

Person Centred Approaches:

Preparing for and running person centred meetings in early years settings



This document has been created in order to support settings with person centred thinking, approaches and meetings including Annual Reviews and Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan Meetings.

It aims to provide guidance which you can use to support your setting in person centred thinking and with the processes that surround it. It may be helpful to read this document prior to conducting your first person centred meetings as well as any subsequent meetings.

What are Person Centred approaches?

Person centred approaches place the child and their family at the centre. This way of working reflects what a child is able to do, what is important to them (now and in the future) and thinks about what support they might need in order to reach their potential. It is a continuous process of listening, learning and action in order to support the child and their family to get what they want out of life.

Being person centred includes problem solving and thinking about how we can allocate the most appropriate support and resources in order to enable children to work towards their aspirations. It is a way of thinking and relating to the world and other people rather than a specific technique, tool or strategy.

How is it different?

Being person centred may be a slightly different way of working. It puts a greater emphasis on:

- What the child wants, what is important to them and what they are good at rather than focusing on what they find hard.
- Greater involvement of family.
- Goals based on what a child is good at rather than their areas of need.

For example:

Traditional Planning	vs.	Person-Centred Planning
Disabilities		Abilities
What they can't do		What they can do
Written reports		Interviews with families
Fitting into the system		Creating dreams for the future
Medical/clinical		Strengths, likes and dislikes
Standardised assessments		Flexible, child-centred assessment

How does it work in early years settings?

It is important to collect information with a child creatively and where possible, as well as making sure the views of the child's family are collected, heard and incorporated into the support provided for the child.

Examples of Person Centred approaches

Although being person centred is an overall approach and way of thinking, there are tools which can be used to support this approach. These can include:

- One page profile (this can include what is important to the child and their family, please see appendices)
- Using person centred planning tools (please see appendices)
- Person centred meetings (such as an Annual Review or EHC Plan Meeting)

Gaining children's views

It is important to think about how best to gain children's views. Questions to think about might include:

- Who is the best person to gain a child views? Key worker and/or parent?
- How can they be supported to express their view? Use of symbols/pictures/objects of reference/play and our interactions with the child.
- How can we use observations to gain likes/dislikes?
- How can we work with the family to gain views? What can parents/carers/siblings and other family members tell us about the child?

Gaining family views

As already mentioned it is really important to also gain the views of the family that surround the child. Using person centred tools and approaches can be a really helpful way to gain views and think about all the strengths and positives of a child in a meaningful way. Person centred meetings, such as annual reviews and EHC Plan meeting support you in gaining family views before the meeting as well as during it.

What is a Person Centred Review meeting?

"A person centred review is an opportunity to gather information about what is important to the person, now and for the future, what support the person needs and what is working and not working in their life."
(Mathiesen, Helen Sanderson Associates)

The new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (2014) requires that we use person centred planning processes when working with children and young people with SEND, planning with them and reviewing their plans.

How is it different from other meetings?

This meeting is all about what is important to the child and their family from their own perspective. It is designed to be more user-friendly and informal than the traditional style of meetings. When you walk into the room of a person centred meeting there might be flip chart paper on the walls, pictures on the walls or a PowerPoint, there might be music playing and chairs could be set up in a horseshoe shape, rather than around tables. The setting of the meeting depends upon what will put the family at ease and support them in expressing their views and their child's views. The aim of this approach is to be able to gather information from everyone on an equal footing. It is important to prepare for the meeting beforehand (e.g. setting the room up and preparing the family) in order to make the process as beneficial as possible.



What information do I need to gain before a person centred meeting?

You will need to gain information from the child, their family and any other professionals involved before a person centred meeting. If the meeting is an Annual Review or an EHC Plan Meeting the SEN team will send out guidance to support you in doing this.

Planning for a Person Centred Meetings?

There are several steps to planning a person centred review:

Questions to ask	
How are we going to gain the views of the child?	
How are we going to gain the views of the family?	
How are we going to support these views in being heard in the meeting?	
How are we going to set up the room for the meeting?	
How are we going to ensure that outcomes are based on views and what the child and family wants to achieve?	

Once we have thought about and answered these questions we will be better prepared for a person centred meeting.

What might Person Centred Meetings look like?



There are different ways in which Person Centred Meetings can be facilitated. However you need to explain at the start of the meeting that it may be different to other meetings attended. The most important aspects are the needs and wishes of the child and their family. This could include having a PowerPoint presentation (such as of pictures), having objects that are important for the child or having flip chart paper on the walls. No matter how the meeting is presented it might be helpful to have some headings, these are the headings below suggested by Helen Sanderson Associates. However, you may want to use headings that you feel better support the child and their family.

