

## **Annual Review Guide for SENCO's**

*“EHC plans should be used to actively monitor children and young people’s progress towards their outcomes and longer term aspirations. An EHCP must be reviewed by the local authority as a minimum every 12 months. Reviews must focus on the child or young person’s progress towards achieving the outcomes specified in the EHC plan. The review must also consider whether these outcomes and supporting targets remain appropriate” (SEND Code of Practice 9.166)*

### **What is an annual review?**

An annual review is an opportunity to come together and celebrate the success of a child or young person.

They are normally led and chaired by the nursery, school or college who know the child or young person best, and then other professionals who are involved will be invited (such as Speech and Language Therapists, Social Workers). Professionals may not attend every annual review but should try and contribute with an update and/or report if they are not able to attend.

Schools should consider whether it is necessary to have all professionals attend the meeting and how valuable the contribution will be. It can be daunting for parents, children and young people to enter a room with a large number of people, and sometimes professionals cannot add much in addition to their reports.

The annual review will review all of the information in the most recent EHCP, this includes strengths, needs, outcomes, progress towards outcomes, and provision. If things need to be amended, the annual review chair will advise the Local Authority of this when they send the paperwork following the meeting and the Local Authority will then consider the suggested amendments.

### **What happens before the meeting?**

The annual review chair (normally nursery, school or college) must invite everyone at least two weeks prior to the meeting. This is a statutory requirement to give at least two weeks' notice, but you should try to work with key people (such as parents, children, young people and key professionals) in advance to arrange a date and time that works for most people to ensure a meaningful meeting.

You need to send pre-review paperwork to parents, professionals and the Local Authority at least two weeks before the review takes place.

You should encourage parents, children and young people to read this before the meeting, as well as the current EHCP so they can consider whether they think any changes are needed.

It is important to remember that you are reviewing the EHCP, not the last review, so you should always be referencing the latest EHCP.

Parents must be given the opportunity to complete a parent views form and share their views throughout the annual review. Their views are important to the process, so please encourage them to speak openly.

The child or young person should be offered the opportunity to attend all, part or none of the review (it is up to them) and share their views in a way that feels comfortable for them.

Their views can be captured in a range of ways, from drawing a picture, to answering questions with support from an adult, to recording a video, to attending their whole review. It is about making sure they are involved in decision making and their review as much as they are confident to and feel able to.

### **What should I think about before the meeting?**

- Read through the most recent version of the EHCP. Does this still represent the child young person? Would someone who doesn't know them understand their strengths, needs and targets from reading it?
- If not, what changes do you think are needed?
- If there are any professionals involved (e.g. SALT, OT, Physiotherapy, medical professionals), do you have updated reports? Please get these to include within the paperwork.
- Are there any important updates in their life over the last year that professionals need to know about? This may include diagnoses, change in home circumstances, significant life events
- Is the child or young person due to transition to a new setting in the next two years? (e.g. if they are a Year 5 or Year 10) Start thinking about next steps as you should consider this at least two years ahead, the Local Authority discussions with next schools and colleges starts from September of their final year. What schools or colleges might they want to consider? Have the family visited them? What is the child or young person interested in? Have they had careers advice? Do they have any questions?

- What would you the child or young person like to achieve in the future? Sometimes we need to think further ahead to help us plan the stepping stones in between, what about when they are 25? Where do they want to be? What help might they need to achieve this?

### Pre-review checklist

- Pre-paperwork is populated using the most recent EHCP
- Confirm with the family if there are any new professionals involved so that they can be invited
- Pre-paperwork shared to all professionals, family and the SEND EHC Team, at least 2 weeks before the meeting date
- Family, child and young person view forms are sent to them so they can complete these ahead of the review
- Child/young person is invited and knows what to expect. Discuss with them if they would like to attend all, part or none of the review. Make sure they know they can still share their views.
- Parents invited and know what to expect
- Professionals invited and asked to submit reports if not attending

### **What happens at the meeting?**

At the meeting you will work through the annual review document to review each section of the EHCP.

