

Gateshead

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Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) Annual Review Process

An Information Leaflet for Parents and Carers

The local authority must review your child's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) every 12 months (if your child is under five years old, reviews must be six monthly).

The purpose of an annual review is to bring together the views of everyone who helps your child:

1. to assess whether the child/young person's educational needs are being met
2. to assess progress towards outcomes within the EHCP
3. to assess whether the provision is still appropriate in meeting the child/young person's educational needs
4. to make recommendations for the Local Authority to consider.

Or to put it in the form of questions:

- Are the child/young person's needs being met?
- Are they making progress?
- Is the support in place and working?
- What are the next steps and aims for the future?

The annual review process

1. Notice

You should be given two weeks' notice of the review date. You have the right to attend, as does your son or daughter if he or she wants to.

2. Collecting information

Before the meeting the school or college will ask for written reports from you, your child's teacher/tutor and any other professionals who know and work with your child. You will be sent a copy of all the views that have been received before the meeting.

3. The Meeting

Usually this will be held at the school your child attends.

People who may be at the review meeting include:

- you, as the parent/carer
- your son or daughter
- a relevant teacher, who may be the child's class teacher or form/year tutor,
- the SENCO, or some other person responsible for the provision of education for the child
- a representative from the placing local authority (if they feel this is required)
- any other person who the child/young person, the parent, educational setting or the local authority consider appropriate (including health and social care practitioners).

The year's progress will be discussed, and the EHC Plan is amended and updated accordingly. You and your child's views, wishes and feelings are considered.

4. The Report

If the meeting is held at school, the headteacher or principal has two weeks after the meeting to prepare a report to the local authority. They will also send a copy to everyone who was invited. This report must set out any amendments that were recommended and note whether everyone at the meeting agreed to them or not.

5. The Decision

Based on the review, your local authority must decide if they are going to maintain the plan without making any changes, amend the plan or end the plan entirely due to the progress your child has made or because the plan is no longer required.

Changes might be made to the EHCP if:

- your child's needs have changed significantly
- the local authority decides that different kinds of additional help are necessary
- your child needs to move to a different school or college.

Annual reviews will not always lead to changes in your child's EHCP.

The LEA have to let you and the school know within four weeks of the review meeting:

- if they aren't going to change anything and

they must tell you about your right to appeal this decision

- if they are going to make changes, they should do that without delay

If the local authority issues a proposed amended EHCP you have the same rights as when the EHCP was first made for resolving disagreements with the local authority and the right to appeal.

Transition reviews

Transitions from one setting to another are always a lot to deal with, and people with special educational needs may find them particularly challenging.

It's important that both your son or daughter and their old and new schools are fully prepared for transition so that the process is as smooth as possible. For this reason and also to give you the opportunity to appeal to tribunal if you're unhappy with the plan – particularly if you're not satisfied with the new school or institution it names – reviews always take place around these points.

The key transfer stages in your child's education are:

- Early years provider to school
- Infant school to junior school
- Primary school to secondary school
- Secondary school to Further Education College

When your child is within 12 months of transferring from one of these stages to another, there always has

to be a review. Any amendments should be made by 15 February of the calendar year your child is due to make the transfer.

If your child is moving from secondary school to post-16 education or an apprenticeship, there should also be a review – in this case, it should happen by 31 March of the calendar year.

Preparing for Adulthood Reviews - Year 9 and onwards

All reviews taking place from year 9 at the latest and onwards must include a focus on preparing for adulthood, including employment, independent living and participation in society. This transition planning must be built into the EHCP and where relevant should include effective planning for young people moving from children's to adult social care and health services.

It is particularly important in these reviews to seek and to record the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person. The review meeting organiser should invite representatives of post-16 institutions to these review meetings, particularly where the child or young person has expressed a desire to attend a particular institution.

Review meetings taking place in year 9 should have a particular focus on considering options and choices for the next phase of education.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How can parents/ carers prepare for the annual review?

A. The most obvious things include:

- Letting the school or college know if you are attending
- Putting the annual review meeting date in your diary
- Completing and sending the parent/ carer views form to the school or college
- Reading the reports and information sent by the school before the meeting
- Do I want to have anyone else with me at the meeting?
- Are any changes needed to the Profile (Part A) of the EHCP?
- Does your child have any particular fears or worries?
- Are there any significant changes in your child's needs?
- What are your main hopes for your child this year?

Here are some further questions for you to think about:

Q. How can children and young people prepare for the annual review?

A. Where your child is able to be involved he/she should be encouraged and assisted to give his/her views about progress made during the previous year. If appropriate, your child should take part in all, or part of, the annual review meeting.

The relevant questions are likely to be very similar to that mentioned above and the parent/ carer views form.

Here are some ways that young people have been supported to prepare:

- Short powerpoint presentations to introduce what matters to them and their aspirations, at the beginning of the meeting.
- Using photographs, symbols or other pictures that describe what they want to say, written up on pre-prepared cards.
- Newer technology such as iBooks can be made and shared.
- Booklets that the young person can complete as part of the curriculum or through dedicated preparation time in school.

The young person needs to know what to expect at the review. Some schools have produced videos for young people to watch, storyboards or other communication.

Q. What if we don't agree with the content of the EHC plan?

A. The type of provision and interventions needed are deliberately described in quite general terms in the EHCP to allow flexibility for each individual educational setting and family to discuss and agree the best approach.

Families may expect schools and other providers to work in a specific way. It is important to take the time to explore the options and to make sure that the reasons for choosing one intervention over another are clear and transparent.

Families may not always agree with a decision that an early year's setting, school or college has made about support.

Parents and carers should first raise this with them and try to reach agreement. If agreement cannot be reached, they can advise you on their procedures for making complaints.

Young people and their families can also approach the local authority's SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service) for help.

The local authority has made arrangements for both disagreement resolution and mediation services to be available. These services are independent of the local authority and can provide you with a quick and informal way of resolving disagreements.

Q. Where can I get advice and support?

A. If parents, carers or young people require help or need advice, they can contact the local Special Education Needs Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) where they live. This is a free service. Details of the service can be found in the Local Offer.

<https://barnardosendiass.org.uk/gateshead-sendiass/>