



5.8 Best practice annual reviews

This help sheet was developed in partnership with South Gloucestershire SENCOs.

The child or young person should be at the heart of the review and the review should be carried out in partnership with the parents/carers.

Getting the right people there

- Plan well in advance
- Engaging and consulting the family initially
 - (i) Ask the CYP who is important that they would like to be there (a friend/child)
 - (ii) Ask parents who they would like to attend/which agency
- Identify the key people and plan date around their commitments e.g. Paediatrician avoiding set clinic times. A phone call to their admin can be really useful. Also utilising parent power to ensure the attendance of key agencies
- CYP to attend all or part of meeting/ 'host'
- Provide plenty of notice for key players
- When in contact with professionals stress the value of their presence and advice
- Ensure you consider what would be the right venue or space in the school or at an alternative venue.

Capturing the child and young person's views

- Engage children in the preparations for the meeting e.g. Invitations/snacks/playlist

Use an adult who knows them in school well (CT, SENCO or TA) to mediate and support

- CYP Mind Map
- Collage of photographs of child/student at various activities

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- Posters – activities inside school as well as outside
- Compile a Power Point that CYP can then present independently /with support
- Video clips
- Sometimes children welcome the opportunity to something they have made to share with parents at the end of the meeting

Engaging Parents and Carers, capturing their views

- Build relationships with parents to enable effective communication, working together to make arrangements for the review.
- Make sure parents/carers know that they can bring along a friend or family member for support.
- Let parents know of the help of **Supportive Parents** (who can support them through the process and attend a pre/meeting with them)
- Sometimes Refreshments or food made by their child/provided by school kitchen can create a welcoming atmosphere.
- Holding a pre-meeting a couple to three days beforehand to read through the paperwork together can be reassuring and help families consider questions they may like to ask.
- Support with recording their contributions can be welcome.
- The Index for Inclusion has helpful questionnaire which parents (and students) could be given to complete.
- Some prompts may help parents describe their child, for example:
 - What are they like before schools, the when they get up, when they arrive home from school.
 - What are their interest's hobbies, friendships.
 - The jobs they may do or help with in and around the home.
 - What they love about their child.
 - Their hopes and aspirations for their child.

Navigating Agency reports

- Reads summaries first before the report.

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- Ensure you discuss the child young person with the school's educational psychologist.
- Be proactive with agencies to ensure advice in reports is relevant and practical.
- If you get no response from you request for information use the most recent report following the latest consultation.

Facilitating the Meeting

- Set clear time-frame (1-1 ½ hour max) order, agenda (on White board and tick off or rub out as you go?)
- Afternoons can prove very suitable for meetings, the aim being that the end of the review coincides with the end of the school day.
- Provide refreshments (child can be part of this at the beginning or end) and tissues
- SENCO usually facilitate/chair the meeting.
- Avoid sitting in front of parents with laptop open (a barrier in itself as eye contact is really important).
- If at all possible use another member of school staff to record conversation in notes (HT, TA, CT office staff if possible.) Many meetings are delicate to balance and SENCOs need their skills and talents to effectively manage the meeting.
- Be aware of seating (so where possible sit parents opposite TAs and avoid them sitting opposite anyone they are possibly at loggerheads with!)
- Start with positives, say 3 from school and home to give a positive and constructive tone, later ask for what the child would like to change/work towards.
- Read out summaries of agency reports or recommendations /ask professionals to summarise their involvement. Do not read entire reports.

Administration

- SENCO to maintain an overview/calendar especially if they have several EHCPs to manage
- Provide plenty of time (more than suggested) to allow agencies time to visit and prepare a report to send to you 2 weeks beforehand, or to bring with enough copies to distribute on the day
- Avoid recording yourself. Delegate!

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- Set the expectations of the meeting at the start to ensure that no-one feels awkward
- Ensure everyone has a time to contribute.
- Timing - Allow time to summarize outcomes - Give one or two reminders e.g. we are half way through meeting or in 10 minutes we should finish.