



**STOKE-ON-TRENT
PARENT PARTNERSHIP**

Annual Reviews

This leaflet explains who will require an annual review, the process that will be followed and how parents will be involved in the process.

What is an annual review?

Statements of special education needs must be reviewed by the Local Authority (LA) at least once a year. This is called an 'Annual Review'.

The annual review process involves a meeting between parents, school and the Local Authority, a report from the head teacher after this meeting and the actual annual review at the Local Authority. There is a timeline showing the annual review process on [Page 3](#).

For children in Year 9 who have a statement the annual review process is a little different. This is known as a 'Transition Review'.

Why do children with a statement need an annual review?

The aim of an annual review is to gather together parents, school, the Local Authority and, where appropriate, the child to discuss the progress that the child has made over the past year. It gives the opportunity to make sure that the information in the statement is still correct and discuss whether the child's needs have changed. If the child's needs have changed, the statement may need amending. Parents and the school will also be able to discuss whether the provision made for the child (i.e. the type of school, hours of support and strategies used) is still appropriate.

How often will my child have an annual reviews?

There will be an annual review every 12 months from the date on the original statement or at least 12 months from the date of the last review, whichever is sooner.

In Stoke-on-Trent, children under 5 will have a review every 6 months.

Timeline of the annual review process

2 weeks before the start of the term



Around 6 weeks before the annual review meeting



2 weeks before the annual review meeting



The annual review meeting



Within 2 weeks of the annual review meeting



Within 1 week of the LA's decision

The LA will write to the head teacher to inform him/her of all the children that are due for an annual review in the coming term.

The head teacher will send invites and requests for written advice - see [Page 4](#) for more information.

The head teacher will send copies of all the reports that he/she has received to everyone invited to the annual review meeting.

See [Page 4](#) for information on the actual annual review meeting.

The head teacher must send a report to the LA, summarising the issues discussed at the annual review meeting and any recommendations.

The LA will send a copy of their decision to the parents, head teacher, the child's teacher and anyone else they feel is appropriate. If any amendments need to be made to the statement they will send a copy of a proposed amended statement to the parents as soon as possible.

Who will arrange the annual review meeting?

The head teacher, or other teacher such as the SENCO, will arrange the annual review meeting. They will send letters inviting the necessary people to the meeting.

If the date and time are not convenient you should contact the school immediately to discuss whether the meeting can be rearranged. This will give the school time to contact everyone else that was invited to the meeting.

Who will be invited to the meeting?

The head teacher must invite the following people to the annual review meeting:

- the child's parents
- a relevant teacher - class teacher/form tutor/head of year/SENCO
- a representative of the Local Authority
- anyone that the Local Authority considers appropriate
- any other person the head teacher considers appropriate

If there is anyone that you feel needs to be invited to the annual review meeting, such as your child's speech and language therapist or paediatrician, you should let the school know as soon as possible.

It may not be possible for all the professionals to attend the meeting. They should however send the school any relevant information that they wish to be shared at the annual review meeting.

Where will the annual review meeting be held?

The annual review meeting will usually be held at your child's school.

Will I be asked for my views?

The head teacher will write to you to ask you to provide your views. Usually, the school will send you a form to fill in to do this. You will need to send this in writing so that a copy can be sent to all the people invited to the annual review meeting.

You could include the following information:

- the progress that you feel your child has made over the last 12 months
- any significant changes in your child's needs/behaviour
- whether you feel that the objectives in the statement are still appropriate
- what you would like your child to achieve over the next year

You should try to make sure that your views are sent back to school by the date given so that they can be copied and sent to the other people that will be attending the annual review meeting.

Who else will be asked to provide written advice?

The head teacher must also request written advice from anyone identified by the Local Authority, such as the Educational Psychologist, as well as anyone that the head teacher feels is appropriate, such as class or subject teachers. The written advice will be the basis for the discussions at the annual review meeting.

What preparation will I need to do before the meeting?

You should try to read all of the reports that the head teacher sends to you before the meeting. This will give you time to think of any questions about the information in the reports that you want to ask at the meeting.

What will happen at the annual review meeting?

The annual review meeting will usually start by everyone introducing themselves and saying how they are involved with the child. The head teacher will give apologies from anyone who is unable to attend the meeting.

Next the head teacher will usually check that everyone present has received a copy of all the reports that will be looked at during the meeting.

The child's progress towards the objectives in the statement will be discussed. This should include:

- the parents' views
- the child's views
- any successes the child has had in the last year
- details of strategies that have been successful
- the current National Curriculum levels for literacy and maths
- any changes in the child's needs or circumstances

The meeting will then focus on providing recommendations on what should happen to the statement, including:

- whether the statement is still needed
- whether the school placement is still meeting the child's needs
- whether the statement needs amending and if so, how and why.

If not all of the people at the meeting agree with all recommendations the different views should be recorded in the head teacher's report (see [Page 8](#) for more information on the head teacher's report).

The next part of the meeting will look at planning for the year ahead. This will include writing a target for each special educational need that is identified in the statement. Targets for a new IEP will also be discussed.

The people at the meeting may discuss whether the next annual review should take place in 12 months or whether they recommend to the Local Authority that the next review is needed sooner.

At the end of the meeting the head teacher will usually explain what will happen next in terms of the annual review. It is important to remember that the Local Authority will decide whether to accept the recommendations from the meeting and then change the statement if needed.

