



Running Annual Reviews during School Closures

During these uncertain times, parents/carers may well become quite rightly anxious if the Annual Review of their child's statement is due.

There has been some clarification from Welsh Government regarding provision for learners with SEN and particularly those with statements. As yet, Welsh Government have not published any statutory notices relaxing aspects of the SEN system (under the 1996 Education Act). Currently all mandatory duties remain, Local Authorities and schools are expected to use their 'best endeavours' to do what's reasonable in terms of provision and Annual Reviews.

We hope the FAQs below will help you to plan and carry out successful Annual Reviews

Q: How do we conduct an Annual Review in line with social distancing rules?

A: Schools should seek to hold Annual Reviews by virtual means, Information Management have confirmed that Microsoft Teams offers a safe platform to use for video calls. If your school uses a different virtual platform, please check with Information Management that it is secure and meets their requirements to protect data privacy. Welsh Government is taking steps to ensure all learners have access to technology to access virtual learning and this could be utilised

You could consider conducting the Annual Review by telephone, however it could be difficult to maintain quality communication between participants and it may be better to wait until the meeting can be conducted face to face.

Q: How do I run a meeting virtually?

A: To organise a meeting in Teams, go into your outlook calendar, on the tool bar you will find an icon with the Teams logo, New Teams Meeting. Clicking on this allows you to organise a meeting with people with or without Teams. You set up the meeting like an appointment. A link to the meeting is sent to attendees. At the time of the meeting, the meeting will appear in your teams and you allow participants to join from there once they have clicked on the link in the email.

If you have not held a meeting virtually before it is a good idea to practice first. You may want a colleague to help you to manage the technology, so you can focus on the meeting. It is important to consider the following points:

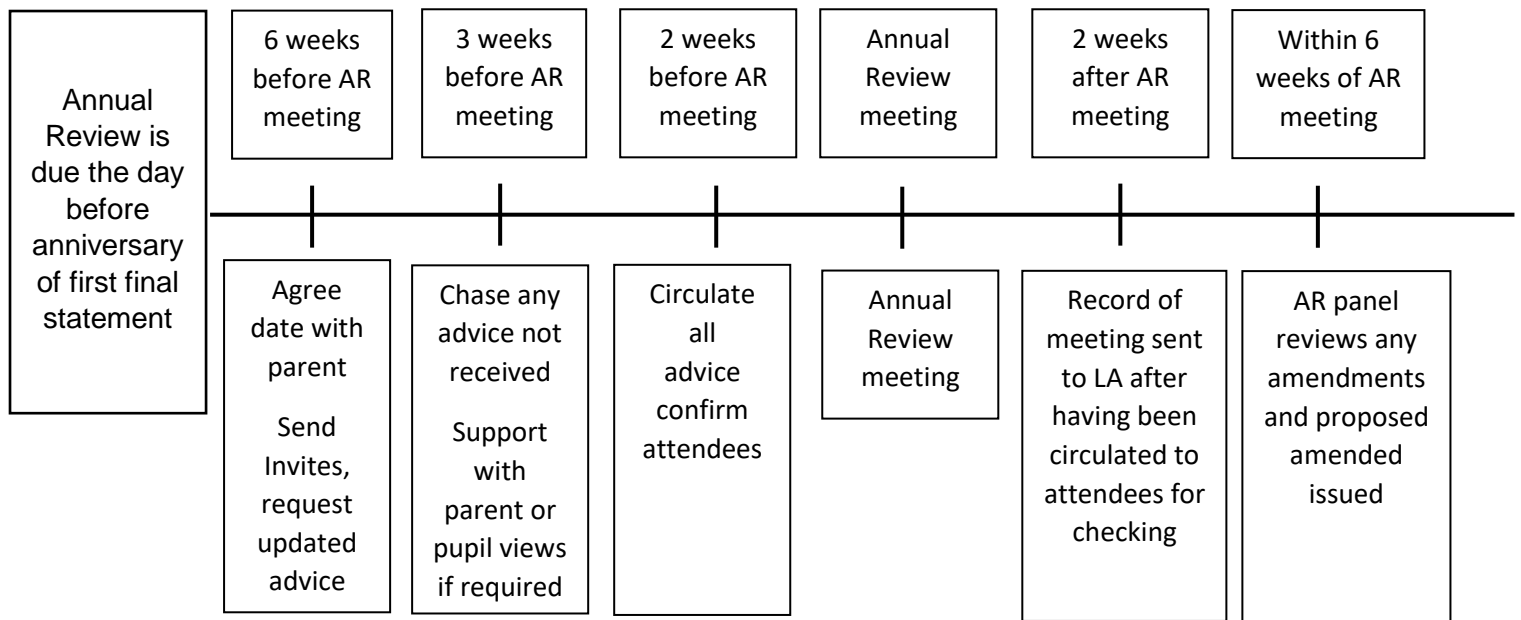
- Who will chair the meeting?

