

Person centred planning with children and young people

The Tower Hamlets model



Acknowledgements

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Any mistakes or omissions are, of course, our own.

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
a) Aims	1
b) Benefits	2
Box: Philosophy	3
Box: 2014 SEND Code of Practice	4
Box: Theoretical background	5
2. Person centred cultures	6
Box: Index for Inclusion	8
3. Person centred processes	9
a) The ladder of participation	9
b) Person centred reviewing	10
i) Planning a person centred review	12
ii) Running a person centred review	14
iii) After a person centred review	16
4. Person centred tools	17
a) The person centred agenda	17
b) Person centred language	18
Box: Listening to children and young people	19
i) Person centred outcomes and targets	22
ii) Person centred action planning	23
c) One page profiles	24
d) Further person centred tools and formats	25
5. Examples of children and young people's participation	26
a) What makes a good contribution?	26
b) When are contributions less effective?	27
c) Examples of levels of participation at reviews	27
d) Case studies	29
i) Nawal's review	29
ii) Daniel's review	30
iii) Anita's review	32
6. References and further reading	33

1. Introduction

'People said I am funny, getting better at maths, lots of people said the same things. I found out new things, I realised that people knew a lot more about me than I thought. It was good... I can get loud. My behaviour can get fizzy. I need help to calm down and to stay away from Siddique. The meeting was good, people were honest... I understood what was said, and it made things better. It made me laugh...I smiled a lot...people were listening to each other... I have already tried some of the ideas to help and that has helped me behave better in the playground'

Sam, aged 8, talking about his review

Person centred planning aims to put children and young people at the centre of planning and decisions that affect them. When children are meaningfully involved, this can change their attitude, behaviour and learning and make them active partners who work with adults to bring about change.

The Tower Hamlets model of person centred planning was adapted from Helen Sanderson Associates' work for the government's 'Valuing People Now' strategy for adults with learning disabilities. The Tower Hamlets model was developed through an extended pilot project with several local schools. It continues to evolve based on feedback from children and young people, their parents, and the work done by staff in the pilot project, and beyond.

a. Aims

The Tower Hamlets model of person centred planning aims to:

- Put children and young people at the centre of planning and decisions that affect them
- Bring people together – both to celebrate successes, and also to address difficulties with honesty and care
- Help children and young people learn how to express their views, how to choose and how to listen
- Show children and young people that they are listened to, respected, and valued and cared for – that they belong
- Help adults get to know the children and young people they work with, and give insight into the impact they are having on children and young people
- Make plans that build towards meaningful outcomes for children and young people and their families



b. Benefits

Our ongoing work shows that this model of person centred planning can lead to:

- Children and young people showing increased motivation and self confidence, taking more responsibility for their learning and progress, and showing greater maturity
- Parents seeing the child or young person in a new light – “through different eyes”
- More collaborative working relationships between children and young people, families and professionals
- Clarity of purpose for professionals, developing a shared understanding of the child or young person, what their outcomes should be and how they should be supported
- Targets being more individualised, personal and meaningful
- Teachers and professionals being able to reflect on and improve their practice, and become more skilled in listening to and talking with young people

Philosophy

Person centred planning is an ethical approach to working with vulnerable clients. Ideas about 'the voice of the child' and 'person centred' ways of working are part of a broader social movement concerned with promoting social justice, including the civil rights, women's rights, and disability rights movements.

In 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child internationally recognised children's right to be involved in making decisions that affect them. Since then, UK legislation and guidance has routinely emphasised the importance of listening to children including: Every Child Matters (2003); the Disability Discrimination Act (2005); Valuing People Now strategy for adults with learning disabilities, (2009); the Munro Review of Child Protection (2012) and the SEND Code of Practice (2014).

The guiding principles of person centred planning are that:

- Children and young people should be listened to and their views and feelings should be taken into account
- All children and young people have a right to be consulted about services they receive
- All children and young people have a right to participate actively and equally in school life
- Children and young people are valued partners, who can play an important role in making things better
- The adults' role is to empower the child or young person; to promote their independence and enable them to do things for themselves, wherever possible

We hope that this guidance booklet will introduce those new to this approach to the ideas and practicalities, and enable those already experienced in this way of working to go further with it.

We begin by looking at what it means to have a **person centred culture**, and how this is reflected in policies, attitudes, and practices.

Then we outline **person centred processes**, and how these work with children, young people and their families.

Next we look at a range of **person centred tools**, the practical strategies and frameworks used as steps along the journey of a person centred process.

After that we give **examples** of how children and young people have participated in their reviews.

Finally there are **references** and further **reading**.



The 2014 SEND Code of Practice states that:

“The assessment and planning process should:

- focus on the child or young person as an individual
- enable children and young people and their parents to express their views, wishes and feelings
- enable children and young people and their parents to be part of the decision-making process
- be easy for children, young people and their parents or carers to understand, and use clear ordinary language and images rather than professional jargon
- highlight the child or young person’s strengths and capabilities
- enable the child or young person, and those that know them best, to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
- tailor support to the needs of the individual
- organise assessments to minimise demands on families
- bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach, and
- deliver an outcomes-focused and co-ordinated plan for the child or young person and their parents

This approach is often referred to as a person centred approach. By using this approach within a family context, professionals and local authorities can ensure that children, young people and parents are involved in all aspects of planning and decision-making.”

2014 SEND Code of Practice, Section 9.22 & 9.23, page 148

Theoretical background

Person centred planning draws on ideas from a range of psychological traditions, including Social Psychology, Personal Construct Theory and Positive Psychology. Person centred planning can promote personalised learning, self-awareness, self efficacy and also resilience and a sense of belonging. Many professionals will recognise person centred approaches as being a practical application of ideas from positive psychology, including Solution Focused work and Appreciative Inquiry. Professionals may also notice parallels between person centred work and applications of social psychology routinely used in schools such as 'Circle Time' (Mosley, 2005) and 'Circles of Friends' (Newton and Wilson 2003).