The school, nursery or college will share their views on the child/young person's progress, and parents and child/young person must also be given the opportunity to share their views. The child/young person may be in attendance or share their views through other methods, depending on what they prefer. Maybe you want to ask them if they want to share their views verbally and speak at the beginning of the meeting so it is clear that they are central to the process. They should know that they can leave the meeting at any time. Maybe agree a signal that they can use to indicate they wish to leave.

It will be a chance to celebrate their achievements and think about their next steps. You can discuss future schools/colleges if they are due to transition or if the school placement is no longer suitable.

You can amend their strengths and needs; try to think about what strengths and skills they have developed as well as considering their needs.

You may amend their outcomes (targets) if they have achieved or partially achieved them, so that they are applicable to their new goals, making sure that new outcomes are SMART.

**It is important that a review celebrates their progress and strengths, as well as considering their needs and future support.**

It is important parents and young people are involved throughout the process, so that their views are captured in the annual review paperwork.

### **During the review checklist**

- Child/young person's views are collected and central to the meeting
- Celebrations of what the child/young person has achieved – no matter how big or small these steps are
- Outcomes have been reviewed and amended where needed (make sure they are SMART and co-produced with the family and child/young person)
- What do they want to achieve in the future? How can we help them get there?
- Information across all sections has been reviewed and updated (old information removed, new information added) based on the most recent EHCP (not the last annual review)
- Parents and child/young person understand what has been discussed and agreed at the meeting
- Clear timescales and actions agreed at the end of the meeting
- Relevant sections are thoroughly completed with appropriate evidence, e.g. change of funding if applicable



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### **What happens after the meeting? Including timescales for decisions**

The annual review chair will send the paperwork to the Local Authority (Hillingdon SEND Team) within 2 weeks of the date of the review whilst also sending a copy to the family.

Within 4 weeks of the date of the review, the SEND Team will advise if they are maintaining the plan (not making any changes), ceasing the plan (stopping the plan – e.g. if leaving education or met all their outcomes) or amending the plan (editing any part of the plan).

The SEND Team do not have capacity to amend every EHCP every year, so will make an informed decision based on the paperwork, stage of education and how significant the changes are.

**If maintaining the plan:** Parent/young person and setting will get a letter advising of this which includes a right of appeal for the parent/young person.

**If ceasing the plan:** Parent/young person and setting will get a propose to cease letter advising this, parent/young person will have at least 15 days to respond to the letter if they disagree. After the 15 days, if the cease goes ahead, parent/young person will be provided with a cease letter which provides their right of appeal if they do not agree with the decision.

**If amending the plan:** Parent/young person and setting will be sent a draft amended plan within 4 weeks of the annual review. Parent/young person and setting have 15 days to review the plan and let us know you are happy with it, or if you have any further proposed changes.

If you are requesting a change of placement outside of the traditional phase transfers (e.g. for immediate transfer) then we will need to send consultations (the child/young person's paperwork) to parental/young person preference schools and colleges and will also send Local Authority option consultations. Please give us parental/young person preferences as soon as possible, to not delay the process.

The SEND EHC Team are legally required to give schools and colleges 15 days to respond to the consultation, they will then advise whether they can meet the needs of the young person and offer them a place.

We will keep you updated on any responses. Some changes may need to go to our SEND Panel for consideration, but we will advise if this is the case.

Special schools, SRP's and DU's are significantly oversubscribed, if no offers are made this may mean you continue to be named.

Within 12 weeks of the annual review, we will send a final amended plan.

### **After the review checklist**

- Paperwork complete in all sections
- If the child/young person did not attend all of the review, explain to them what has been discussed so that they are aware of decisions being made and their views can be incorporated
- All necessary supporting documents and completed paperwork sent to the LA and family within 2 weeks of the review





- Expect a decision from the LA about whether to maintain, amend or cease within 4 weeks of the review date

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## Children/Young Peoples Participation in Reviews

Children/young people should never have decisions made about them in reviews without them knowing what is happening and should be involved as much as possible. Our children and young people say, “**no decision about us, without us**”.

