

Preparing for an Annual Review of an EHC plan

Guidance for schools, colleges, and other educational settings



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Introduction

The Annual Review of an EHC Plan is a process, not a meeting. It comprises what happens before, during and after an Annual Review meeting. The process from the point of having an Annual Review can take up to 12 weeks.

This guidance is provided to assist schools in planning for and managing the Annual Review meeting. It includes brief guidance on particular considerations for very young children, and those in Year 9 and above, and then goes on to describe the process that should be followed. Additional information is also provided on preparing for adulthood and person-centred approaches which we hope you will find helpful.

Attendance at Annual Review meetings

Unfortunately SEND Caseworkers are unable to attend every Annual Review meeting. However, if the Review is likely to be contentious, or you know that a change of placement or provision is likely to be requested, you should contact the SEN Caseworker or relevant SEND Team separately and with plenty of notice to invite them to the meeting. The role of a SEND Caseworker at an Annual Review meeting is to gather information. They will not be able to make decisions at the meeting.

Specialist Teachers and Educational Psychologists are also part of the SEND Service and, if one of them is attending, it is not always necessary to ask a SEND Caseworker to attend.

Advising the Authority that a meeting will be held is not the same as inviting someone from the Local Authority to attend. If you want someone from the SEND Service to attend the meeting, please make this request specific and provide plenty of notice.

Similarly, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists are unable to attend every Annual Review meeting. In most cases an updated report which

includes a review of the child or young person's progress towards meeting their outcomes or therapy targets is sufficient to contribute to the Annual Review.

Timing of the Annual Review meeting

After the issue of a child or young person's very first EHC Plan only, the Annual Review meeting should take place within 9 months of the date of the EHC Plan. This is because the statutory Annual Review process, which must be completed within 12 months of the date of the Final Plan, can take up to 12 weeks following the Annual Review meeting.

Subsequent Annual Review meetings should take place within 12 months of the first Annual Review meeting to ensure that the Local Authority is able to complete the 12 weeks process within 12 months of the previous Annual Review process having been completed.

Children under the age of 5 years

Although it is referred to as an Annual Review, children under the age of 5 must have their EHC Plans reviewed every 6 months, although the same process applies.

Children in Years 5 and 6

Please note that children in Year 6 always need to have an Annual Review even if a Review was held in Year 5.

If an Annual Review meeting is held in the summer term of Year 5 then the Annual Review for Year 6 will be due 12 months later, in the summer term of Year 6. This can be combined with transition planning with the new school attending the Annual Review meeting, and schools can hold this Annual Review meeting earlier than the due date to include transition planning with the new school if they wish to.

If an Annual Review meeting has not been held in the summer term of Year 5, this must be held in the first half of the autumn term of Year 6 to inform phase transfer. This will ensure that sufficient time is

available afterwards to make consultations to potential new placements.

It is not often possible to include transition planning with the new school or setting at this time, since the name of the school is not usually known before February in year 6. In this case it is good practice to hold a separate transition planning meeting in the summer term before the child or young person transfers to the new school/setting.

Young People in Year 9 and onwards (Preparation for Adulthood)

Please note that young people in Years 11 and 13, and in the last year of a stage or phase of education, always need to have an Annual Review even if a Review was held in Years 10 or 12 or otherwise in the academic year before the last one in their current phase of education or training .

If an Annual Review meeting is held in the summer term of Years 10 or 12 or otherwise in the summer term before the young person's final year in a stage of education or training, then the Annual Review for Years 11, 13 or the final year in that phase of education or training will be due 12 months later, in the summer term of Year 11, 13 and so on. This can be combined with transition planning with the new school or setting attending the Annual Review meeting, and schools can hold this Annual Review meeting earlier than the due date to include transition planning with the new school if they wish to.

If an Annual Review meeting has not been held in the summer term of the academic year before the young person's final year in that phase of education or training, this must be held in the first half of the autumn term of the final year of their current phase of education. This is to inform phase transfer, ensure sufficient time to make consultations to potential new placements, and provides additional time for planning for the transition to adulthood, where appropriate, if this has not been fully completed as an outcome of the previous Annual Review.