Social Learning Theory – perhaps the most influential theory of learning and development, formulated by Albert Bandura in 1977, and later developed by many others including Carol Dweck. This emphasises both the importance of people learning from observation, and also the role of the learner's intrinsic motivation – their sense of pride, satisfaction and achievement. Dweck explains the importance of having a 'growth mindset' with mistakes and challenges being an essential part of any meaningful learning process.

Personal Construct Theory – a way of understanding the ideas which shape each person's unique view of the world. Just like scientists, children strive to understand the world around them and make predictions about what will happen. This means creating theories to explain events, called "personal constructs". These individual mental pictures then act as lenses, through which we interpret events. Trying to make sense of how someone sees the world helps you listen meaningfully and understand them as a person.

Positive Psychology – the study of the positive aspects of human life, such as happiness, wellbeing and human flourishing. Martin Seligman, a key proponent of this view, described it as: "The scientific study of optimal human functioning, which aims to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive."

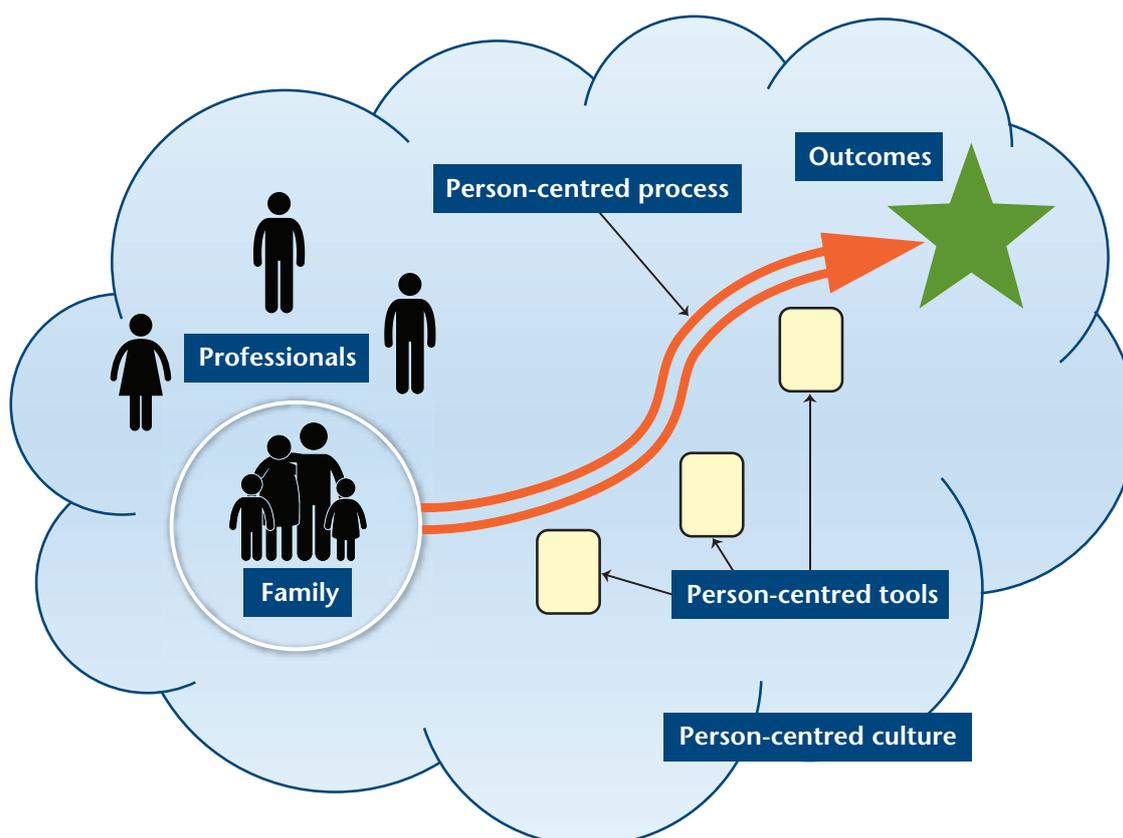
2. Person centred cultures

'I think honesty's very important because it is part of trust, and I don't want to promise something I can't deliver. It can be very difficult to be honest sometimes in this sort of situation and it takes time, but in the long run it's best... I hope this will give you a sense of achievement and self-confidence... it's talking to the patient, understanding what they are trying to achieve. '

Mr Hill, orthopaedic surgeon from Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, from Scope Trendsetter Emily's video.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5nGMHvD2p4>

Person centred planning should be one aspect of a person centred culture, where adults work together and treat each other with respect and care. The emphasis on inclusion starting with relationships between the adults is not new – see information below about The 'Index for Inclusion' (Booth and Ainscow, 2011).

Our experience is that most colleagues in the 'helping professions' already hold person centred values and recognise the importance of listening to children and young people. However, unless there is a supportive organisational culture, there





is a risk that busy professionals have little space to develop collaborative ways of working with children and their families, and meaningful ways of listening to children and young people. A person centred culture should be reflected in attitudes towards children and adults, irrespective of their status or role.

In a person centred culture, the whole person is considered, and we identify their strengths, abilities and good qualities and encourage them to share their interests, preferences, hopes and ambitions. At the same time we need to be honest and realistic about the difficulties and barriers they face.

Through this way of working, the child or young person is listened to and involved, and should feel valued and connected; trust is built, as well as between parents, professionals, and children and young people. The model demonstrates that the child or young person is at the centre of a network, and that that they are part of something bigger – a community that values and cares for them. Professionals should take the initiative to listen actively and meaningfully, acknowledging that they are learning too.

A person centred culture means: high aspirations and thinking forward to adulthood, even for very young children; paying more attention to outcomes in the short, medium and long term; aiming high, and making realistic plans. Adults should not offer false hope, nor deny the possibility of positive change.

