

## **Guidance for Preparing for and Running a Conversion Meeting**

### **Guidance**

Conversion Review Meetings must follow a person-centred format; this includes a preparation stage as well as the meeting itself and completion of the proposed and then final EHC Plan. There are strict government timescales which the local authority must abide by and educational settings should not proceed with conversion meetings unless instructed to do so by. Failure to carry out the conversion in the correct way may result in a new meeting needing to take place as parents/carer's and young people can proceed to Judicial Review if the process has not been carried out correctly. It is important to recognise that the Statement of SEN is a legal document as is the EHC Plan and as such the EHC Plan must be created in full accordance to the law. This guidance aims to set out how the SEND Service will work with the educational settings to ensure this happens.

### **Timescales**

Lambeth SEND Service have 14 weeks from the date the school formally notified parent/carer or a young person (16+) to inform them that their Statement of SEN will be converted to an EHC Plan to issuing a final EHC Plan (20 weeks to convert a LDA to an EHC Plan).

*See flowchart.*

### **Preparation**

We have designed a professional report template which gathers information in a way that will facilitate a person centred conversion meeting. This means that the information in the reports must focus on the child/young person's strengths, just as much as on their special educational needs. The usual recommendations section is replaced by a focus on setting outcomes and recommending the type of provision needed to be put in place to ensure the child/young person reaches these outcomes.

SENCOs are familiar with preparing for Annual Review meetings; Conversion Review meetings are very similar in preparation, i.e. SENCOs will need to send the professional advice template to the relevant people who would usually contribute to an Annual Review. However, it is important that professionals return their information to you, and you complete the educational perspective (on the professional advice template) in good time before the meeting date so that the EHC Template can be populated with information and shared with the parent/carer and/or young person **2 weeks** before the Conversion Review meeting.

### **Person-centred approach in preparation stage:**

Parents/carers and the child/young person must be involved at every step of the process, this can happen by:

- When you know the term for conversion review ensure that the date set for the meeting is arranged with the parent/carer first to ensure their ability to attend (e.g. in the EHC Assessment process EHC Coordinators ask the parent for 3 potential dates/good times to meet).
- Parents/Carers and/or young people must be given the professionals reports and the draft EHC template up to two weeks before the actual conversion meeting to give them time to prepare.
- Parents/Carers may need support to complete their part of Section A: All About Me or they may feel happy to complete by themselves. **We will provide you with a Section A: All About Me guidance document.** This will make clear the kind of information that is needed to be included.
- Children/young people should be asked directly, where able, to input into their All About Me profile and be supported to do so as their needs require.
- The child/young person should be asked who they would like to be at their meeting, who knows them best and where possible and practical this should be arranged.
- A discussion should be had with the parents/carers about which professionals they think are key and who they would like to have at the conversion meeting.

### **Gathering the necessary professionals**

The conversion review is not a re-assessment, although new assessment information might need to be sought to provide the most up to date input to setting long-term (and short-term) outcomes. Therefore it is up to the educational setting (with regard to the parent/carer's and/or young person's request) to select the professionals that they feel are a priority for supporting the child/young person's conversion meeting. Continuous involvement of key professionals, e.g. SALT or EP (traded services) is likely to be recommended in the child/young person's Statement of SEN and the expenditure for this resource is therefore already accounted for in the SEN notional fund and/or top-up fund for the child/young person.

Attendance by key Health practitioners and specific Social Care professionals is currently under discussion.

A SEND Management and Monitoring Officer (SMMO) will provide direct support through attendance at a number of the first conversion review meetings in each school/setting. One of their roles will be to monitor the person-centred approach used throughout the meeting and in attempts to include the parent/carer and child/young person in the whole process.

## **Running the Conversion Meeting**

An appropriate room needs to be organised for the Conversion Meeting. It is essential that the child/young person is present at the start of the meeting (and for as much of the meeting as they want to be in or is appropriate) and so access arrangements and support will need to be thought about carefully. Every effort should be made to ensure that parents/carers with young children are able to attend.

