



Annual review template guidance for early years setting and schools



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

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Annual Review Guidance

This guidance is to support the completion of the Annual Review Form for EHC Plan reviews. This is the formal record of a pupil's progress over the previous year. It may be used to inform an amendment of an EHC plan; support a request for change of placement or additional level of support; or, in some circumstances, be submitted as evidence towards a SEND tribunal. As such, the form must be completed thoroughly and accurately. The Annual Review (AR) form should be used for all reviews and key stages.

For further guidance on the annual review process please refer to the following helpful resources:

- Surrey's Local offer Resources for Practitioners: [SEND resources for practitioners | Surrey Local Offer](#)
- SEND Code of Practice (CoP): [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- The Council for Disabled Children's guidance: [What is an Annual Review? \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](#)
- The Council for Disabled Children's training: [Training catalogue | Council for Disabled Children](#)

What is the purpose of the annual review?

Surrey County Council is committed to the annual review of all EHC plans so that the Plan remains relevant, up to date and reflects the child or young person's special educational need.

The Code of Practice states that EHC plans must:

- be reviewed by the LA as minimum every 12 months
- focus on the child or young person's progress towards achieving the outcomes set out in the current EHC Plan
- consider if these outcomes are supporting targets that remain appropriate
- be undertaken in partnership with the child or young person and their parent
- take account of their views and wishes and feelings
- consider the continuing appropriateness of the EHC plan in light of the child or young person's progress during the year or changed circumstances
- consider whether changes are required including changes to outcomes, enhanced or reduced provision, change of educational establishment or whether the plan should be ceased

Attendance at the annual review, by the child or young person, is encouraged

When should the review take place?

The review meeting should be held no more than 11 months after the date of the issue of the first EHC plan or the last review meeting. This allows a four-week window for the

recommendations from the review to be considered and decide on as to whether the plan should remain the same, be amended or ceased within the 12 month deadline.

Schools are advised to schedule dates of review of EHC plans for all pupils at the beginning of each academic year.

Consideration should be given to holding KST reviews early in the year before transfer (e.g. Autumn term year 5 for year 6 transfer to year 7)

EHC plans review date should aim to link to other regular reviews, including the child in need plan or child protection plan reviews if appropriate.

Who chairs the meeting and where is it held?

The LA delegates the responsibility for arranging and conducting the review meeting and the administration of this to the school/setting/or other education provider, they are known as the 'host'.

Section 9.175 of the SEND CoP states 'In most cases, reviews should normally be held at the educational institution attended by the child or young person. Reviews are generally most effective when led by the educational institution. They know the child or young person best, will have the closest contact with them and their family and will have the clearest information about progress and next steps. Reviews led by the educational institution will engender the greatest confidence amongst the child, young person and their family. There may be exceptional circumstances where it will be appropriate for the review meeting to be held by the local authority in a different location, for example where a young person attends programmes of study at more than one institution'.

Who should be invited to the Review?

The parent/carer and child/young person and all the relevant professionals currently involved with the CYP should be invited to the review meeting.

The SEN CoP Section 9.176 states '*The following requirements apply to reviews where a child or young person attends a school or other institution: The child's parents or young person, a representative of the school or other institution attended, a local authority SEN officer, a health service representative and a local authority social care representative **must be invited and given at least two weeks' notice of the date of the meeting.** Other individuals relevant to the review should also be invited, including youth offending teams and job coaches where relevant'.*

The CoP does not state that the SEN officer has to attend the annual review only that they should be invited at least two weeks' notice of the date of the meeting. At the annual review meeting there may be other LA officers present including EP, SLT, STIPS.

The Case Officers have been asked to prioritise attendance at annual reviews for Children in a Key Stage Transfer year group (Transition review), Children Missing Education

(CME), Looked After Children (LAC), Elective Home Education (EHE), Children in Need (CIN), Child Protection Plan (CP) or for Children Persistently Absent from School.