The Index for Inclusion, Booth and Ainscow

The *Index for Inclusion* is a set of materials to guide schools through a process of inclusive school development. It is about building supportive communities and fostering high achievement for all staff and students. It was originally written in 2000, and the 2002 edition was distributed to all schools in the UK. The revised edition (2011) has been translated into over 40 languages.

Indicators for DIMENSION A Creating inclusive *cultures*

A.1 Building community- Indicators:

- A.1.1 Everyone is made to feel welcome.
- A.1.2 Students help each other.
- A.1.3 Staff collaborate with each other.
- A.1.4 Staff and students treat one another with respect.
- A.1.5 There is a partnership between staff and parents/carers.
- A.1.6 Staff and governors work well together.
- A.1.7 All local communities are involved in the school.

A.2 Establishing inclusive values- Indicators:

- A.2.1 There are high expectations for all students.
- A.2.2 Staff, governors, students and parents/carers share a philosophy of inclusion.
- A.2.3 Students are equally valued.
- A.2.4 Staff and students treat one another as human beings as well as occupants of a 'role'.
- A.2.5 Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school.
- A.2.6 The school strives to minimise discriminatory practice

<http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/inclusion-index-explained.shtml>

We can think of the level of the child or young person's participation as a dial that can be turned up or down. We aim to increase the level of participation a little each time. The level of participation must be meaningful to the child or young person and appropriate to their age and maturity.

Person centred planning means teamwork and including the child or young person. However, it does not mean doing everything they might ask. Adults retain their professional judgement and the responsibilities linked to their professional role. At the same time the child or young person may tell us something that might surprise or challenge us.

- In order to share potentially difficult things, children and young people need to feel trusted, valued and accepted – that they will not be blamed for saying something difficult
- In order to hear these potentially difficult things, adults must be genuinely curious about what the young person has to say
- Being a reflective practitioner means having expertise, this is different from having 'all the answers'

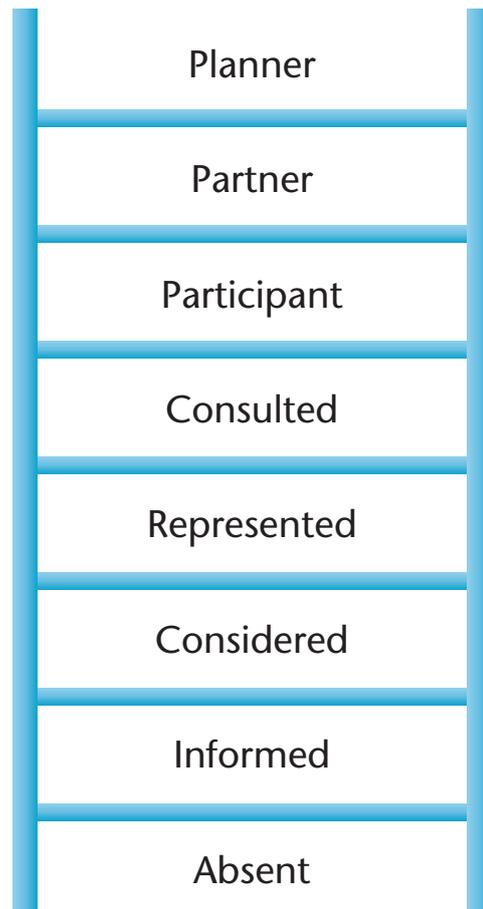
3. Person centred processes

Many practitioners are familiar with the idea of inclusion as a 'continuum' or a process; similarly, techniques such as using 'scaling' within solution focussed work can be useful ways to think about 'where we are now' and 'next steps'. Historically, Arnstein and later Hart introduced the idea of a 'ladder' to think about citizenship and participation.

a. The Ladder of Participation

The ladder of participation is an idea which can help us to think about children and young people's involvement in meetings and planning. It provides a series of steps from complete absence to an active involvement, and represents how children and young people's participation can develop over time.

Any structure of this kind is necessarily simplified. Children and young people's participation can be at different levels in different contexts and there is significant overlap between the rungs of the ladder. Many younger children or those with more complex needs will be starting at a very low point on the ladder and, realistically, some will always find it hard to participate at the higher levels. However, all children can gradually be enabled to participate more over time. Please see page 22 for examples of practice linked to the different parts of the ladder.



When a child or young person is **absent**, even though professionals are talking about them, they are being thought of as a case or a series of problems, rather than as a person.

A child or young person is **informed** when they know that adults are meeting to think about them and they are told about the decisions that have been made. This could be communicated through pictures, in writing or through a face-to-face conversation.

A child or young person is **considered** when adults use their judgment to say what they believe the child or young person's views might be, when the child or young person is unable or unwilling to make choices or speak for themselves. These statements should be based on evidence and are always taken as tentative and subject to amendment.

A child or young person is **represented** when their views are shared through direct quotes or choices the child or young person themselves has made. They may or may not attend the meeting – either way, adults hear what the child or young person wants to say in the child or young person’s own words, or by seeing their work.

A child or young person is **consulted** when they are able to answer direct questions at a meeting, or they can respond to decisions made about them.

