

Supporting Your Child: Alternative Provision, Section 19 and EOTAS Explained

Welcome

Every child deserves access to an education that meets their needs. If your child is struggling to attend school, has frequent absences, or their needs cannot be met in a mainstream setting, this guide is here to help. Drawing on real parent experiences, expert advice, and up-to-date guidance, this booklet will walk you through: - Understanding Section 19 and interim provision - The journey to EOTAS (Education Otherwise Than At School) - Your rights, practical steps, and useful templates - How to organise and manage your child's support

Section 1: Understanding Section 19 – Interim & Alternative Provision

What is Section 19?

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 places a legal duty on local authorities to provide suitable education for children who cannot attend school because of illness, exclusion, or other reasons. This applies if your child has missed at least 15 days in an academic year (these do not need to be consecutive and include days when you're called to collect your child early).

What to Do If Your Child Has Frequent Absences

- **Keep records** of all absences, including dates and reasons (even if sent home part-way through the day).
- Once your child has missed 15 days, you can request alternative provision from your Local Authority under Section 19.

Requesting Section 19 Provision – Sample Letter

Dear [Caseworker's Name],

I am writing to request alternative provision for my child, [Child's Name], under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996. [He/she/they] has now missed at least 15 days of school this academic year due to [brief reason]. Please can you confirm the arrangements for suitable education as required by law?

Kind regards,

[Your Name]

What Counts as Suitable Education?

- The curriculum must be broad and balanced, similar to home education guidelines.
- If the LA offers a narrow curriculum, you can challenge this as discriminatory.
- Providers like Little Crafters Boxes offer a diverse range of subjects and activities, helping to ensure a well-rounded education.

Section 19 Absence Log Template

Date	Reason for Absence	Full/Partial Day	School Notified?	Notes
12/09/25	Anxiety, sent home midday	Partial	Yes	Called at 11am
17/09/25	Medical appointment	Full	Yes	

Section 2: The EOTAS Journey – Step-by-Step

What is EOTAS?

Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) is education arranged by the local authority for children whose needs cannot be met in any school or alternative provision. Sometimes written as EOTIS in official documents, EOTAS is not an elective option—it's a solution when all other avenues are exhausted.

Who is Eligible?

- Children with an EHCP whose needs cannot be met in any setting
- Only after all school/alternative options have been tried or considered
- Decided by a panel of professionals (EP, SALT, OT, CAMHS, medical consultants, etc.)

The EOTAS Process

1. **Securing an EHCP:** Obtain an Education, Health and Care Plan that clearly sets out your child's needs.
2. **Demonstrating Unmet Needs:** The LA consults with schools and professionals to see if any can meet your child's needs.
3. **Panel Decision:** If no suitable placement is found, and all professionals agree, the LA may agree to EOTAS. EOTAS can start at any time of year.
4. **Building a Provision Map:** Plan all the support your child needs, link it to EHCP outcomes, and gather quotes.
5. **Panel Review:** Submit your provision map and supporting evidence for panel approval.
6. **Funding & Implementation:** Set up EOTAS accounts, manage spending, keep receipts, and prepare for audits.

EOTAS Timeline Checklist

- ☐ EHCP secured
- ☐ Absences and unmet needs documented
- ☐ All school consultations have come back as unable to meet needs
- ☐ All professional reports gathered

- ☐ Provision map completed
- ☐ Quotes from providers obtained
- ☐ Submission to LA and panel
- ☐ Panel decision received
- ☐ EOTAS account set up
- ☐ Invoices, receipts, and spending log started

Section 3: Building Your Provision Map

A provision map lists every element of support your child needs, linked directly to their EHCP outcomes (Sections E and F). Be as detailed as possible and gather written quotes from each provider.

