



SENDIASS guide to the annual review (short version)

This guide explains what happens during the annual review process and gives hints and tips for families as they go through it.

Jargon buster

Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan – the legal record of your child’s Special Educational Needs and the support needed for the child to achieve.

Outcomes – the targets you agree in the EHC plan that will show that the plan is having a positive impact on your child.

Provision – what needs to be done to support the child to meet their outcomes e.g. time with a teaching assistant, therapy or specialist equipment?

SEN Caseworker (CWO) / Assessment and Planning Officer (APO) – the person at the local authority responsible for updating the EHC Plan.

What is the annual review?

The annual review looks in detail at your child’s EHC plan to ensure that:

- The description of their special educational needs is still right (Section B)
- Your child is making progress towards their outcomes (Section E)
- The education, health and care provision they require still meets their needs (Section F, G and H)

The local authority (LA) is responsible for your child’s EHC plan and must review it every 12 months. The process takes several weeks and includes an annual review meeting.

Children due to move schools must have their annual reviews at times set out in law:

- If they are in **Year 6**, then their annual review must take place in the autumn term and be completed by 15 February in the year they are due to move school

- If they are in **Year 11**, then the annual review must take place in the autumn term and be completed by 15 March before they transfer to college
- If your child is **under five**, their annual reviews will be held every three to six months. This is because young children change very quickly, so it is important to make sure that the provision still matches their needs

What happens before an annual review?

About 4 weeks before the review meeting is due to take place, your child's school or college will ask you to complete your **parental contribution** (also known as the **parental views**.) This is when you can express your views about your child and how things are going. You may have done this before for their previous review or when the plan was first written.

- If you have a copy of your previous contribution, it might help to add any new information about your child or change parts of it rather than rewriting the whole thing again.
- Make a list of things that are going well and things that are not going so well for your child.
- Look at your child's EHC plan and check to see if their needs have changed. (this is in section B)
- Has your child achieved their outcomes? (in Section E)
- Are they receiving the support it states they should be getting in their plan? (in Section F)
- If your child's needs have changed a lot since their last review, they might need another assessment. Ask your school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or Inclusion Coordinator (INCO) if you feel this is necessary.

It is important for children (age 0-16) and young people (age 16-25) to give their views too. Amaze has a '**Young person's views for the annual review**' form, which can be helpful to use.

Send the contributions back to the school SENCO so that they can share it with all the people who are working with your child. If you do not want to write your contribution, you can just tell the SEN Caseworker about your wishes and views.

About **2 weeks before the review**, the SENCO will circulate all the paperwork to you and to everyone who is supporting your child. Read all these reports carefully and make a note of anything that you want to discuss at the review meeting.

Who is invited to the annual review meeting?

The SENCO at your child's school is responsible for inviting people to the review meeting. These include:

- You (parent or carer)
- Your child's teacher
- Your LA caseworker
- A representative from health, e.g., a speech and language therapist, physiotherapist or worker from CAMHS
- A representative from social care. However, if your child does not have a social worker, then it is unlikely that anyone will attend.

Children and young people should be invited to attend at least part of the annual review meeting.

Unless there is a significant problem to discuss, it is unlikely that anyone from the LA or health will be able to attend the meeting. If you feel that you would like a particular person to be there, then it is best to speak to the school SENCO about this.

What happens at the review meeting?

The purpose of the review meeting is to look at your child's outcomes in their EHC plan and to discuss their progress towards them. It will be an opportunity to discuss all sections of the plan and if there is anything that you do not understand, it is important to ask for an explanation during the meeting.

It might help to take a friend with you so that they can take notes and remind you when you may have wanted to ask a question.

The meeting should focus on:

- The progress your child has made towards achieving the outcomes specified in their EHC plan
- Whether the outcomes still remain appropriate, or need updating
- Whether their aspirations have changed
- Reviewing and setting new short-term targets
- If something is not working, what needs to be changed to make it work better for your child
- Whether any changes need to be made to the education, health or care provision



- Whether you wish to request a personal budget
- Whether the placement is still suitable to meet their needs
- From Year 9, there must be a focus on preparation for adulthood.

What happens after the review meeting?

Two weeks after the meeting, the school will send a report of the meeting back to your caseworker at the LA. They should check this with you first. Read the report carefully to check it reflects the discussion at the meeting. If you have concerns, contact the SENCO.

The LA must decide what to do with your child's plan and tell you, in writing, 4 weeks after the meeting. There are three things they can decide to do:

- **Continue** with the existing plan as it seems to be working well
- **Amend** (change) the plan because some outcomes need to be changed or because the child's needs/provisions have changed
- **Cease** (end) the plan, usually because the child has achieved all their outcomes

The LA must give you reasons for their decision in their letter.

If the LA decides to amend the plan, they have to send you a proposed amended copy of the plan to check through before it is finalised. You have 15 days to comment on this and request changes to be made. Please see Amaze's '**Guide to checking your draft EHC plan**' which will help you respond to the proposed amended plan.

The LA must send the parent or young person the final amended EHC plan within a maximum of 12 weeks of the annual review meeting. If you do not agree with the decision about the EHC Plan, then you can appeal.

If you are worried that your child's need have changed significantly and they are not due for a review soon, then you can ask the SENCO for an early annual review.

Amaze SENDIASS is the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support service for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. We offer impartial and confidential support with anything to do with special educational needs and disabilities for 0-25 year olds.

Please contact us on 01273 772289 or by email on sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk if you would like further advice and support.