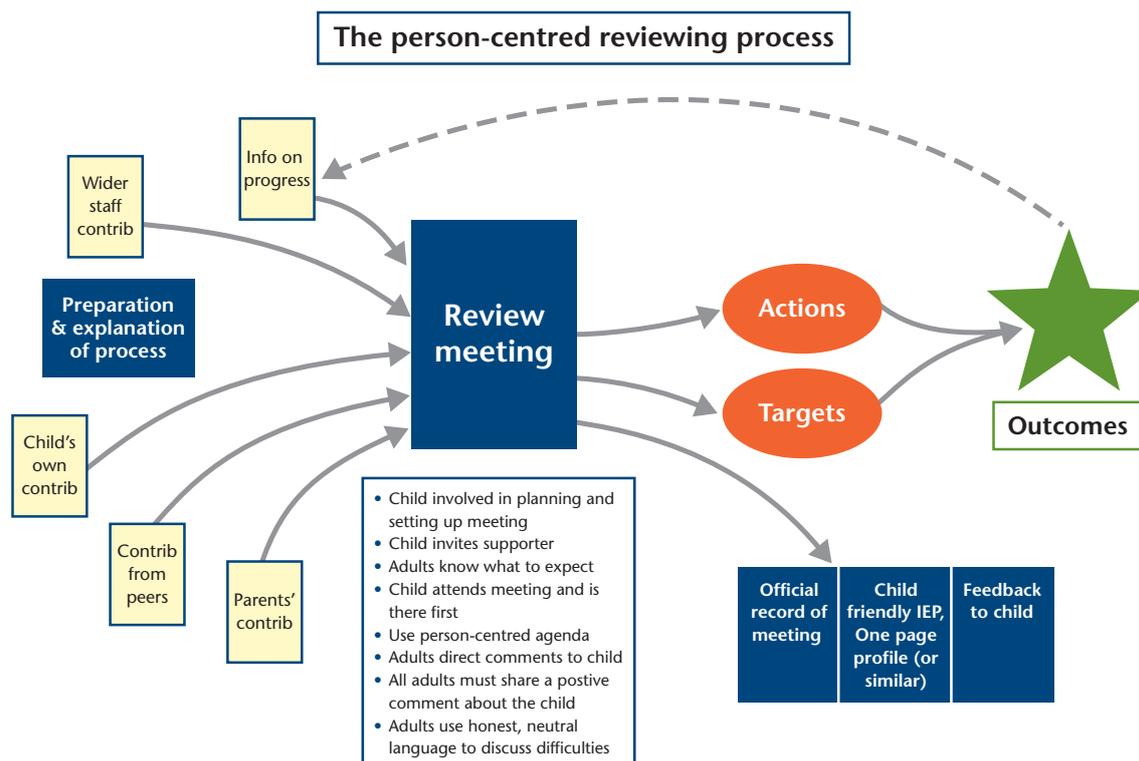
A child or young person is a **participant** when they become more active in the meeting and ask their own questions of the adults. They begin to contribute more to decision making and have more influence over planned outcomes.

A child or young person is a **partner** when they are involved in deciding what will be discussed; they might be able to lead a section of the meeting or suggest relevant targets for themselves and actions for themselves or others.

A child or young person becomes a **planner** when they are able to give adults useful feedback about what works and what doesn’t work for them; they might help adults evaluate practice or influence the service provided later to others.

b. Person centred reviewing

Person centred reviewing is a process which brings people together around a child or young person, to evaluate how things are going in a particular part of their life.





Person centred reviews can be used for many different purposes, including:

- For termly reviews of SEND support
- For the Annual Review of a Statement of SEN or Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan
- For a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting or Common Assessment Framework (CAF) review
- To make or review a Personal Education Plan (PEP) or Looked After Children (LAC) review
- To make or review a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)
- For transition planning

The ideal review is one where:

The child or young person looks forward to it and is confident it will be a positive experience, and a celebration of their achievements.

AND

Everyone leaves confident that the difficulties of the child or young person's situation have been addressed honestly and fairly and clear about the plan and how it will help the child or young person.

(i) Planning a person centred review

Essential elements

- Think about the child or young person's current level of participation and their preferred communication style and plan how they can contribute to, or be involved, in the meeting
- The child or young person needs to be told in advance, the purpose of the meeting and what to expect on the day, for example through photos, an explanation or a social story
- The child or young person should bring an appropriate contribution to the meeting, for example a special book, presentation, poster, interview, or video clip
- The child or young person must have an opportunity to share their preferences and their views on:
 - their strengths and difficulties
 - the progress they feel they have made
 - the support they receive

This could follow the person centred agenda (see page 14)

- The child or young person's parents need to know what to expect at the meeting and be given an explanation of the person centred approach and an opportunity to consider the agenda
- Professionals who have been invited also need to know what to expect at the meeting and that while reports can be useful to bring, it is important to plan how information will be shared, so it is meaningful to the child or young person

<p>When I am older I would like...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to work in ICT • To know how computers function • To go to university to study ICT • To live in London 	<p>My favourite things are.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star Wars • ICT • Computer Games • Mobile phone • Contact with my family 	<p>Things I like at school are....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT • Food Technology • SEN room where I can relax • The staff • Friends I have made 												
<p>Things that are important to me outside of school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My family • Friends • Phone • Pets • Being treated fairly • Getting back with my mum or nan 	<p>My Review</p> 	<p>People who help and support me at school....</p> <table border="0"> <tbody> <tr> <td>• Rasma</td> <td>Kathy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Sarah</td> <td>Mr. Cheedy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Leo</td> <td>Mr. Afsar</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Muhibur</td> <td>Jen</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Ruhul</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Ms Caughey</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	• Rasma	Kathy	• Sarah	Mr. Cheedy	• Leo	Mr. Afsar	• Muhibur	Jen	• Ruhul		• Ms Caughey	
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<p>Things I don't like at school.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography • Art • PE • Maths 	<p>I am.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confident • Hard-working • Kind • Helpful • Independent 	<p>My friends at school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicholas • Jabed • Redouanne • Nayim • Jason • Tommy 												



Important elements

- The child or young person's peers or classmates prepare a contribution to the meeting, such as a poster, a special book, a mind map, audio interviews, video clips etc. This could focus on questions like:
 - What do we like and admire about the child or young person?
 - What is the child or young person good at?
 - What can the child or young person do now that they couldn't do last year?
- Older and/or more able children and young people should be involved in choosing which of their peers contribute, and how
- When other adults who know the child make a contribution to the meeting it can support the child or young person's feelings of being valued and connected
 - Adults could be invited to write on a poster in the staff room, titled, "What do we like and admire about the child or young person?" or "What progress/achievements have we noticed for the child or young person?"

