe the emotional, physical, and educational impact – e.g. severe anxiety, panic attacks, regression, refusal to leave the house, loss of confidence, falling behind academically.]
• [Include any professional input, e.g. GP advised child cannot attend school for medical reasons.]

5. Why EOTAS is needed
• [Explain that no school setting can meet your child's needs, and forcing school attendance is damaging.]
• [Describe the type of provision your child would benefit from instead – e.g. home-based tutoring, online learning, therapy, life skills sessions, flexible timetable.]
• [Link this to their strengths and needs from section 1.]

6. Hopes and outcomes

• [State your hopes – e.g. your child will re-engage with learning, build confidence, improve wellbeing, develop skills for independence.]

• [Reassure that you are committed to supporting education at home with the right specialist provision.]

Signature: _____

Parent/Carer Name(s): _____

Evidence Checklist for EOTAS Request

From school
• Copies of **IEPs / Provision Maps / SEN Support Plans**
• **School reports** (academic progress, attendance, behaviour logs)
• Evidence of **reasonable adjustments tried** (reduced timetable, sensory breaks, 1:1 support, quiet room use)
• **Exclusion letters** (fixed term or permanent)
• **Attendance records** showing school refusal or medical absences
• Written statement from SENCo / Headteacher confirming difficulties in school

From professionals
• **Educational Psychologist report**
• **Speech & Language Therapy (SALT)** reports
• **Occupational Therapy (OT)** reports (sensory needs, motor skills)
• **CAMHS letters/reports** (anxiety, mental health difficulties)
• **GP / Paediatrician letters** (confirming that school attendance is impacting health or is not currently appropriate)
• Any private assessment reports (if available)

From family
• **Parent statement** (the template I wrote for you earlier)
• **Child/young person's views** (can be written, drawn, or video-recorded – very powerful)
• Evidence of **impact at home** (e.g. anxiety before school, meltdowns, withdrawal, sleep disruption)

Other useful evidence
• Reports from **Social Care** (if involved)
• **Early Help or safeguarding reports** (if school attendance is causing significant stress/risk)
• Any correspondence with the **Local Authority SEND team** showing previous concerns
• **Independent Advocate / SEN caseworker notes** (if you've had SENDIASS involvement)

Post-Submission EOTAS Timeline

Week 0: Submission
• You send your **EOTAS request and evidence pack** to the SEND team.
• Make sure you keep a copy for yourself and note the date submitted.

Week 1–2: Acknowledgment
• The Local Authority must **acknowledge receipt** of your request.
• They may ask for additional information or clarification.
• If no acknowledgment, follow up to confirm they received your pack.

Week 3–6: Initial Consideration
• LA officers review the evidence to decide whether an **EHCP assessment / EOTAS provision** is appropriate.
• They may consult:
• School (Headteacher / SENCo)
• Professionals (Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, GP, therapists)
• Parent / carer (you)

By Week 6: Decision on Assessment
• The LA must notify you **within 6 weeks** whether they will:
1. **Carry out an EHCP assessment** (including EOTAS), or
2. **Refuse assessment**, with reasons in writing.

Week 6–14: EHCP Assessment (if agreed)
• Professionals gather reports and complete assessments.
• You may be asked to attend meetings or provide additional input.
• The LA drafts the **proposed EHCP**, including Section I placement (EOTAS) and Section F provision.

Week 14–16: Draft EHCP Consultation
• You receive a **draft EHCP** for consultation.
• You can request changes or clarify how provision should be delivered.
• If you disagree, you can:
• Request **mediation**
• Ask for **amendments**
• Appeal to the **SEND Tribunal** if necessary

Week 16–20: Final EHCP Issued
• The LA issues the **final EHCP**, naming EOTAS if approved.
• Funding and provision arrangements should now be in place.

After EHCP Issued
• Provision is implemented according to the plan.
• Annual review takes place to assess progress and make updates.
• You can request an **earlier review** if circumstances change.