Provision Map Template

Provision/ Service	Provider Name	Linked EHCP Outcome	Frequency (e.g. hours/ week)	Cost per Session/ Week	Annual Total	Quote Attached ?
TA/ Tutor Support	Jane Smith (TA)	Section E, Outcome 2	15 hrs/week	£30/hr	£17,100	Yes
OT Sessions	Thrive OT Services	Section E, Outcome 4	1 hr/week	£60/hr	£2,280	Yes
Craft Box	Little Crafters	Section E, Outcome 5	Monthly	£30/month	£360	Yes

Panel Preparation Checklist

- ☐ All quotes gathered for each provision/service
 - ☐ Provision map completed and linked to EHCP outcomes
 - ☐ Written justification for each provision (why it meets the child's needs)
 - ☐ Supporting evidence attached (reports, professional recommendations)
 - ☐ Draft emails/letters to LA ready
 - ☐ All documents saved and backed up
-

Section 4: Funding, Payments & Audits

- **Direct Payments:** The LA pays into dedicated EOTAS accounts. Parents pay invoices and keep receipts.
- **Audits:** Keep all receipts and bank statements—unspent funds are returned to the LA.
- **Allowable Expenses:** Each category (e.g., stationery, sensory items) has a maximum spend—anything left over goes back to the LA.
- **Example:** Stationery allowance is usually £200/year. If you spend less, the remainder is returned to the LA.

Funding & Receipt Log Template

Date	Item/Service Purchased	Amount (£)	Paid from (Account)	Receipt Attached?	Notes
05/09/25	Stationery	23.50	Child A EOTAS	Yes	Paper, pens
12/09/25	TA Invoice	450.00	Child B EOTAS	Yes	15 hours
20/09/25	Swimming Lessons	40.00	Child A EOTAS	Yes	4 sessions

Audit & Annual Review Checklist

- ☐ All receipts and invoices for the year are collected
 - ☐ Bank statements for EOTAS accounts are up to date
 - ☐ Unspent funds identified and ready to return to LA
 - ☐ Annual review paperwork submitted (reports, progress updates)
 - ☐ All provision and spending linked back to EHCP outcomes
-

Section 5: Recruiting and Managing Your Team

- **Finding TAs and Therapists:** TAs must be self-employed, have significant SEN experience, and work well with families and professionals.
- **Pay rates:** Typically £30- £50/ hour for TAs.
- **Hours:** 20 to 25 hours/ week is common.
- **Contracts and Accounts:** Each child usually has a dedicated EOTAS account for payments and audits (if you hold the budget). The LA may choose to hold the budget or provide you with a prepaid card with funding on, once approved instead.

Useful Contacts Log Template

Name/ Organisation	Role/Service	Contact Details	Notes
LCB Education	EOTAS Provider	hello@littlecraftersboxes.co.uk, 01526 701214	Main contact
Your local group			
Your LA			

Section 6: Common Challenges & How to Overcome Them

- **Delays and communication black holes:** Funding can be delayed and emails may go unanswered. Escalation may be needed (MPs, councillors, complaints).
 - **Appeals and tribunals:** Most families report needing to appeal or go to tribunal to secure EOTAS.
 - **Organisation:** Keep all paperwork, receipts, and correspondence organised for audits and reviews.
 - **Peer Support:** Join groups like the LCB Education Facebook group for advice, emotional support, and practical tips.
-

Section 7: FAQs

Q: Can EOTAS start at any time of year?

A: Yes, EOTAS can begin whenever all other options have been exhausted and the LA panel agrees.

Q: What happens to unspent funds?

A: Any money left over at the end of the year is returned to the LA.



Education

A: No, EOTAS is only agreed when no suitable school or provision can meet your child's needs.

A: You can challenge this as discriminatory and reference statutory guidance or home education standards.

Absence Log

[illegible]



Provision Map

[illegible]



LCB
Education

[illegible]

Funding & Receipt Log

[illegible]



Contacts Log

[illegible]

Name/ Organisation	Role/ Service	Contact Details	Notes

Section 9: Contact LCB Education

For further support, advice, or to discuss your journey, contact us: - Email:
hello@littlecraftersboxes.co.uk - Phone: 01526 701214 - Website:
www.lcbeducation.co.uk

This booklet is based on publicly available information, supplier experience with the EOTAS process and real parent experiences and up-to-date guidance as of October 2025. For the latest information, always check with your local authority and trusted parent networks.