- Where is the review? Please be as specific as which room! If they’ve never been there before, can you show them?
- Will it be online?
- Who else is attending the review? (Would they like to see a photo of them and/or know about them beforehand)
- What can they expect? Show them our young people’s review guide!
- Give them as much notice as possible – not just the day before!
- How much, if any, of the review do they want to attend?
- How would they like to share their views?

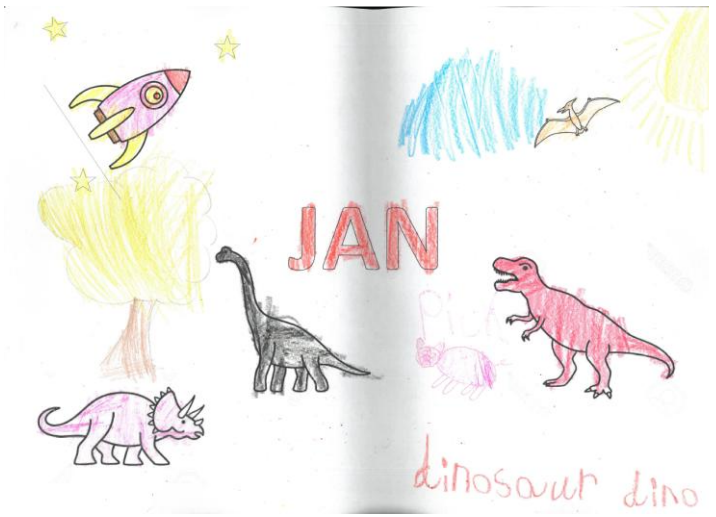
### Collecting Views

Depending on the age, ability and wishes of the young person, views can be collected in a range of ways. It is an important way for us to capture the child/young person’s voice and really help us capture the individual nature of the child/young person.

Here is an example of a primary child’s views, this is a great example of how even non-conventional views can really help us understand the child as an individual!

Here are some ideas for ranges of ways children/young people can share their views and participate in their review:

- Using visuals or communication aids to share views
- Completing a views form, independently or with support
- Doing a presentation about themselves at their review
- Recording a video about themselves before their review
- Drawing pictures of their favourite things, dream school or what they want to be like when they’re older
- Writing a letter about what they want
- Attending all of the review and sharing their views throughout
- Attending part of the review



Jan met with the EHCCo and did some colouring and drawing (picture above). Jan loves dinosaurs and was able to name all the dinosaurs. He said red was his favourite colour and his favourite dinosaur is the T-Rex. He drew a tree for one dinosaur to eat and the pig for the T-Rex to eat, he pointed to the T-Rex’s tummy and said “yummy!”

Jan said he also likes mammals. He explained there was a bang down on the dinosaurs and then there was the ice age.

Jan had designed his own house the day before at school and said he had drawn a castle for his house and it also had a dragon!

- Submitting views beforehand and then meeting with the SENCO afterwards to discuss what was agreed at the review

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## Preparing for Adulthood

*“Being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life-transforming for children and young people with SEN. This support needs to start early and **should centre around the child or young person’s own aspirations, interests and needs**. All professionals working with them should **share high aspirations** and have a good understanding of **what support is effective in enabling children and young people to achieve their ambitions**.” - SEND Code of Practice (7.37)*

From Year 9 onwards it is a requirement that young people are supported to prepare for adulthood; however this can often start earlier.

Preparing for adulthood means preparing for:

- **higher education and/or employment** – this includes exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies
- **independent living** – this means young people having choice, control and freedom over their lives and the support they have, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living
- **participating in society**, including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community
- being as **healthy** as possible in adult life

(SEND Code of Practice 7.38)

In practice, this means discussing how the 4 key areas of preparing for adulthood can support young people, show how ready they are and what support they need in the future.

This will mean different things for everyone, depending on their age, stage, ability and aspirations, but the goal is to know what they want and ensure they are supported.