Valuable additional extras

- The child or young person might help to plan how the meeting will be conducted, for example by making simple choices such as the venue, layout etc.
- Children and young people being able to choose someone special to invite. This is usually a friend, but could also be someone from their extended family or a professional they know well
- The child or young person makes their own invitations or helps send formal invitation letters out
- The child or young person chooses snacks and drinks or music to play as people arrive



(ii) Running a person centred review

Essential elements

- If they are attending, the child or young person needs to be in the room first, to welcome people as they arrive. It is their review, so they should feel it is their space
- The child or young person needs to be appropriately supported to make their contribution, for example through the use of PECS or by a supportive adult
- The meeting needs to follow the person centred agenda (see page 14)
- The meeting must have a positive and realistic tone
- Wherever possible, comments about the child or young person should be addressed directly to the child or young person themselves
- Everyone must contribute something they “like and admire” about the child or young person
- Comments about problems, difficulties, disagreements and barriers to success should only be shared under “What is not working well”
- Comments about concerns should be honest and fair, and everyone must avoid blaming or negative language
- The facilitator also has an important role in summarising and reframing other people’s comments, to ensure they are phrased in a way that is respectful and constructive, and that the child or young person can understand
- The child or young person’s recent attainment is recorded
- Progress against previous targets should be discussed under “What is working well?” and “What is not working well?”
- Any relevant Health & Safety issues or Care Plans are discussed

Important elements

- Think about the most appropriate layout for the meeting, for example a circle time layout, a horseshoe, round the table etc.
- The child or young person should attend for as long as possible, with consideration given to their ability to concentrate and to communicate
- If there are things that need to be discussed without the child or young person in the room, this should take place at the **end** of the meeting
- If one issue needs a longer discussion than is possible in a review meeting, suggest deferring it and arrange another time to cover it in the depth that it deserves
- Give an appropriate conclusion at the end of the meeting or when the child or young person leaves. This could be:
 - A clear positive summary of what was said
 - A clear explanation of what will happen next
 - A comment from everyone along the lines of
 - “I am proud of you because...”
 - “The thing I will remember from this meeting is...”
 - “After the meeting I am going to do...”

Valuable additional extras

- Using a visual timetable to show the agenda of the meeting can be a useful way of helping children and young people understand what is happening
- Having 10-15 minutes of free flow, where people circulate around the room to put their thoughts and ideas on paper, can be effective in supporting open and equal contributions
 - Each agenda item is put on a piece of flipchart paper on the walls around the room
 - Everyone writes their contributions on post-it notes and sticks them under the relevant heading
 - Parents and children may be given support to contribute in this way

What can go wrong at a person centred review?

Facilitating the meeting is a demanding role, and it is important to be aware in advance if there is a chance that parents and/or professionals will be in conflict during the meeting. Parents may also not feel ready or able to make appreciative comments about their child – or they may feel exposed by professionals being honest about the child’s difficulties. There is also a risk of breaching the child or young person’s right to confidentiality by discussing sensitive issues in front of their friend.



(iii) After a person centred review

Essential elements

- The child or young person needs something to keep afterwards. This can include:
 - Copies of the contributions made by classmates and staff
 - A record of the meeting, including the action plan
 - A child friendly Individual Education Plan
 - A one page profile
- Careful thought needs to be given to the child or young person's level of understanding and to how to make their record of the meeting **meaningful** to them

4. Person centred tools

a. The person centred agenda

While not all children or young people have the capacity to attend meetings, the person centred agenda enables adults to keep them in mind and to plan in a way which respects them as an individual. This agenda works as an intervention, because the order in which areas are discussed can help people think differently about the child or young person, their situation and their difficulties.

1. Welcome

- Introductions, ground rules and what to expect from a person centred review

2. Presentations

- Share the contributions which have been prepared in advance by the child or young person, their peers and adults who are not at the meeting

3. What do we like and admire about the child or young person?

- Make positive comments on the child or young person's character, strengths and achievements

4. What is important to the child or young person?

- Summarise their views and preferences about relationships, learning and the future
- List any important questions which need to be answered

5. Previous targets and actions

- If appropriate, recap the targets and actions from the previous review

6. What is working well?

- Comment on progress, support, successful strategies, effective provision, targets that have been achieved and completed actions from the previous review
- Include the views of the child or young person, the parents and professionals

7. What is not working well?

- Comment on difficulties, problems, barriers to success, disagreements, targets that have not been met and uncompleted actions
- Include the views of the child or young person, the parents, and professionals

8. What do we want the child or young person to learn?

- If appropriate, choose up to five specific, realistic targets or outcomes that are meaningful to the child or young person

9. Person centred action plan

- Base the plan on what is most important to the child or young person, and address what is not working well
- Use the child or young person's comments or ideas where possible, to shape the actions
- Be clear about who will do what, by when and who will check things are done

10. Conclusion

- Finish with a positive summary of the meeting



b. Person centred language

Person centred language means describing the person and their difficulties in a way that they or their family feel considers them as a whole person. A helpful guide is to imagine what the young person, or someone close to them, would think about what is being said about them, either now or later as an adult.

Using person centred language can be a powerful way to support honest and respectful communication. This means communicating directly to the young person wherever possible, using whatever medium they understand best.

Communicating accurately with children can be complex, especially those with additional needs. It is important that adults recognise that this is an imperfect process. Like adults, children can change their minds; they can also say something that the adults have not perfectly understood, and they may even say something because they believe it is what the adults want to hear. With the best of intentions, some adults can speak for a child, rather than genuinely representing their views.

Communication works well when the adult is genuinely interested in what the child or young person has to say, can keep an open mind, and checks carefully that they have properly understood, and faithfully represented, what the child has to say.

Listening to children and young people

The work of the psychologist Irvine Gersch reminds us that listening works best as a conversation, an interaction between two people with different perspectives, rather than one person trying to take in a speech.

