

TRANSCRIPT: Person centred reviews: pupil voice

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Traditionally within special schools, every child has to have an annual review and the school sits down with the parents and other professionals to make sure that the statement reflects that young person's needs and the provision to meet those needs. And it could involve physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, teachers, parents but it's not necessarily involved the young person themselves. It might be that the young person comes along for the last five minutes to listen to their targets and that's it, end of the meeting, tick in the box.

Now person-centred review, however, has been developed with the young person very much at the centre of the whole planning process.

We have a facilitator and facilitators make sure that the pupil remains at the focus of the meeting and that the pupil's voice is heard, and one of the keys to person-centred reviews is that the young person is saying what's right for them, what they want, what they aspire to and it's our obligation as professionals to facilitate that young person in achieving those dreams and aspirations, whether that's short term or planning for their future.

So, for example, a young person with moderate learning difficulties will be supported in compiling a PowerPoint, which they will be presenting at the meeting. It will illustrate the work that they've been doing at school, what they've been doing at home, what's been going well for them but also what's not going that well for them and what they would like to get better at doing. Sometimes it might involve video clips, it might be audio. We would use symbols, objects, photographs. So it's however the young person can best meaningfully be involved in the whole process.

The young person would then show their presentation or speak to photographs or show some objects and the professionals there will talk about what we like and admire about that young person, what's gone well for that young person at the school and at home.

For young people with severe learning difficulties or profound multiple learning difficulties, complex needs, a person-centred approach is just as valid, however, the way that we go about that is going to be very different because it may not be appropriate for the young person to be present for all of the meeting in person. However, it's really important that that young person is represented at that meeting. What we do at this school is have a slide show of that young person throughout the meeting showing everybody who is attending that meeting what the young person has been doing, so that they are always present in the room, even though they might physically might not be there. We show some video clips of them involved in activities that they particularly enjoy. Now the parents are going to be that young person's advocates, so we do a lot of work with parents in supporting them in knowing what the person-centred approach is about.

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