We have devised some prompts to help you think about these areas:

### **Employment**

- How can they be supported into employment?
- What would meaningful employment mean to them? (This may include voluntary or paid work)
- How far on the path to employment are they?
- What areas of employment are they interested in? Are there any areas they are definitely not interested in? (Sometimes its easier to know what you don't want to do, than what you do!)
- What qualifications and/or skills do they need to build on?
- Have they had careers advice?
- Do they have an up-to-date CV?
- Is the curriculum supporting them to develop skills needed for these areas?
- Do they need support from any external services? (e.g. SEND specific job finding support, interview training, Access to Work)



### Independent Living

- Where does the young person want to live when they are older?
- Where do parents want them to live when they are older?
- Have they learnt skills at school/college or home to support them to live independently?
- Are they going to need support to be independent and build on those skills longer than the EHCP will offer?
- Do they need information on what different types of support can look like? (e.g. supported living, housing registers)
- Have they got a social worker? If not, this may be worth considering for longer term support

### Community Inclusion

- Do they have a circle of friends and socialise inside and outside of education?
- Do they participate in any community activities? Would they like to?
- What things do they do outside of school?
- How else can they be involved in the community?
- What clubs and external services are there to help them broaden their community involvement?

### Health

- Are they currently involved in their health appointments?
- How can we make sure they are involved in their health appointments?
- What support might they need to be involved with their own health? E.g. easy read information
- Are parents and young people aware of the transition to Adult Health at the age of 18?
- Do they understand what a healthy lifestyle is?
- Are they aware of annual health checks being available?
- Are any of their physical and mental health needs currently not met? What support do they need?

Remember, we are working towards a long-term goal. Though it may be daunting, try to consider where we want the young person to be when they are 25, 30 years old this can help them plan a pathway of how to achieve this.

Remember the young person's views and aspirations are central to this process – they need to be engaged with the pathway and involved in decision making as much as possible.

If you are working with young people coming to the end of their educational journey, it is particularly important that your annual review includes good exit education and it is considered what support they will need to move onto their next steps (e.g. higher education, employment and adult care).



## Suggesting amendments throughout the EHCP and writing outcomes

When reviewing an EHCP one of the most important things to consider is: Would someone who has never met this young person, get a good understanding of them from the EHCP?

As someone who knows them well, it is really important that you share where there are updates and refer to the most recent final EHCP.

Updates may include removing old information which is outdated or no longer age appropriate, not just adding more information into the EHCP.

EHCP's and annual review paperwork are what are considered when a case comes to a Local Authority SEND Panel, or when consulting with another setting. If this does not accurately reflect the young person, then we will not have all the information we need to make an informed decision.

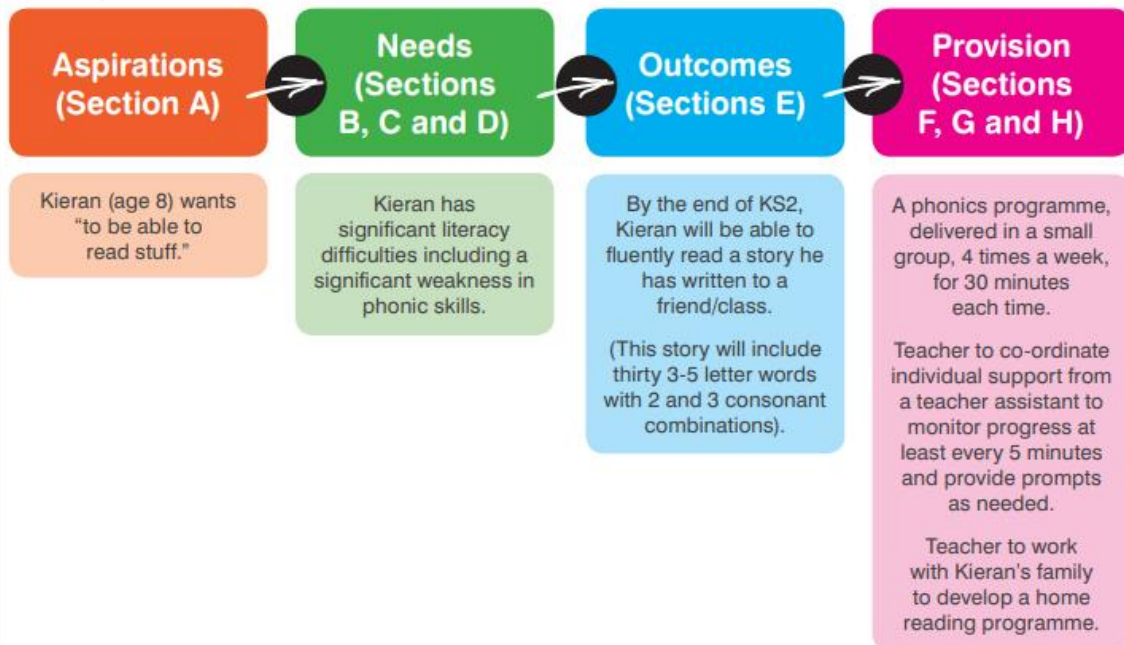
By working together to ensure the EHCP's are thoroughly reviewed and updated, we can support you and the young person to ensure the right support is in place.