Listening does not mean doing everything a child might ask. Children need to learn how to choose, and how to present their views as well as how to listen to others. Participation therefore involves negotiation, mediation skills and the ability to compromise.

Our expectations should be appropriate for the age and maturity of the child. Gersch thinks of listening to children as a continuum – not being all or nothing, but instead being like a ‘volume control’, which can be gradually ‘turned up’.

With time and practice adults and children develop their skills in expressing themselves and listening to each other.

Person centred language can have a positive impact for those at the lowest levels of participation, such as those who are very young or with profound needs. Here the benefits may be most apparent for the family, for example in a review meeting. However, experience has shown that it is all too easy for adults to underestimate how much children and young people understand.

Just as a carer working with an adult with a learning disability and physical needs might speak to their client before moving their wheelchair, person centred language means explaining and talking to the person about what we are doing to help and why.

Person centred language:

1. Is **clear and jargon free** - using everyday words. When written, it is accessible and inclusive, often supported by visuals.

Consider the difference between:

Technical language	Simpler language
Cranial imaging showed evidence Brenda has cerebral atrophy and hypoplastic corpus callosum.	A brain scan showed that there was damage to Brenda’s cerebral cortex, which is the area of the brain where complex thinking takes place. There was also damage to the corpus callosum, a bundle of nerve fibres which connects the left and right sides of the brain together.



2. Is **honest and realistic** - careful with extreme words and avoids absolute statements, expressing difficulties in a neutral and matter of fact tone.

Consider the difference between:

Judgemental language	Factual language
Jake's behaviour is demanding and aggressive. He is an intimidating bully who hits out for no reason.	Jake comes across as someone who needs a lot of attention and reassurance. He has attacked other boys three times in the last month, and as a result some other students have told staff that they feel scared of him.

3. Uses **explicit and fair assessments** - comparison to developmental norms can be useful and clear – comparison to peers or siblings is usually unhelpful.

Consider the difference between:

Comparison to others	Considering the child's own achievements
Ariana is poor in spelling and her writing level is the worst in the year.	Ariana finds spelling and writing challenging. She can now spell most of the 45 reception words, and can write short sentences with a high level of support.

4. Is **factual and verifiable** - being specific about time, place and context.
Using care when describing patterns.

Consider the difference between:

Focus on the problem	Considering the problem and possible solution
Briony makes friends easily, but every time she upsets them and always ends up isolated again.	Briony has the social skills to start a friendship, however she needs adult support to learn to repair and maintain relationships through difficulties.

5. **Allows for change** - not assuming that the child or young person's abilities or skills can never progress. Simply including the word 'yet' can change a perceived limit into a possibility.

Consider the difference between:

Language that sets limits	Language that acknowledges current skills
Jaylan's physical disability means he can never use the toilet on his own.	Jaylan can get himself to the accessible toilet, but he cannot yet move from his wheelchair to the toilet seat without adult help.

Sometimes one of the things that I can find tricky is to have every discussion you need to have, directed at the child. It's getting that balance between talking to the child and ... professionals and parents being able to have conversations about things that may be a bit sensitive, or at a level that might not be accessible for the child. Juggling that can sometimes be a bit tricky ... Over the time we have been doing reviews I have become more confident in tackling sensitive issues with the child there.

Charlotte, Primary School SENCo



(i) Person centred outcomes and targets

The purpose of person centred targets is to encourage the development of the skills, attitudes and behaviours that enable children and young people to learn, make progress and, in the long term, prepare for adulthood. If children and young people come to meetings ready to talk about what they want to change, and able to ask adults to help them achieve their goals, then a review meeting can become like a 'circle of adults' and a source of practical and emotional support.

We can only know that a target is genuinely person centred when we are clear about the child or young person's needs and wishes.

While SMART targets remain popular, person centred target setting emphasises targets which are **meaningful** to the child or young person. Targets should be specific, clear and realistic. It is essential to decide when targets will be reviewed. The right number of targets depends on the child or young person's needs and their capacity to understand – generally no more than three and, at most, five.

In educational settings, person centred targets relate to what is **additional and different** for the child or young person – not generic learning goals, which are set for all children by teachers as part of their regular curriculum.

Consider the difference between:

Generic target	Personalised target
Charlie needs to learn addition and subtraction with numbers up to one hundred.	Charlie will be able to shop for groceries, paying with notes and coins, and checking his change.

Working on something that is genuinely important to the young person tends to be much more motivating, and can help them become more confident to deal with other challenges with the support of those around them.

When children and young people feel a target 'belongs to them' and can explain it in their own words, this has a number of benefits, making goals meaningful, tangible and motivating.

Consider the difference between:

Target set by adult	Target in child or young person's own language
Bryan will start his writing independently and complete at least one sentence before asking for help.	I will start my work by myself. I will finish at least one sentence before asking for help.
Satvinder will demonstrate that she can walk away from situations when another student has used provocative language towards her, using strategies from her anger management sessions.	When someone cusses me in the playground, I will use one of my 'stay cool' strategies to help me walk away. I will tell Mr Lawrence each time I do this.
Muhammad will take turns in a structured game, without adult support.	I will use 'my turn/your turn' when we play language games independently in my table group.
Jaidah will sit on the carpet for 10 minutes, showing consistent attention to the teaching, with the support of her textured cushion and fiddle toy.	I will stay on the carpet for 10 minutes, and my teacher will see that I am listening to the lesson. My bobble cushion and squeezey will help me do this.

(ii) Person centred action planning

A person centred action plan is a list of actions which will support the child or young person in meeting their targets or in achieving positive outcomes. Good action plans build on the young person's goals and involve them so that they know what they are working on and why, and who will help them.

There may be times when the child or young person's stated goals seem unrealistic to us as the adults. In a person centred culture, it is not for professionals to set limits on a young person's dreams or aspirations. The professional's role is to think carefully about what the goal means to the child or young person and help decide on a concrete and realistic next step that will

move them in the right direction, or which gives them a chance to experience an aspect of their aspiration, while acknowledging the effort that will be involved.

