**Best Practice for Gaining the Views of Parent and Carers**

The SEND Code of Practice (CoP) 2015 sets out the importance of parents participating as fully as possible in decision making processes around their child/young person. It states that they should be provided with advice and support along with appropriate accessible information, which allows them to prepare for discussions and meetings.

(Section 1.9, p 21)

**When should I gain the views of Parents and Carers?**

**Rich conversations** should take place regularly (not just at the time of EHCP reviews). This will ensure that the views of parents and carers are responded to in a timely manner and with full consideration of their wishes and feelings.

**Reviews of EHCP**

**EHCPs should show clearly the contributions made by the parents/carers.** Settings should consider ways to gather the views of parents and carers regularly in order to build up a record of views throughout the year. It may be that there are differences of opinion between children and young people/parents and carers/professionals about the best steps going forwards. These differences are best explored through a continuous relationship, rather than through the medium of an annual meeting.

**Prior to the EHCP Review Meeting**

The dates and times of review meetings should be discussed with parents in order to enable them to attend. When the meeting date is set, settings should

discuss with the parent/carer the best methods to use in order to obtain their views and ensure that they are able to fully participate in the review meeting.

A variety of methods can be used to support parents/carers to be able to express their views – please see Appendix 5 for examples.

* Parent Views Form – For those parents who are able to provide a written response prior to the review meeting.
* Share anonymised examples of completed Parent View Forms. It can be helpful to have models.
* Provide prompts to support parents thinking prior to the meeting, e.g. Pupil and Parent’s Prompt Sheet.
* Provide an opportunity for parents to discuss the review before it happens. In a prior meeting (which may form part of the ongoing communication between the setting and the parent) views can be gathered as well as the format of the meeting being discussed.

**During the Meeting**

* Use person-centred questions/charts as part of the review meeting:-
  + ‘What people like and admire about’ their child/young person
  + ‘What’s important to’ their child/young person now and their aspirations for the future
  + What’s working / what’s not working for their child/young person currently
  + ‘How best to support’ their child/young person
* If using such person-centred questions/charts, it can be useful to have some key parental (and pupil) views on the chart in advance of the meeting starting. This gives the parental voice a central ‘foothold’ in the meeting, which can sometimes be lost in the professional aspects of the process.
* Provide an adult that the parent/carer trusts to translate/scribe during the meeting, if they would find this supportive.
* Be conscious of moments in the review when the conversation has been passed back and forth between professionals, without active contribution from the parent/carer.The parent/carer may find it difficult to break back into the dialogue without support.

**After the Meeting**

* Share the information being sent to SENAR with the parent.
* Describe to the parent/carer what will happen next and the process to be followed by SENAR.Explain that there will be another formal review in 12 months (unless an earlier review is required), but that conversations about their child or young persons’ needs and provision are welcomed throughout those 12 months.