Reviews of EHC plans for children aged 0 to 5

The SEN CoP section 9.178 states 'Local authorities should consider reviewing an EHC plan for a child under five at least every three to six months to ensure that the provision continues to be appropriate. Such reviews would complement the duty to carry out a review at least annually but may be streamlined and not necessarily require the attendance of the full range of professionals, depending on the needs of the child. The child's parent must be fully consulted on any proposed changes to the EHC plan and made aware of their right to appeal to the Tribunal'.

Preparing for adulthood in reviews

Information, advice and guidance on post 16 opportunities can be found on the local offer can be found here:

<https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/young-people/preparing-for-adulthood/booklet>

The SEN CoP section 8.9 states 'Local authorities must ensure that the EHC plan review at Year 9, and every review thereafter, includes a focus on preparing for adulthood. It can be helpful for EHC plan reviews before Year 9 to have this focus too. Planning must be centred around the individual and explore the child or young person's aspirations and abilities, what they want to be able to do when they leave post-16 education or training and the support they need to achieve their ambition. Local authorities should ensure that children and young people have the support they need (for example, advocates) to participate fully in this planning and make decisions. Transition planning must be built into the revised EHC plan and should result in clear outcomes being agreed that are ambitious and stretching and which will prepare young people for adulthood.'

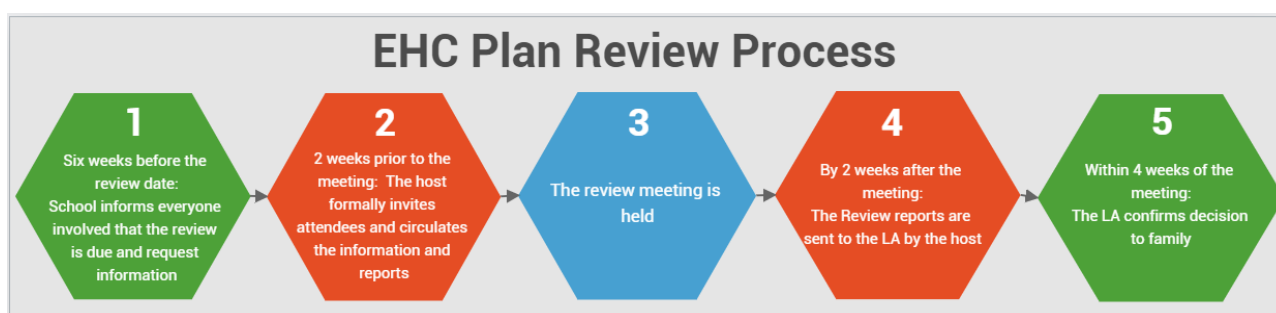
The SEN CoP section 8.10 identifies 'Preparing for adulthood planning in the review of the EHC plan should include:

- support to prepare for higher education and/or employment. This should include identifying appropriate post-16 pathways that will lead to these outcomes. Training options such as supported internships, apprenticeships and traineeships should be discussed, or support for setting up your own business. The review should also cover support in finding a job, and learning how to do a job (for example, through work experience opportunities or the use of job coaches) and help in understanding any welfare benefits that might be available when in work
- support to prepare for independent living, including exploring what decisions young people want to take for themselves and planning their role in decision making as they become older. This should also include discussing where the child or young person wants to live in the future, who they want to live with and what support they will need. Local

housing options, support in finding accommodation, housing benefits and social care support should be explained

- support in maintaining good health in adult life, including effective planning with health services of the transition from specialist paediatric services to adult health care. Helping children and young people understand which health professionals will work with them as adults, ensuring those professionals understand the young person's learning difficulties or disabilities and planning well-supported transitions is vital to ensure young people are as healthy as possible in adult life
- support in participating in society, including understanding mobility and transport support, and how to find out about social and community activities, and opportunities for engagement in local decision-making. This also includes support in developing and maintaining friendships and relationships.

Annual Review process and timescales



Step 1

The host (education setting) obtains written advice and information from all the relevant professionals.

They must also write to the parent/ carer/ young person inviting them to contribute their views wishes and feelings. This should include their view of the current arrangements and provide an opportunity to discuss changes which the parent/ carer/ young person may want to be made to the EHC plan. With effect from January 2025 a [Health questionnaire](#) should also be circulated, in advance of the review meeting.

These reports must be circulated within two weeks of the meeting.

