

Effective Communication Series

- Children & Young People's Views



Please note: 'child' = 'child or young person'

Introduction

When collecting or sharing information about your child or young person's strengths, needs (difficulties) or any barriers they experience, there are times when it can be important and/or effective to include your child or young person's own 'voice'.

Presenting information in their own words can provide a powerful piece of evidence, so we would encourage you to include something where possible. This can be submitted alongside other reports and evidence you are using to share your concerns.

For children under 16, obtaining and sharing their views and wishes is entirely optional, even for EHC needs assessments (EHCNA) or EHC plans (EHCP). However, for those between 16 and 25, their views, wishes and feelings are central to the SEND process and should be included. (*Children and Families Act 2014*)

What this evidence could look like

For EHCNA requests and Annual Reviews (AR) of the EHCPs, your child/young person will be asked for their views by completing a related booklet or document. However, answers to a few focussed questions, given in their own 'voice' could be helpful for **any** process of sharing what is working well, and what isn't.

Obtaining views and wishes from your child or young person could be delivered in a range of different ways. It could be:

- a written piece
- a drawing
- a couple of minutes (maximum), of sound recording / video done on a phone
- Young people aged 16+ may wish to record a short video to express their wishes and what type of support works best for them.

Remember: it doesn't have to be anything formal but please make sure your child or young person is happy for others to see, hear or read it.

Children and young people can often find it challenging to voice their thoughts, so clever questions will help them to think about this.



The questions may need to be adapted depending on their age or the way they think. Some simple questions might be:

- "if you had a magic wand what would life look like for you – what would change and what would stay the same" with a follow up question of "why"? or
- "if you could change one/two thing(s) about school /college, what would it/they be and why?"

Other questions you could use to capture their imagination and get them thinking or talking might be:

- Things that I am good at:
- Things that I find difficult:
- Things that are important to me:
- I am able to:
- I need help with:
- Things that I would like to do:

- How you can help me:
- Life would be better If...
- How you can communicate important information with me:

If your child or young person is slightly older then you may want to include some different or further questions:

- What's going well in your life?
- What would you like to achieve?
- What things would you like to get better at?
- What type of things will help you?
- What would you like to be able to do yourself?
- How do you think you could achieve this?
- When do you feel you need support?
- What type of support works best for you?
- What type of work would you like to do?
- What courses/skills do you think you need to achieve this?
- How could things be made better for you? e.g. at school/college, at home – now and in the future.

Often the professionals you are sharing your information or concerns with, do not know your child, or their current circumstances. Therefore, they may only make judgements or decisions based on what information and evidence is presented to them. By capturing your child's 'voice' in an effective way can help towards increasing the professionals' understanding of them and their situation (and what may help in the future).

Further Information

- Pupil views – [Examples of ways to gather child or young person's views - West Sussex County Council /](#)
- Other Factsheets in the 'Effective Communication' Series
- Webinars, Guides and Downloadable leaflets from our website SEN Support, EHC Needs Assessment & EHC Plans <https://westsussexsendias.org/sendias-resources/>

Service Statement

The role of the SENDIAS service is to ensure all parents, children and young people have access to impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions related to their situation. Any information that is shared with the service is in confidence unless permission has been obtained to share this with any individuals, services and agencies that may be able to help in the circumstances. For more detail, view our [policies and privacy notice](#) on our website.

How to contact us: Tel: 0330 222 8555 / Email: send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk or cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk (up to age 25) /
Website: www.westsussexsendias.org

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