When making a person centred action plan, there are two main areas to consider:

Firstly, those issues which are most important to the child or young person. If the child or young person has expressed hopes or ambitions for the future, we need to plan actions which help them move towards these goals.

Secondly, any issues raised under “What is not working well?”. We should attempt to find solutions to the everyday problems the child or young person is facing in their life now.

Person centred actions plans should always be clear about:

- What the action is
- Who will do it
- When they will do it by, and
- Who will check it gets done

Clarity and structure helps people work together to carry out the plan.

c. One page profiles

A one page profile is a powerful person centred tool, originally developed by Helen Sanderson Associates. It is a positive and meaningful way for service users in health, education and social care to “direct their own support and find their voice.”

One page profiles provide a structure for recording the most important information about a person in one place, including: **what people appreciate about them, what is important to them and the best way to support them.**

One page profiles can be used to prepare for a person centred review or to summarise the outcomes of a person centred review.

“We believe that one-page profiles are the foundation of personalisation, and can lead to positive change for people, whatever their age or circumstances. Helen Sanderson Associates and The Learning Community for Person-Centred Practices are using one-page profiles to empower people to have greater choice and control in their life and work.”

Quoted from onepageprofiles.wordpress.com

Children and young people can be supported to create their own one page profile, or to contribute according to their level of participation. Adults can also make one page profiles on behalf of younger children, ensuring they are “considered” or “represented” appropriately.

Detailed advice and guidance on making one page profiles can be accessed at: <http://www.personalisingeducation.org>

Many examples of one page profiles for children and young people, as well as for adults and older people, can be found at: <http://onepageprofiles.wordpress.com/>

d. Further person centred tools and formats

Many of the everyday tools and formats used in schools and early years settings have a strong person centred element, including:

- Special books
- Communication passports
- "All about me" books
- Child friendly Individual Education Plans

In fact almost any format can be adapted and used in a person centred way – what makes the difference is listening meaningfully to the child or young person and attempting to represent them as a whole person.

A wide range of further tools and formats, useful in supporting person centred thinking in many different contexts, have been developed by Helen Sanderson Associates, including:

- Communication charts
- Good day/bad day
- Important to/important for
- Relationship circles
- Learning logs
- Appreciation records

These and others can be found at: <http://www.personalisingeducation.org>



5. Examples of children and young people's contributions

"It was very good for Harry to put his views across and to see his work. Also to talk about himself made the meeting an event for him to remember"

Stephanie, Parent

In person centred reviews, children and young people often bring something that they want to share in the meeting, which is referred to as 'their contribution'. Useful contributions can take many forms, but it is important that the contribution is **meaningful** to the child and **appropriate** to their level of development, preferred communication style and level of participation.

In general, professionals in Tower Hamlets have most often used the following:

- Examples of the child or young person's work
- A book of photos (like a special book or wow diary)
- A poster with pictures and writing planned and made by the child or young person
- A presentation or slide show written and delivered by the child or young person
- A written document, for example a One Page Profile (see Section 4c above)
- The child preparing answers to questions using a communication device
- Video of the child or young person working,
- Audio recording of the child or young person speaking

"I liked the video. It was good to see Sajna working. Her mum would be proud."

Akbar, parent

a. What makes a good contribution?

In the schools which took part in the pilot project, we found that the best contributions give a picture of the whole child or young person, try to reflect their views and interests, and are realistic about both positives and negatives. In preparing this, it can be helpful to draw on the person centred agenda.

In order to help the child be fully engaged in their contribution, it is important to ensure the medium they use is matched to their needs and communication style. While a child or young person's contribution should be long enough for them to express their views. Time constraints mean that this part of the meeting should be no more than 10 minutes.

Children and young people at every level of participation will need someone to support them in preparing a contribution, often a teaching assistant, key worker or mentor.

Experience has shown that giving plenty of time to preparing this contribution can be very beneficial, enabling the child or young person to reflect on their progress. This can be a very powerful experience for the child or young person, especially if plenty of evidence (such as photos or video) has been saved since the previous review.

b. When are contributions less effective?

Sometimes the child or young person's contribution is less effective. Most difficulties can be avoided with careful thought and preparation.

If a child or young person has had little time to prepare, their contribution can seem tokenistic or superficial, or they may be less confident in presenting it. In these situations the process becomes much less meaningful for them. Similarly, the review loses its effectiveness if the adult supporting the child or young person takes over, or gives too much instruction about what they should say.

c. Examples of levels of participation at reviews

Planner

The child and the key worker plan the review together. Afterwards the child says that next time he would prefer to choose several friends to comment on his progress instead of his whole tutor group. The key worker speaks to the Head of Year who then makes this an option for all reviews.

Partner

The social worker asks the young person to lead the meeting. They work together to set ground rules and write questions the young person will ask the adults. At the meeting the social worker steps in when the young person seems to be struggling.

Participant

The child and a friend interview each other using audio recording asking prepared questions about their relationships and interests. They also come up with a list of questions to ask the staff of the care home at the meeting.

Consulted

The child makes a poster showing "What is important to me?" and "What am I good at?" Everyone looks at it at the meeting and the child answers any questions that come up. The child leaves the meeting while the adults set targets and plan actions.

The young person and their psychologist make a one page profile together and the psychologist shows it at the meeting. The young person does not attend, but a member of teaching staff uses it to adapt the young person's care plan.



Represented

The child uses PECS to complete a series of sentences such as "At school I enjoy..." "My friends are..." etc. and the SENCo reads them out at the meeting.

The young person makes a video with their friends called "My day at school". They show it to the adults at the beginning of the meeting, then go back to class.

Considered

The parent and speech therapist use their knowledge of the child's pre-verbal and non-verbal communication to make a communication passport, which is shown at the meeting.