Will my child be involved in the annual review meeting?

The school should work with your child to obtain his/her views before the actual annual review meeting. You may also want to discuss with your child about how he/she feels about school and the progress that he/she is making towards the objectives in the statement.

Depending on your child's age and ability they may be brought into the annual review meeting to share their thoughts. They may come in for a few minutes at the beginning or end, or on some occasions stay for the entire meeting. This should be arranged to suit your child's age and ability. Alternatively, your child may prefer for a mentor or advocate to go to the meeting in his/her place so that his/her views can be shared with those at the meeting.

What will happen after the annual review meeting?

The head teacher will produce a report following the annual review meeting. This will give a summary of the discussions held at the meeting. It will also give details of any amendments to the statement that are recommended.

The report must be sent to the Local Authority no later than **10 school days** after the annual review meeting. The head teacher should also send a copy to all of the people that were present at the meeting.

Once the Local Authority has received the head teacher's report the *actual* annual review of the statement will take place. The Local Authority will look at the head teacher's recommendations and decide whether to accept them or not. They will decide to do one of the following:

- make no changes to the statement
- amend the statement
- cease to maintain the statement

Within one week of making a decision, the Local Authority will send you a written copy of their decision. They will also send a copy of their decision to the head teacher and anyone else that they feel is appropriate, such as the Educational Psychologist.

If the Local Authority decide to amend the statement they will begin to do this straight away. They will issue a proposed amended statement and you will have 15 days to respond to this.

The Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service can support you in understanding and responding to the proposed amended statement. Please contact 01782 234701 for more information.

Why hasn't the Local Authority made the amendments that were recommended at the annual review meeting?

The Local Authority will look carefully at the recommendations from the annual review meeting when they review your child's statement. They will look at any evidence that is provided by the head teacher that will support the recommendations, for example a recent report from the Educational Psychologist, or a timetable showing the extra support that the school feels your child will need.

If the Local Authority feel that there is not enough evidence to support the recommendations they may decide not to accept them. If this happens the Local Authority should explain why they haven't followed the recommendations when they write to you with their decision.

Why might the Local Authority 'cease to maintain' my child's statement?

The Local Authority may decide to cease to maintain a child's statement if :

- the child has met all of the objectives in the statement
- the child's needs can be provided for by the school without additional funding from the Local Authority
- the child no longer requires high levels of daily adult supervision
- the child has no significant self-help difficulties
- the child can cope with everyday social interaction
- the child is moving into further education, such as college

The Local Authority will write to you if they plan to cease your child's statement. You have the right to appeal this decision with the First Tier Tribunal for Special Educational Needs and Disability. You have two months from the date on the decision letter from the Local Authority to register your appeal.

What happens if I don't agree with the changes that are made to my child's statement?

When you are sent the proposed amended statement you should read through it carefully. The Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service can help you to understand the proposed amended statement.

If you don't agree with any of the proposed changes you should note these on the form that came with the proposed amended statement. It may also be helpful to speak to the Named Officer to discuss your views. You are entitled to ask to meet with your child's Named Officer to discuss your thoughts on the proposed changes. You will then have 15 days from this meeting to send your views, in writing, to the Local Authority.

If you are still unhappy with the a final amended statement that the Local Authority produces you have the right to appeal to the First Tier Tribunal for Special Educational Needs and Disability. You have two months from the date on the decision letter from the Local Authority to register your appeal with the Tribunal Service.

Can an annual review be arranged sooner if there are problems with my child's education?

You can ask for an early review if there are problems that need to be addressed. This is sometimes called an 'interim review'. To request an interim review you should contact the school's SENCO. You may need to request the interim review by writing to the head teacher. If you feel that changes to your child's statement are needed you may also want to speak to your child's Named Officer at the Local Authority.

What is a Transition Review?

A transition review is the annual review of a statement of a young person in Year 9.

How is a transition review different to an annual review?

The transition review meeting will be very similar to an annual review meeting. The statement will be reviewed to make sure that it is still appropriate. However, there are some key differences:

- A Connexions advisor must be involved. They must be invited and then must attend the actual meeting.
- Social Care must be invited to the transition review so that they can plan for any support that the child may need once he/she leaves school. They will only attend if it is appropriate.
- A transition plan must be drawn up during the meeting.

What is a transition plan?

The transition plan should draw together information from a range of individuals involved with the young person (school, social care, health etc) so that plans can be made for the successful transition into adult life.

The plan should contain information on the career options that the young person is considering; the further education options that are available (college, work placement etc); and the support that the young person will require once he/she leaves school, both in further education and also in general everyday life.

The transition plan should be reviewed during the annual review in Years 10 and 11.

Useful weblinks

The Government's information website – SEN: statements

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_4000870

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/dfes%200581%202001

The Department for Education - Statements of SEN

www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/sen/schools/a0014701/statements-of-special-educational-needs

Special Educational Needs (SEN): A guide for parents and carers booklet, produced by the government

www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00639-2008

ACE (Advisory Centre for Education) – 'Understanding Annual Reviews

www.ace-ed.org.uk/advice-about-education-for-parents/Special_Educational_Needs/understanding-annual-reviews

Stoke-on-Trent SEN Monitoring & Assessment website – downloadable annual review forms and information

www.sgfl.org.uk/subsites/view/default.asp?doc=1648

The Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service

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