

## Preparing for Adulthood

This factsheet is about the role of parents and others in supporting young people to set and achieve these outcomes.

As your child grows into a young person, your role as a parent changes. Previously you may have made decisions on their behalf. Now they will be encouraged to form and share their own views. They will need to think about their aspirations, and the outcomes they want for the future.

The definition of a young person in this context is a person over compulsory school age (last Friday of June in the academic year in which they reach 16) and under 25.

The law also makes provision for those young people who will not be able to make all of their own decisions. This legislation is called the Mental Capacity Act. SENDIASS can give you more information about this if you ask.

### When will preparing for adulthood start?

The Children and Families Act says that discussions about long term goals should start early – ideally well before year 9.

If your child already has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) the plan and review meeting will include a focus on preparing for adulthood from year 9 onwards.

EHC plans can now remain in place until a young person is aged 25. The EHC plan will only remain in place after 19 where there are education or training

outcomes in the plan which have not yet been achieved. (For more information see our factsheets on **Education, Health, Care Plan (EHCPS)** and **Education, Health Care needs Assessments.**)

Some specific decision making rights pass to the young person after compulsory school age (the end of the Academic year in which they turn 16).

These are:

- The right to request an assessment for an EHC plan (which they can do at any time up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday)
- The right to ask for changes to (make representations about) the content of their EHC plan
- The right to request that a particular institution is named in their EHC plan
- The right to request a Personal Budget for elements of an EHC plan (see our factsheet about **Personal Budgets**)
- The right to appeal to the SEN and Disability Tribunal about decisions concerning their EHC plan.
- The **SEND Code of Practice** says that parents should still be involved in discussions about a young person's future and the young person may well still need your help with this process.

### What should you plan for?

- **Post 16 education and training** – you can find out about colleges in your area through the Local Offer (see our factsheet on **The Local offer**). You can also visit the college website and attend their open days. Colleges are happy to talk to prospective students and parents about the courses they offer. The information in the EHC plan will help with this discussion. You will want to know what work experience opportunities might be available.
- **Apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships** may also be available.
- **Post 19 higher education and/or employment** – some students with special needs will be able to study at university. EHC plans do not

continue for Higher Education but the information contained in them can be used to inform continuing support needs.

All will have to consider how they prepare for work, where they will work or where their future income will come from.

- **Independent living;** Thinking about when a young person will leave the family home and where they will live. What support might they need to do this?
- **Being part of society:** What is the young person interested in? What hobbies do they have? What clubs or organisation will they want to join? Where will they meet their friends? What about a holiday?
- **Being healthy;** As well as thinking about exercise, diet, keeping busy and going to the dentist, some young people will need an ongoing health plan with the professionals they see already like an occupational therapist (OT), physiotherapist, doctor, specialist nurse or consultant. The people they see may change as they move from children's to adult services and this needs to be planned well in advance.

A small number of young people may need a continuing health care (CHC) plan.

### Can the plan change?

The EHC plan will be reviewed annually and the review must include a focus on preparing for adulthood every year from year 9 onwards.

The plan should grow and evolve as the young person learns new skills and achieves existing outcomes. Planning must be centred on your young person and explore their aspirations and abilities.

Discussions about a young person's future should focus on what they want to achieve and the best way to support them to do this.

Outcomes should be 'ambitious and stretching'.

## Who might be involved in creating and reviewing the plan?

### The young person

The law says that as the young person develops they should be more closely involved in decisions about their future and that if there is a disagreement the young person's view can override that of their parents. They will be able to say what they feel their needs are and what they would like to do after leaving school

### Parents

You should continue to be involved in discussions about your young person's future. You should think about what your young person would like to achieve and what support they may need to do this.

Young people can also ask for the support of an advocate. This person's role is to make sure that the young person's views are acknowledged and valued by all who are involved.

**The school or college** will provide information about progress made and learning programmes.

The SEND Code of Practice says:

... There is a statutory duty for pupils to be provided with independent careers advice. **Future Focus** are commissioned to provide this in Telford and Wrekin.

**Other professionals** actively involved with your young person.

**Health and Social Care professionals** if your young person is likely to need continuing support health or care services.

## How the plan might be funded

Some young people, especially those with the most complex needs may be eligible for a personal budget. For more information see our factsheet **Personal Budgets** for SEN.

## How can you help?

Talk to your young person and explain what they need to think about. You and your young person should think about the list of **'what should you plan for?'** together.

You could think about:

- What is your young person good at? What do they enjoy?
- What is important now? What is important for the future?
- What is working and has been achieved?
- What is not working and needs to be changed?
- What do they still need to learn? What support might they need to do this?

**Don't forget: Preparing for adulthood is a process and happens gradually. That's why it's good to start early and have a plan to work towards!**

Contact **Telford and Wrekin SENDIASS** for information, advice and support:

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