**Interim Guidance: May 2020**

**Annual Reviews during Covid-19**

The DfE have advised local authorities, schools and other educational settings that we should be making “best endeavours” to maintain operational functions.  Annual reviews should be conducted within their normal cycle that it is, prior to the anniversary of the EHCP.

Settings should consider whether parents/carers and young people are in agreement with continuing with reviews. We suggest that you contact parents to indicate the intention to conduct the review and the methods by which the review will be held.  Parents should be encouraged in the spirit of co-production to suggest ways that their voice and their child’s voice can be captured in the review.  Informed consent should then be recorded.

Face to face contact via video conferencing may be helpful but it is not necessary in all instances.  Annual reviews could be completed by the sharing and consolidation of the key stakeholders’ progress views via written advice and telephone conversations.   This should be recorded in the Annual Review paperwork.

Settings should consider the facilities key advice givers have in order to provide updates and give sufficient opportunity for active professionals to contribute by giving early notification of the annual review date. Advice can be provided in the following ways:-

* + Emails
  + Telephone
  + Written report
  + Video Conferencing – Skype, Microsoft Teams or other familiar/safe systems
  + For a Guide on how to use Microsoft Teams look at the following link: <https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/microsoft-teams-video-training-4f108e54-240b-4351-8084-b1089f0d21d7>

Regardless of ‘attendance’ at the meeting, SENCOs should endeavour to obtain up to date written advice from professionals and the views of child/young person/parent/carer in a timely manner before the meeting is due. The SENCO could then update the plan (using tracked changes) and share this version with parents/carers/young people and professionals through the agreed method. The SENCO should make a note of any further changes and complete the final tracked changes to the EHCP after the meeting.

Following the review, please then submit the annual review paperwork in the usual way to [senteam@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@gateshead.gov.uk)

The SEND Casework Team will keep settings up to date with any further guidance provided by the DfE.

If you require support on any of the SEND processes, please contact the above email address in the first instance. All forms can be found on

https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/2816/Information-for-practitioners