- **Who is here?**
- **Ground rules**
- **What people like and admire about the child?**
- **What is important to the child now?**
- **What is important to the child for the future?**
- **What support does this child need to stay healthy and safe: What does good support look like?**
- **What's working/not working in the child's life?**
- **Questions to answer / issues to resolve**
- **Action planning**

We use these headings to help us think about how we can plan with the child based on what is important to them. Often in a person centred meeting there is limited time, so it will be important to ask the people who know the child well to think about these headings before the meeting (preparation is the key) – then we can use the meeting to focus on working together to form the most appropriate 'outcomes' for the child based on what the person wants for their future and what is important to them.

Action planning

Action planning is an important part of the person centred meeting process. It includes deciding what needs to happen to support the child in achieving their outcomes. It is possible that appropriate actions will have been discussed throughout the meeting. The outcomes formed during this time should be based on what is important for the child, build on their strengths and interests and include their aspirations.



The IDLP's and/or SMART targets that you use within your setting will guide the short and long term outcomes that you set.

Examples of short term outcomes:	Examples of long term outcomes:
To show an interest in new experiences or toy when supported by an adult.	To initiate an interaction with another child.
To take turns rolling a ball back and forth with their Key Worker.	To turn take spontaneously with another child.
To sit on the carpet for 30 seconds during circle time.	To join in at circle time.

Who is there to support this process?

- There are early years professionals who can support you with person centred thinking and approaches. These include your Reaching Children and Families Worker, Portage and Educational Psychologist. An SEN/LA

Officer will also attend an EHC Plan Meeting and support you through this process.

- The Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) offer free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with SEND. Referrals can be made from settings, other professionals or the families themselves (0161 7610401).

Local contacts

- Bury Parents Forum, a local social enterprise which offers information and training in order to enable and support families to plan for what they want. For more information please visit: www.buryparentsforum.org.uk of contact them on 0161 762 1444.

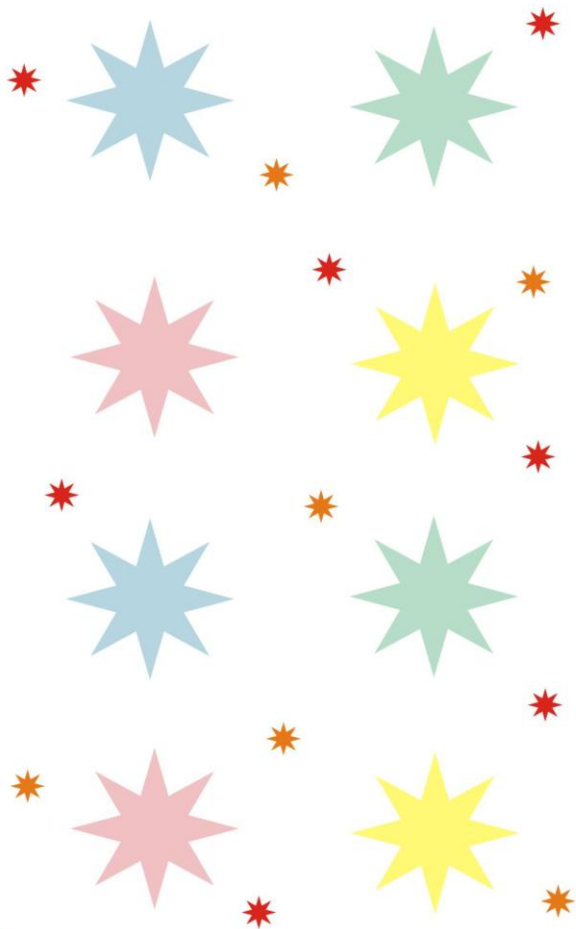
Useful National contacts

- <http://www.sheffkids.co.uk/adultssite/pages/onepageprofilestemplates.html> (examples of one page profiles)
- www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk
- www.communicationmatters.org.uk
- www.inclusive-solutions.com
- www.learningdisabilities.org.uk
- www.inclusiononline.co.uk
- www.makaton.org
- www.talkingmats.com
- www.widgit.com/symbols/index.htm

Appendices: One Page Profiles



What people like and admire about me...



Photo

What makes me happy...



How I want to be supported...





What people like and admire about me...

Photo

What makes me happy...



How I want to be supported...