Preparation for Adulthood

The Annual Review in Year 9 and subsequent reviews until the young person leaves school must include the drawing up and subsequent review of a transition plan. The plan should draw information from a range of individuals within and beyond school in order to plan for the young person's transition to adult life. The plan should address ongoing school provision within the terms of the EHC Plan and post-school arrangements.

The views of young people must be sought and recorded in reports provided for Annual Reviews and transition plans. Vocational guidance provided by the school or careers adviser should include information on Key Stage 4 and post-16 options, and fully take into account the young person's aspirations.

The school remains responsible for convening Annual Review meetings and updating the transition plan until the pupil leaves school. At the Year 10 Annual Review meeting, consideration should be given to Post-16 options in preparation for the young person's final year at school. In order that they make an informed choice in Year 11, the transition plan should map out the pathway to allow them to work towards their goals and aspirations for education and training. Every effort should be made to link the Annual Review of their EHC Plan and the transition plan to maintain a holistic approach.

Please see additional guidance specific to this age group provided separately- 'PfA Outcomes Across the Age Ranges.'

Request for a move to a special school

The Report of the Annual Review summary form asks whether a move to special school is requested. Please note that all children have a right to a mainstream education, and any request for a special school cannot be considered unless this is parental preference. If the Parents or young person have not requested to move to a specialist provision, then no request for this should be recorded in the Report of the Annual Review form.

Where a move to special school is requested, the Local Authority would normally expect to see updated external professional advice, evidence that this has been implemented, and a review of progress as a result of the professional recommendations being implemented.

The Annual Review Process

To ensure that all the relevant information is gathered prior to the Annual Review meeting taking place, and to comply with the Children and Families Act and SEND Code of Practice, certain actions must be taken prior to the Annual Review meeting. The timetable below gives schools and other setting a process to follow to support them in preparing for the Annual Review meeting.

As reviews will need to be conducted for all relevant children and young people at some time during the year, it is advisable for schools to plan for these reviews early, at the beginning of the autumn term, including making arrangements for the gathering of information and setting meetings.

It is very important that up to date advice is provided for Annual Reviews in Years 5/6, 10/11 and 12/13 in particular as this will contribute to the Phase Transfer process when the Local Authority initiates this.

When	Action
At least 2 weeks before the start of each term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="596 1151 1374 1518">• The Local Authority provides a list of all children and young people who will require an Annual Review of their EHC Plans that term to all Headteachers and Principals of schools, colleges, and other institutions, and to the CCG and Local Authority officers responsible for social care for children and young people with SEN or disabilities.
Beginning of Autumn term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="596 1606 1385 1910">• All children and young people with an EHC Plan will need to have an Annual Review of their Plan during the academic year. The Local Authority will contact schools and other education providers at the beginning of each term to let them know which Plans need to be reviewed that term.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school/setting makes arrangements for the gathering of information and setting meetings. • Contact all relevant parties to set date for Review meeting if not already set. Schools/settings can hold the Annual Review meeting earlier than the due date to avoid particular times such as exams time, but should not arrange the meeting to happen at a date after it is due. • Advise the Local Authority what date the meeting is to be held by email to the relevant address given at the end of this guidance.
Beginning of Autumn term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile a list of reports that are already available and relevant. • Establish what updated reports/assessments are required and let the relevant professionals know that updated reports/advice will be required for the Review meeting and that these should be sent to the school/setting at least 3 weeks before the meeting. • A Report Audit Form has been provided to help you keep track of what reports have been need, requested and received. You can use this tracker for each individual child or for multiple children and there are 2 versions that you can choose from depending on which you find most helpful. You do not have to use this tracker but you may find it helpful to do so.

- School/setting sends the 'Professionals Report for an Annual Review of an EHC Plan' form to all professionals involved *except SLTs and OTs within Whittington Health*, and asks them to complete and return this to the school/setting to be received at least 3 weeks before the meeting and to attend the person-centred review meeting.