There will be an agenda set out for the meeting and it should be used to keep the meeting to time and to ensure that all of the necessary discussions and information are gathered:

### **Agenda**

1. Introduction and time keeping – **it is important to ensure that everyone around the table/room knows who people are and what their role is, encourage members to say their name and role clearly so that the minute taker can note these down and parents are sure of who is who and why they are there.**

**Time keeping is also important to keep to – set out a 1 hour 30 minutes time boundary. The chair of the meeting should sit where they can easily see a clock to monitor time. Be aware that some people will talk lots and some people will not talk very much. The chair of the meeting needs to be skilled in making sure that all voices are heard equally. (Lambeth Educational Psychologists taking part can support with this).**

**Language must not be a barrier to a parent/carer's inclusion in the meeting. Interpreters must be engaged and it must be ensured that the correct dialect has been asked for.**

2. Aims:

- To convert child/young person SEN Statement to an EHC Plan
- To review progress
- To set new Outcomes – long term and short term
- To discuss: school placement/transport/attendance/transition

3. Conversion:

- Views of child/young person in Section A – **this should be by the child/young person wherever possible and creativity should be used to communicate the child/young person's views wherever they cannot e.g. pictures, films, posters etc.**
- Views and aspirations of parents in Section A – **parents to be encouraged to share their aspirations, the history, the strengths and needs and the outcomes they would like to see for their child**
- Review strengths and needs for each relevant category of SEN in Section B – **with the EHC template already populated with the information from the professionals this section becomes an opportunity to talk about strengths identified by various parties and the**

**needs identified. The aim is to gain an holistic view of the child/young person and clarify any differences of opinion. This should include a review of what the child/young person has achieved over the past year.**

- Add new information to Section B based on parental and professional knowledge at this time in Section B
  - Discuss Section C – **Health in this section refers to any diagnoses given and any ongoing treatment/involvement by Health that does not relate to education or training needs**
  - Discuss Section D – **this describes any Social Care involvement**
  - Identify priorities (e.g. To develop ...) Section E – **this draws together the discussions had about strengths and needs and aspirations it should describe the main areas that now need to be focused on e.g. 'To be able to communicate his needs, wants, joy and fears'**
  - Set long term Outcomes in Section E – **thinking ahead to next transition points – end of Yr2, Yr5, Yr7, Yr9, Yr 11, Yr13. The long term outcomes are the main outcomes in the EHC Plan because the Plan cannot be updated annually.**
  - Set short term Outcomes in Section E – **the suggestion is that there will be a range of outcomes long, medium, short – for the purpose of the Conversion Review it is important to set the next annual targets (or 6 months if EY)**
4. Conversion Review Meeting Report finalise parts not covered in EHC Plan conversion – **this would be the Actions section from the old Annual Review Report – any changes needed to be made regarding change of placement, transport issues, requesting additional support etc**
  5. Discussion of school placement/transport/attendance/transition – **important that this part of the meeting is minuted accurately to reflect all views in the room.**
  6. Conclude meeting informing all present of next steps/agreed actions
  7. Feedback of the process from all involved

#### **After the review**

- Do not circulate the completed draft template
- The completed template and covering sheet for reviews must be returned to the SEND Officer within two weeks of the meeting
- A proposed EHC Plan will be circulated to all those who participated in the review and a period of 15 days will be allowed to check accuracy, clarify any points and/or comment etc.

## **Training and Support for Educational Settings**

All of the Lambeth EPs will be trained to role model a person-centred Conversion Review Meeting and will be able to advise SENCOs at all stages of the process.

SEND Monitoring and Management Officers (SMMOs – previously Statement Managing Officers) will be trained to recognise and contribute to a person-centred Conversion Review Meeting and will also be a contact person for SENCOs.

### Early Years /Schools

All SENCOs will have a Local Authority Officer (SMMO/EP) who will chair their first Conversion Review Meeting. The officer will role model the process following a standard AGENDA for the meeting. If an EP is chairing the meeting, the SMMO will take minutes of discussions held and actions agreed. If an SMMO is chairing the meeting the SENCO is asked to keep minutes.

SENCOs will chair/lead their second and subsequent Conversion Meetings with support from the SMMO. Any Lambeth EPs invited to attend the conversion review will also support the SENCO and invitees through the process.

### Special Schools

Each of our special schools (The Livity, The Michael Tippet, Lansdowne, Turney, Elm Court and Aurora House) will have a bespoke meeting with Sue Franklin, Lead Educational Psychologist and/or Adam Yarnold, SEND Service Manager to discuss each individual schools training and support needs.

### Colleges

A bespoke meeting will be held with Lambeth College to discuss the training and support needs of college staff in carrying out the conversion meetings for students with LDA/Statements of SEN.

### Out of Borough Placements

A Lambeth Educational Psychologist and/or SMMO will chair Conversion Meetings for Lambeth children following a preparation stage led by the school (as outlined above).