The host should notify professionals **six weeks** before the review is due so that they can submit their written advice/ reports in time. It is advisable for the host to notify everyone of when the meeting is likely to take place at this point, especially where their attendance is required.

Step 2

The host must send out formal invitations to all those required to attend the annual review meeting and circulate copies of all the reports they have received at least **two weeks** before the date of the Annual Review meeting.

This will usually be the same people contacted in Step 1 but may include others if their assistance or contribution are required.

The host should start filling in the Surrey EHC plan Annual Review or interim review form with relevant information. The host will then complete the form during the AR meeting.

Step 3

The Annual Review meeting is held. The host will chair the meeting and complete the Surrey EHC plan Annual Review or interim review form based on discussions at the meeting and written contributions, including the [Health questionnaire](#) if relevant.

The Annual Review must enable full involvement of the parent/ carer, child or young person and consider their views wishes and feelings, especially when making decisions. 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.

Step 4

After the meeting, the host must prepare a report that includes any recommendations for amendments to be made to the EHC plan. This should include where there are differences of opinions and not just the general consensus.

The report must be sent to everyone who had been invited to the review and the LA within two weeks of the meeting taking place.

It is important that the LA is sent these papers as soon as possible after the review, as the LA must inform the parent/ carer/ young person of their decision within four weeks from the Annual Review meeting. This date should be no later than the anniversary of either when the EHC plan was first issued or the last review meeting.

Step 5

The LA reviews the annual review documentation and decides which one of the three following options applies. Whether the EHC plan:

- Should remain unchanged.
- Needs to be amended.
- Should be ceased.

The LA will write to the parent/ carer/ young person and notify them of their decision for No changes to EHCP or Ceasing.

Where amendments are agreed, the draft plan will be sent to the parent/ carer/ young person within four weeks of the annual review meeting. The educational setting will also be consulted with.

An EHC plan will not need amending annually and the annual review will form part of the EHC Plan appendices so that it can be referred to as needed.

If amending the EHCP **8 weeks** after the draft plan has been sent the final amended EHCP. The **15 days response time for the draft plan** is included in this 8 weeks.

What are the different types of review?

Annual Reviews

All EHC Plans must be reviewed by law at least every 12 months. For children under the age of five, EHC plans should be reviewed every three to six months. For a new EHC Plan the first review should take place within 12 months of the first finalised EHC Plan being issued (this date can be found on the front page of the EHC Plan). After that, the annual review meeting must take place within 12 months of the last annual review meeting.

Interim Reviews

Interim reviews are only held in special circumstances where there is a significant and demonstrable change or concern that needs to be addressed. It might be requested because:

- the child or young person's education, health or social care needs have changed and are no longer accurately described in the EHC plan, or
- the education, health, or social care provision in the EHC plan is no longer meeting the child or young person's needs.

If the child or young person has been excluded from school or is at risk of exclusion, this would also be a good reason to ask for an early review.

When considering holding an interim review, the setting should contact the SEND Case Officer to discuss the rationale.

Transition Reviews

These are reviews to focus on the Key Stage Transfer (sometimes known as Phase transfer). They are normally held in the autumn/ summer term of the year before the transfer is due to happen. Key Stage or Phase transfer is the moving between stages of education:

- early years education to school
- infant to junior school
- primary to middle school
- primary to secondary school
- middle to secondary school

- secondary school to a post-16 institution

Year 9 Transition Review - Whilst Preparation for Adulthood happens from the earliest years The Transition Review Meeting in Year 9 marks the start of planning for the young person's transition to adulthood. This means thinking about what they will want to do when they leave school at age 16+.

Post 16 transition reviews - When a young person is already attending a post-16 institution and it is proposed that they move from one post-16 institution to another at any time, this is classed as a transition review. The LA must review and amend the EHC plan at least five months before that transfer takes place.

Reviews and ongoing appeals

If there is an ongoing appeal relating to the EHC plan, then the LA is still required to carry out the Annual Review. The host should carry out the steps above regardless of their being an ongoing appeal. This could be a useful way of seeking agreement on the issues in the appeal. The SEND Case Officer should attend these meetings where possible.