## **Preparing for Annual Reviews: A Parent & Carer Guide**

*Helping you feel confident, informed, and empowered during your child’s EHCP review*

### **What Is an Annual Review?**

If your child has an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**, the **Annual Review** is a formal opportunity to review the plan and make sure it still reflects your child’s current needs and progress.

This process must happen **at least once a year**. It brings together parents, school staff, and professionals (where relevant) to discuss how well the EHCP is working and whether any updates are needed.

##  **What Happens in an Annual Review?**

An Annual Review is more than just a meeting. It’s a **process** that includes:

1. **Preparation and information gathering**
2. **The Review Meeting**
3. **A written report with recommendations**
4. **A decision from the Local Authority** on whether to:
	1. *Maintain* the EHCP as it is
	2. *Amend* the plan
	3. *Cease* the EHCP

##  **Step-by-Step: How to Prepare**

### **1. Know When the Review Is Due**

* The review should happen **within 12 months** of the last one (or the date the EHCP was issued).
* Schools usually coordinate the meeting—if you haven’t heard from them by month 11, it’s okay to ask for the date.

### **2. Understand the Timeline**

You must receive **two weeks’ notice** of the meeting and be sent all relevant reports in advance. These might include:

* Updated school reports
* Professional input (e.g., Speech & Language, OT, EP)
* Your child’s views (if appropriate)

📌 **Tip:** If you haven’t received anything by the deadline, you can politely request it in writing.

### **3. Submit Your Parental Advice**

This is your chance to:

* Share how you feel your child is progressing
* Raise concerns
* Suggest changes to support, placement, or outcomes

✍️ You can submit this as a written statement in advance, or bring it to the meeting. Some local authorities provide a form—if not, just write in your own words.

### **4. Involve Your Child**

The law says your child’s **views, wishes, and feelings** must be considered.
 Depending on their age and ability, this could include:

* Drawing a picture
* Writing or dictating a statement
* Speaking at the meeting (if appropriate)

SEND Empowerment can provide a **child-friendly views template** if needed.

### **5. Gather Your Own Information**

Bring:

* Your child’s current EHCP (and any previous versions)
* Reports from professionals (EPs, therapists, paediatricians)
* Any recent diagnoses or new needs
* Your list of questions, concerns, and suggestions
* Notes from teachers or progress reports
* A friend, family member, or advocate (optional but allowed)

##  **What to Talk About at the Meeting**

Here are some key areas usually discussed:

* Is the **current provision** meeting your child’s needs?
* Are the **outcomes** in the EHCP still relevant?
* Has your child made **progress** academically, socially, or emotionally?
* Are there **new needs** or challenges to include?
* Is the **school or setting** still appropriate?
* Are there updates from **health or social care**?
* What does your child say about school and support?

##  **After the Meeting: What Happens Next?**

1. **The school must send a report** of the meeting (with recommendations) to the Local Authority **within 2 weeks**.
2. The Local Authority must respond with a decision to **maintain, amend or cease** the plan **within 4 weeks** of the meeting.

If they decide to amend:

* You’ll get a draft plan to review and can suggest changes.

If you **disagree** with the decision or the amended plan, you have the right to **appeal**.

## **🧡 SEND Empowerment Tips**

* **Be prepared, but don’t feel pressured to know everything.** You are the expert on your child.
* **Keep records**: Save copies of everything—emails, letters, reports.
* **Ask questions.** No question is too small. If something isn’t clear, ask for it to be explained.
* **Don’t go alone if you don’t want to.** Bring someone with you to take notes or support you emotionally.
* **You don’t have to agree to everything in the meeting.** Take your time to reflect and respond after.

## **📎 Bonus: Printable Checklist**

* I’ve been told the meeting date with at least 2 weeks’ notice
* I’ve received all reports in advance
* I’ve written and submitted my parental advice
* I’ve included my child’s views
* I’ve gathered key documents and reports
* I’ve listed questions and concerns
* I’ve invited someone to support me (if needed)
* I’ve reviewed the EHCP and outcomes
* I know what happens after the meeting

If you need any further support preparing for an Annual Review, please contact info@send-empowerment.co.uk to arrange an appointment or for email advice.