

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **Meeting Guidance in relation to Coronavirus (COVID -19)**

***This guidance applies to: Annual Review meetings for EHC Plans due to be held by Early Years Settings, Schools, Colleges, other Settings or Alternative Provision***

### **Principles**

In the light of government information and requirements in respect of Coronavirus, the following information is provided as guidance in relation to meetings with children and families where a child holds a current EHC Plan which is due for Annual Review.

**Face to Face meetings should not be undertaken** as this requires additional attendance and therefore increases risks and is against government guidelines.

**The statutory duty to complete the Annual Review Process within 12 months of an EHC Plan being issued has not changed. Where possible all Annual Review Meetings which are due should go ahead.**

In line with government guidance, meetings must take place at a distance rather than face to face to ensure containment of the virus. Those chairing a meeting must consider which technology would be most appropriate to use and how they will ensure children/young people, their families and other professionals will be consulted and how their views will be shared in the meeting.

The person chairing the meeting will take responsibility for ensuring a clear recording on the child/young person's record as to how a meeting has taken place and who was consulted for that meeting.

That person should also take responsibility for recording a decision not to hold the meeting with a clear outline of the reasons why and the steps that have been taken instead as a contingency plan.

There are options for how conferences and meetings can be held and the chair should take responsibility for deciding which would be most appropriate and ensure any IT support has been sought to support them.

# One Minute Guide

Options such as Conference Call by telephone, WhatsApp Group Meeting, Skype for business, Conference Call via Lync should all be considered and the most appropriate option used.

These meetings will need to:

- Ensure the views of the child/young person and parent/carer are included
- Encompass information from relevant professionals
- Agree any amendments required to the child/young person's EHC Plan
- Agree outcomes and actions from the meeting
- Agree any changes in provision/resources/intervention in place at the school or setting in order to continue to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child/young person during the period of partial school/setting closures.

## Guidance for preparing for Annual Review Meetings

The guidance for the necessary preparation has not changed during this process:

- We would still ask that you request updated child/young person and parent/family/carer views prior to the review.
- We would still ask that you plan the date of the Annual Review meeting and inform all relevant parties. You should discuss with the family who they would like to be involved with the meeting.
- You should still ensure that you request and collate any relevant updated professional reports prior to the review date. This includes updated school advice and reports. Reports and advice should be sent to all parties two weeks prior to the review meeting date to ensure sufficient reading time before the meeting.

## Guidance for holding Annual Review Meetings

- Meetings will need to be held creatively by alternative technology wherever possible.
- Families to be consulted by the Chair about how they wish to be included in this process; whether this is by alternative technology, or providing their views separately to the Chair prior to, or following the meeting, via telephone call or email.
- Gather the views of the multi-agency group via dialling in to online meetings where possible.
- Consider how best to involve children/young people in their meeting and/or how they could provide views separately prior to or following the meeting via telephone call or email.
- Consideration to be given to completing reviews as a series of meetings to ensure all appropriate consultation and involvement in the review.
- The content to be covered through the Annual Review Process has not changed.

# One Minute Guide

## Guidance following Annual Review Meetings

- Following a review meeting, the statutory requirements have not changed.
- Review meetings will be written up and recorded as usual.
- Schools should still submit all post review information to the Local Authority via Liquid Logic, or through secure email to [SENTeamEast@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:SENTeamEast@cheshireeast.gov.uk), and email securely to all attendees/contributors no later than two weeks after the meeting.
- You should still send a copy to parent/carers and the young person, and any professionals who attended the meeting.

## If an Annual Review meeting does not take place

- It is anticipated that a number of children/young people may not attend a school/setting due to the need for family isolation or due to their health conditions; where possible any Annual Review meetings which are due should still take place virtually.
- In exceptional circumstances, where meetings are unable to go ahead, we would ask that the meeting organiser or chair contacts the SEND Keyworker to discuss this further and to ensure that a note can be made on the child/young person's file.

Please direct any queries to [SENTeamEast@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:SENTeamEast@cheshireeast.gov.uk).