It is important that the golden thread is followed throughout an EHCP, so it also important you understand this when suggesting amendments.

### The Golden Thread

There should be clear link in the plan between Aspirations (Section A), Needs (Section B, C & D), Outcomes (section E) and Provision (Section F,G and H).

An example of this would be:



It is important that the considerations follow throughout the annual review. For example, if you are requesting additional funding, we would expect to see a change in need which reflects the need for different provision and funding.

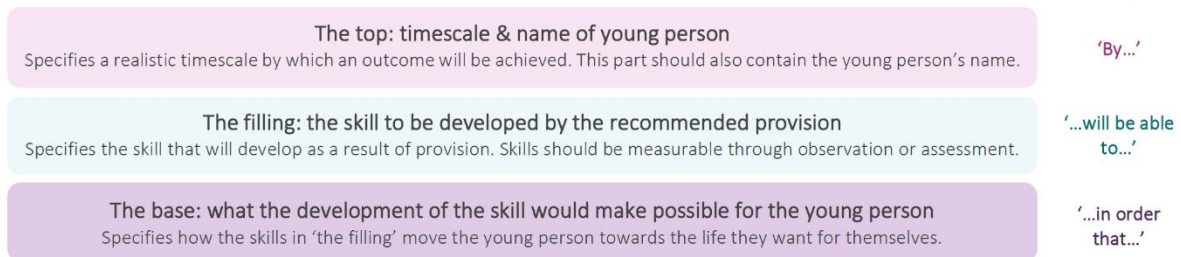
It is incredibly helpful when the settings who know the children/young people best amend outcomes to ensure they reflect where the child/young person is now in their progress as they are able to include specific details which help make it SMART. All outcomes set should be SMART, this means:

- S**pecific
- M**easurable
- A**chievable
- R**ealistic
- T**imebound

We also recommend using the ‘outcome sandwich’ format when writing outcomes, as this helps to ensure they are SMART and person centred:



The ‘[Outcome Sandwich](#)’ is a structure to support writing person-centred outcomes:



By working together to write clear, SMART outcomes we can help measure and celebrate the fantastic achievements of our children and young people.

Here are some examples of how to make outcomes SMARTer:

Instead of:

*John will improve his spelling.*

Amend it to be:

*By the end of Key Stage 1, John will be able to spell key words so that he can achieve at least 60% in his Year 2 Spelling Test.*

Instead of:

*Sarah will be able to access the community.*

Amend it to be:

*By the end of July 2027, Sarah will be able to go into the community with adult support so that she can engage in social or voluntary activities of her choice with support.*

## **Transition reviews and Phase Transfer**

Some annual reviews are especially important because they help plan for a move to the next stage of education (known as *phase transfer*), such as moving from primary to secondary school.

Phase transfer occurs at the following points in your educational journey, and we normally **discuss at review the year before**. This ensures the new school/college have the most up to date information when we send the consultation paperwork:

- Nursery to Primary, Year -1 to Reception
- Infant to Junior, Year 2 to Year 3, if in an infant school
- Primary to Secondary, Year 6 to Year 7
- Secondary to Post 16, Year 11 to Post 16
- Post 16 transitions come at various stages depending on your educational pathway, this may include:
  - Year 14 if leaving a specialist school
  - Year 13 if leaving a mainstream sixth form
  - The end of a college course
  - When they want to move from one Post 16 setting to another (e.g. college to a supported internship)

At all stages it is important to consider the parent and child/young person's preferences when considering next steps.