Relevant professionals may include, where appropriate, Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist/Physiotherapist, Social Worker, other medical practitioners involved and so on.

For SLTs and OTs within Whittington Health ONLY, please notify them as early as possible of the date of the Annual Review meeting and let them know the date on which you need them to provide their report (we suggest at least 3 weeks before the meeting).

- Professionals across education, health and care must co-operate with Local Authorities during Reviews. These professionals may wish to see the child or young person before providing an updated report/assessment. This is why we ask that school/settings alert external professionals to the date of the Review meeting well in advance so that they can ensure they have time to provide updated information if required for the Review.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals can see details of the kind of information required by looking at the form you send them (Professionals' Report for Annual Reviews).
8 weeks before the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school/setting considers the documents used for collecting the views of parent/carers/children and young people in light of their age, developmental stage, special educational needs, or other needs, to ensure a person-centred approach to collecting this information. The school/setting then makes any required adaptations to the layout, wording, or the way that the information is collected to ensure accessibility. • The school sends the following to the parents and young person, adapted as required above where necessary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Formal invitation to the Review meeting; ✓ The parent/carer views form and the child and the child and young person's views form to the young person. School/settings may wish to adapt these forms to the needs of the individuals concerned. • The school/setting arranges for the child/young person to complete the Child and Young Persons' Views form or to give their views in whatever way is most comfortable and accessible for them. If necessary, school/setting supports the child/young person to complete the child/young person's views. Young people must also be given

	<p>information about how to get independent support for this.</p>
<p>6 weeks before the meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school/setting should ask the Parent/carer and young person which additional people they would like to come to the review meeting and invite them. • School/setting requests any internal information required, for example from subject teachers, course tutors, support staff through school systems such as 'round robin' or similar. • School/setting collates attainment /progress data over last 3 years and other information required in the Setting Advice for an Annual Review template. • School/setting analyses the school/setting information gathered and completes the Setting Advice for an Annual Review template with this information.
<p>4 weeks before the meeting</p>	<p>By this date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and young people have returned their completed views to the school/setting; • The school has supported children/young people to provide their views; • Professionals have returned updated reports/assessments/advice to the school/setting

	<p>and advised whether they will attend the Review meeting.</p> <p>If any documents have not been returned to the school/setting, this should be followed up.</p>
3 weeks before the meeting	<p>School/setting collates the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The views of the child/young person; • The views of the parent/carer; • All updated reports / assessments / advice; • The school/setting advice/report • Attainment data and other documents that have informed the School/setting Summary Advice; • A review of the special educational needs support such as a costed provision map, IEP or similar.
At least two weeks before the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school/setting sends all the collated information, with a letter confirming the date of the meeting and details of who will be attending, to the following people: <p>a) the parents/young person;</p> <p>b) the Local Authority; and</p> <p>c) all those invited to the meeting.</p>
Meeting date	<p>The meeting is held. The Report of the Annual Review meeting is designed so that you can use it to record notes of the meeting as the meeting is being held.</p>

<p>Within two weeks of the meeting being held</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school/setting completes the Report of the Annual Review of an EHC Plan meeting and sends this with all documents collated to the Parents/carers, young person, and the Local Authority. • If the 2 weeks falls within a school holiday period, the school must send the documents before the school holiday begins.
<p>Next steps</p>	<p>The Local Authority will consider all the information provided with the Annual Review documents and decide whether to amend the EHC Plan. It will issue its decision within 4 weeks of the meeting taking place and conclude the Annual Review process within 12 weeks of the meeting being held.</p>

All communications and documents regarding Annual Reviews should please be sent to the following email addresses:

<p>For children in Early years and up to and including Year 5 - SENDETeam1@haringey.gov.uk</p>
<p>For children in years 6 to 11- SENDETeam2@haringey.gov.uk</p>
<p>For young people in year 12 onwards – SENDETeam3@haringey.gov.uk</p>