



EHCP SUPPORT SERIES

Chapter 8

Annual Reviews Preparing and Having Your Say

A practical guide to preparing for an annual review, contributing your views and checking what happens after the meeting.

The key idea

An annual review is more than a meeting. It is the statutory process for reviewing the EHC plan, progress towards outcomes and whether needs, outcomes or provision should change.



What Is an Annual Review?

A chance to look at the plan as it works in real life.

EHC plans must be reviewed by the local authority at least every 12 months. The review should consider progress towards outcomes, whether the outcomes remain appropriate and whether the provision is effective (Great Britain, 2014, s.44; Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015).

Key Fact

The annual review is a statutory process, not simply a school progress meeting. It should consider the child or young person's needs, outcomes and provision and whether the EHC plan should remain unchanged, be amended or cease.

The review can help you ask:

- What has changed since the last plan or review?
- What is working well and what is not working?
- Are the current outcomes still meaningful and appropriate?
- Does the provision still match the child or young person's needs?

Study Note

Reviews should focus on progress towards outcomes and longer-term aspirations, while also reviewing the effectiveness of educational, health and social care provision (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015).



Preparing Before the Meeting

You do not have to organise your thoughts while sitting in the meeting.

Reading the current EHCP before the review can help you identify what has changed and which parts need discussion. You can make notes directly against the relevant sections.

A simple preparation check

- B** — Are all current special educational needs accurately described?
- E** — Are the outcomes still relevant, realistic and appropriately ambitious?
- F** — Is the specified special educational provision actually being delivered and is it effective?
- G/H** — Have health or social care needs or provision changed?
- A** — Have the child or young person's views, aspirations or priorities changed?

In Practice

Bring the current EHCP, recent reports and a short list of your main points. If there are several issues, numbering them can help you return to anything that gets missed during the discussion.



Your Parent or Carer Contribution

Your knowledge of everyday life is relevant evidence.

A parent or carer contribution can describe changes that may not be obvious in school or college, including what happens before and after attendance, at home, in the community or during periods of increased demand.

Useful areas to cover

- What has improved, and what seems to have helped.
- Needs or difficulties that have increased, changed or become clearer.
- Provision that is not being delivered, is difficult to access or does not appear effective.
- New professional advice, diagnoses, assessments or evidence.
- Priorities for the next year and any changes you believe the EHCP needs.

Example

"The school day is currently manageable only because Maya spends most evenings recovering in a dark room and is no longer able to attend activities she previously enjoyed. We would like the review to consider whether her sensory and regulation needs, and the provision supporting them, are fully reflected in the plan."

Parent/Carer Note

You can describe both strengths and difficulties. The purpose is not to present the child or young person negatively, but to give an accurate picture of what support is needed.



The Child or Young Person's Voice

Participation can look different for different people.

The review should take account of the child or young person's views, wishes and feelings. Participation does not have to mean speaking throughout a formal meeting; views can be gathered and shared in ways that are accessible to the individual.

Study Note

The SEND framework emphasises involving children, young people and parents in decisions and supporting participation as fully as possible (Great Britain, 2014, s.19; Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015).

Ways views might be shared

- Speaking for part or all of the meeting.
- A written statement, questionnaire, drawing or communication profile.
- Photos, symbols, AAC or another preferred communication method.
- A trusted adult helping to communicate views gathered beforehand.

Question to Ask

What would make this review easier for the child or young person to understand and contribute to? Consider timing, environment, communication, breaks and who they want present.



During the Review Meeting

Keep bringing the conversation back to needs, outcomes and provision.

The meeting should help build an accurate picture of progress and what needs to happen next. If an important point is raised, ask for it to be clearly recorded rather than relying on everyone remembering it afterwards.

Questions worth asking

- What progress has been made towards each outcome, and what has contributed to it?
- Is every part of Section F being delivered as written?
- Have any needs changed or become clearer since the last review?
- Does any provision need to be added, removed, increased or described more specifically?
- What amendments are being recommended, and who will record them?

In Practice

If you disagree with something said in the meeting, you can ask for your view and the reason for it to be recorded. You can also send a concise written follow-up if an important point was missed.



What Happens After the Review?

The meeting is not the final step.

After an annual review, the local authority must decide whether to keep the EHC plan as it is, amend it or cease to maintain it. The decision must be communicated to the parent or young person within four weeks of the review meeting (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015).

Key Fact

If the local authority decides to amend the plan, it should start the amendment process without delay. The parent or young person must be given an opportunity to make representations on the proposed amendments.

After the meeting, check:

- Did you receive the review report and does it accurately record the discussion?
- Has the local authority sent its decision within the statutory timeframe?
- If amendments are proposed, do they reflect what was agreed or evidenced?
- If you disagree with the decision, does the decision letter explain your rights and next steps?

Remember

Keep the review paperwork with the current EHCP and professional evidence. It creates a useful record of what was raised, what was recommended and what the local authority decided.



From Year 9: Preparing for Adulthood

Annual reviews begin to look more deliberately towards adult life.

From Year 9 onwards, annual reviews of an EHC plan must include a focus on preparing for adulthood. Planning should be centred on the young person's aspirations and the support needed to work towards them (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015).

The conversation can include

Education — Future learning, training, employment and meaningful work.

Independence — Daily living, choice, decision-making, travel and future living arrangements.

Community — Friendships, relationships, interests and participation in community life.

Health — Managing health needs and planning transitions to adult health services.

Key Fact

Preparing for adulthood should not suddenly begin at Year 9; earlier planning can be helpful. However, the Year 9 review and every review thereafter must include this focus (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015).



My Annual Review Notes

Use this page before, during or after the review.

What is working well?

What has changed or is not working?

Evidence or reports I want considered

Changes I want discussed

Questions / follow-up actions



References & Further Support

References

Department for Education and Department of Health (2015) Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years. London: Department for Education. See paragraphs 9.166 onwards.

Great Britain (2014) Children and Families Act 2014. London: The Stationery Office. See sections 19 and 44.

Department for Education (2026) Education, health and care plans: 2026. Explore Education Statistics. Annual review information accessed 23 September 2026.

Further support

- SENDIASS — free and impartial SEND information, advice and support. Find your local service through your council or Local Offer.
- GOV.UK SEND Code of Practice — statutory guidance on reviewing EHC plans and preparing for adulthood.
- Council for Disabled Children — information and resources about EHC plan annual reviews.

Important

This guide provides general information about the SEND and EHCP system in England. It is not individual legal advice. Local annual-review paperwork and arrangements can vary, while the statutory duties remain governed by legislation and guidance.