## **Deadlines for the Local Authority to name September placements for phase transfer:**

15 <sup>th</sup> February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursery to Primary, Year -1 to Reception</li> <li>• Infant to Junior, Year 2 to Year 3, if in an infant school</li> <li>• Primary to Secondary, Year 6 to Year 7</li> </ul>
31 <sup>st</sup> March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary to Post 16, Year 11 to Post 16</li> <li>• Post 16 transitions come at various stages depending on your educational pathway, this may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Year 14 if leaving a specialist school</li> <li>○ Year 13 if leaving a mainstream sixth form</li> <li>○ The end of a college course</li> <li>○ When they want to move from one Post 16 setting to another (e.g. college to a supported internship)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **Primary to Secondary Transition**

When preparing for secondary school, it's helpful to consider:

- Secondary schools are often larger, with different teachers, classrooms and routines



- How does the child/young person manage change, independence and organisation
- Whether their support or provision may need to change as they get older
- The type of setting that may best meet their needs for the next stage

#### Timing and planning:

- Phase transfer planning usually happens through the annual review in Year 5
- This review should focus on the next stage of education and future needs
- The Local Authority must name a secondary school in the EHCP by 15 February of the calendar year a child is due to move.

#### School preferences:

- Parents are asked to share their school preferences as part of this process but will also be given an opportunity through a preference form letter that will be sent to the child's school and then given to parents to complete.
- Preferences should be the schools parents would like to be considered, and feel could meet their child's needs

The annual review helps ensure planning starts early and that everyone understands the support the child will need for a successful transition.

### Secondary to Post 16 Transition

When preparing to move after Year 11 it is helpful to think about:

- If a young person wants to remain at their current school, do they know what they need in order to do this. E.g. Does the school require 4 GCSEs achieved at least Grade 4 to 9? Have they looked at what pathways their school offers for Post 16?
- If they want to move to another school 6<sup>th</sup> form, the above would also be applicable.
- Have they looked at what is offered in colleges? Have they attended any Open Days? Try to start doing this in Year 10 so they have longer to think about what options are open to them.
- Make sure there is a discussion about this at the Year 10 Annual Review.
- Have they had their Careers advice? Every young person should receive this in Year 11 if they have not already in Year 10.
- Have they thought about other Post 16 pathways e.g. Apprenticeships, Employment etc.

### Post 16 Transitions

If you're not sure when Post 16 transition will be, please speak to your EHC Co-ordinator who can provide guidance on when it will be and when to start looking at other settings.

When preparing for a Post 16 transition it is helpful to think about:

- What is the end goal for the young person and what do they need to get there?





- Have you visited a range of settings? Every college is very different, so we recommend visiting as many as possible.
- Are there entry requirements for the course and are these achievable?
- Have they considered pathways other than college, such as Supported Internships, Apprenticeships?
- Do they need more careers advice? If so, this should be provided by the school/college.
- Will this change the number of days they are in education (most colleges are 3-4 days a week) and will they need support from Children's or Adults Social Care?
- How would the parent and young person like their life to look when they are 30? What do they need to get there? This may include support from external agencies.

Sometimes at a Post 16 transition they are ready to move to work, university or an Adult Social Care package and no longer need their EHCP. It is good to be prepared for this. We are always available for open and honest discussions to ensure families and young people receive the support they need, whether this is from us or other agencies.

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## **Resources**

- Council for Disabled Children – Preparing for Adulthood  
<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources-0/preparing-adulthood>
- Council for Disabled Children – Delivering quality annual reviews e-training  
<https://learning.ncb.org.uk/products/Delivering-Quality-Annual-Reviews-A.aspx>
- Council for Disabled Children – Holistic outcomes in Education, Health and Care Plans e-training  
<https://learning.ncb.org.uk/products/Holistic-Outcomes-in--.aspx>
- IPSEA – The annual review process  
<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/the-annual-review-process>

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