- Who will take notes/complete the record of Annual Review?
- How to manage contributions so everyone is heard – you could arrange for people to talk in turn with questions being added into chat and addressed later to avoid interruptions
- Do participants consent to the meeting being recorded - if the facility is available? (RCT Teams usage does not allow this at present)
- What will happen if someone has a bad connection or the internet drops out?

Q: How should we set a date for an annual review?

A: The annual review should be held at the **latest the day before the anniversary of the first final statement**. It may be necessary to hold an interim Annual Review earlier, for example where transition between key stages needs to be considered, there are concerns about the appropriateness of provision or significant information becomes available which needs to be reflected in the statement.

Guidance in the SEN Code of Practice recommends 6 weeks’ notice is given of the intended annual review, This provides the opportunity for those involved to prepare and submit any reports, it maybe that some professionals will be unable to attend so the opportunity to contribute in writing prior to the review is crucial.



For full information consult chapter 9 of the SEN Code of Practice
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/special-educational-needs-code-of-practice-for-wales.pdf>

Q: What if the parent/carer doesn't want the annual review to take place virtually?

A: Where ever possible parents/carers need to participate in an annual review, if the parent wishes the annual review to be delayed until a face to face meeting can be held then their wishes should be respected. Schools are advised to keep a record of any correspondence to this effect.

Q: How do I make sure everyone has access to all the reports/information to be shared at the meeting?

A: When informing participants of the date there should be a reminder that any written information needs to be provided in time for it to be circulated 2 weeks prior to the meeting (in line with the Code of Practice). This should be shared electronically and password protected, or copied and posted to participants.

Q: What if the parent/carer is concerned about the child being present or siblings interrupting the meeting?

A: We are all learning to work differently when working from home and participating in virtual meetings. When you set the date and time for the meeting, ask what time of day is most suitable. Provide the parent/carer with lots of reassurance. It may be appropriate to break the meeting into shorter chunks so the child can be present for some sections e.g. what we like and admire; and be occupied elsewhere for the section discussing concerns.

Q: How do we ensure pupil and parent views are well represented?

A: Speak with the parent prior to the meeting in time to share their views with the written information from other participants. It is a good idea to share templates for person centred tools to gather pupil and parent views for example those found here <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/>

If the child is accessing a childcare provision in a hub school, someone who knows them well could use the tools with them to gather their views prior to the meeting. Consider using multimedia approaches to share their views, photographs or videos of them doing things they enjoy or are good at.

Other resources to support person centred reviews

<https://gov.wales/person-centred-reviews-toolkit-guidance-education-providers>

<https://gov.wales/person-centred-reviews-guidance-families>

<https://gov.wales/how-prepare-your-person-centred-review>

<https://gov.wales/person-centred-reviews-guidance-professionals>

Q: What should happen after the meeting?

A: The Head Teacher should ensure an appropriate person completes the record of the meeting and it is shared with all participants for them to agree it is an accurate record of the meeting. As it will not be possible to have parents sign the paperwork, please ask them to send you an email confirming they agree with the content and send this as an attachment to ALNAS (ALNAS@rctcbc.gov.uk) with the record of the meeting.

Annual Review Panel is still taking place and outcomes of annual reviews are considered by this panel regularly.