



1.9 A Person Centred Approach

The Children and Families Act 2014 sets out clear principles for supporting and involving children and young people (CYP) in all aspects of the support and planning of their special educational need. Person centred approaches are about discovering and acting on what is important *to* a person and what is important *for* them and finding the balance between them.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years (2015) provides the statutory guidance relating to part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Embedded in its principles is the need for a stronger focus on the participation of children, young people and their parents/carers in decision making at both individual and strategic levels. The use of Person-Centred Approaches provides the opportunity to fulfil those principles. Working in this way ensures the CYP and their parents/carers are at the centre of all decision making and future planning. It provides an opportunity to engage directly with children and young people to discuss their needs, and plan how they can achieve the best possible outcomes. This should be integral to all planning for children and young people with Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) throughout their lives.

A key strategy for drawing out the voice of the child or young person is the person-centred approach to planning. This process is underpinned by the principles outlined below

Person-Centred Planning should:

- ✓ focus on the child or young person as an individual
- ✓ enable children and young people and their parents to express their views, wishes and feelings
- ✓ enable children and young people and their parents to be part of the decision-making process
- ✓ be easy for children, young people and their parents or carers to understand, and use clear ordinary language and images rather than professional jargon
- ✓ highlight the child or young person's strengths and capabilities
- ✓ enable the child or young person and those that know them best to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future

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- ✓ tailor support to the needs of the individual
- ✓ organise assessments to minimise demands on families
- ✓ bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach
- ✓ deliver an outcomes-focused and co-ordinated plan for the child or young person and their parents.

(DfE and DoH, 2014 (updated 2015))

At an individual learner level – the learner should be encouraged to identify the issues that they would like to address and then prioritise them by mutual agreement between the learner, parents/carers and school staff. The person-centred outcomes will need to be considered carefully, taking time to consider what success would look like and ensuring that interventions can be implemented to deliver these outcomes.

At a school level – learner participation is key – the literal definition of participation is ‘taking part’. In the context of children and young people’s rights, however, participation is about having their voice heard when decisions are being made that affect their lives and being actively involved in decision-making processes. Participation should be seen as a process rather than an event, with varying degrees of involvement from being consulted on a predetermined issue through to young people deciding their agenda, identifying their own outcomes, making their own decisions and taking them forward. Learner participation is about developing a culture in schools where all children and young people have a voice and have the opportunity to play an active role in decisions that affect their learning and wellbeing, as set out in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of a Child.

The key questions in a person-centred review should focus on:

- Appreciation – What is appreciated about the child/ young person (i.e. what are the person’s qualities and characteristics?)
- What is important to the child/young person at present?
- Important in the future – What is important to the child/ young person in the future and what must be present in the future?
- Best support – Identify what is the best support (i.e. what do others need to know and do to meet this person’s needs in a way that makes sense to them and fulfils the statutory requirements)?
- Working/not working – Focusing on the multiple perspectives of those attending the meeting, what is working and not working for the child/young person at the centre of the review?

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- Questions – In relation to the child/young person at the centre of the review, what questions need answering?
- Outcomes and Actions – In relation to the child/young person at the centre of the review, what outcomes and actions are desirable?

Further information

[SENCo Induction Pack Whole School SEND and Nasen](#)

The [Helen Sanderson Associates](#) website includes a number of downloadable templates and a clear explanation of person-centred approaches.

[Involving your child in their care and reviews](#) is a helpful resource within the South Glos SEND Local Offer.