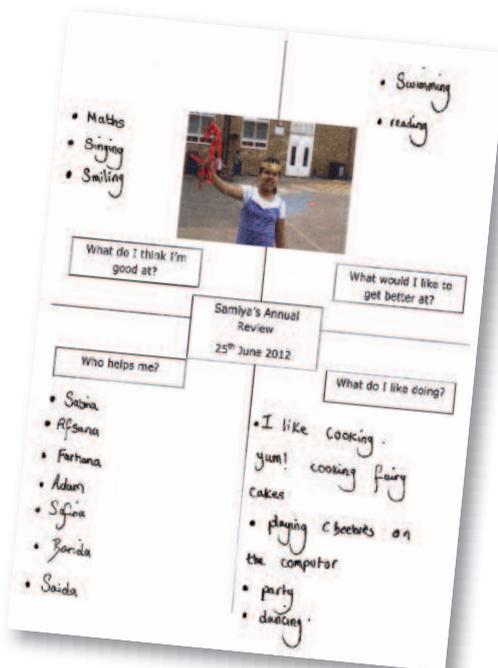
The nursery SENCo makes short video clips of the child playing and interacting with other children. The child attends the start of the meeting and while they are present, adults direct their comments to the child.

Informed

The adults summarise their reports about the young person, under the headings of the person centred agenda. The young person does not attend and has a session with the social worker afterwards to talk about the decisions that were made.

Absent

The teacher and TA write detailed reports summarising the child's strengths, difficulties preferences and progress. The child is not told about the meeting.



d. Case studies of person centred reviews



(i) Nawal's review

Background

Nawal, an eight year old girl, has physical difficulties due to a medical condition as well as language difficulties and a learning difficulty.

Before

Along with her TAs, Nawal made some video clips and chose some photos to show at her review. Nawal's TAs also interviewed her classmates and staff from all around the school on video, asking them "What do you like and admire about Nawal?" and "What is working well for Nawal?"

Nawal invited a friend from her class and together they prepared refreshments and helped to set up the room for the meeting, deciding who would sit where. Nawal welcomed all the adults as they arrived.

During

Nawal attended the whole review, supported by her friend and her TAs. The videos she and her TAs had made were shown early in the meeting, along with examples of her work throughout the year. According to the ladder of participation, she was therefore "represented", as we heard direct quotes from her at the meeting. Nawal could be asked direct questions too, so she was also "consulted" about her education.

"It's going well, it's going good. I enjoyed the videos"

Nawal, aged 8

"I like how it started off with a very positive note. When we watched the video it gave me lots of insight into her abilities. To see that shift of participation coming from a child, and responding, increases the awareness of what they are doing well and what they are working towards"

Romika, Speech and Language Therapist

At times it was hard for Nawal to contribute during the meeting, so adults who know her well used their judgement and knowledge to suggest what her views might be. She was therefore "considered" – care was taken to allow her to correct these statements where necessary.

After

Nawal and her mother took home a DVD with all the video clips and photos on. The class teacher and TAs worked together to make a child friendly Individual Education Plan based on the targets and actions from the review. The SENCo completed the person centred annual review form, including up-to date attainment levels and submitted it to the SEN section.

(ii) Daniel's review

Background

Daniel, a boy in year 10, is looked after by the local authority. He has a mild learning difficulty and a history of emotional-behavioural difficulties.

Before

Daniel chose some examples of his school work to be displayed before the meeting. He also made a personal profile sheet, summarising his views about school, his successes and his hopes for the future. The SENCo collected written messages from staff and other students, which were also displayed as posters on the walls.

On the day of the review, Daniel was in the room first and, along with a friend he had chosen to invite, he welcomed people to his review and offered them tea and biscuits.

"I liked the way that I for once got to speak up for myself and share my opinions and my expressions."

Daniel, aged 15



During

Daniel attended the whole meeting. He had a chance at the start of the meeting to share his views, which he did by talking through his profile sheet. The facilitator of the review summarised the appreciative messages from staff and students.

In speaking about his profile sheet, which was circulated to everyone, he “represented” himself. He was also “consulted” through direct questioning and, as he was able to ask questions back, he was an active “participant” in the review process.

“The preparation was key to the review. Even before the meeting started, self confidence, self esteem was boosted, that’s really key to get the most out of the student in a meeting.”

*Jon, Secondary School
SENCo*

After

Daniel took the posters home with him and the SENCo circulated his profile to his subject teachers, along with an Individual Education Plan. The SENCo completed the person centred annual review form and submitted it to the SEN section.

“I think the best thing about it was that Daniel was at the centre of everything that we were doing. It was very clear from the onset that everything was to be addressed to him to give him the opportunity to reflect on what we were saying. It was quite enjoyable.”

Corrine, Support Worker at Children’s Home

(iii) Anita's review

Background

Anita is a six year old girl with Down Syndrome.

Before

The Speech Therapist tried to get Anita to say what she enjoys at school, through a sorting activity using photos of her daily routine. Unfortunately, Anita didn't really understand the purpose of the sorting and the activity had to be set aside.

The review took place in the school library, chosen because it was a very familiar room for Anita

and she was very comfortable there. Anita and her dad and her younger brother were in the room first and she said "Hello" to all the adults as they arrived. A box of toys was provided for Anita's brother to play with.



During

Anita sat on her dad's lap and they looked at the photos of her daily routine together, before showing them to her brother and passing them around to everyone. This helped Anita to see that everyone is interested in her learning – she was "informed" about the purpose of the meeting.

The meeting followed the person centred agenda, but Anita soon became bored. After a couple of minutes she sat on the floor with her brother and played with the toys. Although she was no longer formally part of the meeting, she was still "considered" – her presence in the room ensured the professionals kept her at the front of their minds and were careful to use person centred language.

After

The school SENCo recorded what was said at the meeting directly on the person centred review form. As everyone agreed that Anita's statement needed updating, the SENCo submitted a speech and language therapy report and a report by a teacher to the SEN section, along with the completed review form, as evidence to support a request for an amendment.

6. References and further reading

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