

Preparing for adulthood is about preparing for things like higher education, independent living, being involved in the community and being as healthy as possible in adult life. It needs to start early – schools and other services should start having discussions with young people about long-term goals, ideally, before they reach the age of 14; parents need to be included in those discussions.

At age 16 and beyond, young people often become increasingly independent and may want to exercise more control over the support they receive for their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Schools, colleges, the local authority, health and others who provide services for young people when they are over compulsory school age are expected to communicate directly with the young person. Talk to your son or daughter and agree how best you can be involved, how they can be supported to be more involved in their own arrangements and how much support they will need, as they get older.

EDUCATION

Young people **must** now continue in education or training until their 18th birthday. All students aged 16 to 19 should follow a study programme that stretches them, prepares them for adulthood, and supports their progression into work or further study.

Special School

Young people aged 19 cannot remain in a special school unless they are completing a secondary education course started before they were 18 years old. They will need to move to college to continue their education or training.

Higher Education

A young person studying for a level 4 in a further education college or at university is not entitled to an EHC plan. There are separate systems in place to support disabled young people in higher education, including Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs). These non-repayable grants assist with the additional costs incurred by disabled students. DSAs fund a range of support, including assistance with the cost of:

- Specialist equipment
- Travel
- Non-medical helpers (e.g. sign language interpreters)

Further information from The DSA finance guide: www.yourdsa.com/news/dsa/36/quick-start-finance-guide-disabled-students-allowances

Help with daily living and personal care at university is normally funded by adult social care, where young people aged 18 or over continue to have EHC plans and receive support from adult social care, this will be provided under the Care Act 2014.

EHC PLANS

For a young person with an EHC plan, the local authority should ensure that the transition to adult care and support is well planned and integrated with annual reviews of the EHC plans, which **must** include provision to assist in preparing for adulthood from Year 9 (age 13 to 14).

Local authorities **must** ensure that the EHC plan reviews at Year 9 and every review thereafter, include a focus on preparing for adulthood. Planning **must** be centred around the individual and explore the child or young person's aspirations and abilities, what they want to be able to do when they leave education or training and the support they need to achieve their ambition. Local authorities should ensure that children and young people have the support they need (i.e. advocates) to participate fully and to make decisions. Transition planning **must** be built into the revised EHC plan and should result in clear outcomes being agreed that are ambitious, stretching and will prepare the young person for adulthood.

The Annual review should include

- support to prepare for higher education and/or employment; identifying appropriate post-16 pathways, training options such as supported internships, apprenticeships and traineeships, or support for employment - finding a job, and learning how to do a job (i.e. through work experience opportunities or the use of job coaches) and help in understanding any welfare benefits that might be available when in work
- support to prepare for independent living; exploring what decisions young people want to take for themselves and planning their role in decision making as they become older, where they want to live and what support they will need. Local housing options, support in finding accommodation, housing benefits and social care support should be explained
- support in maintaining good health in adult life; planning with health services of the transition from specialist paediatric services to adult health care. Helping young people understand which health professionals will work with them as adults, & ensuring those professionals understand and plan well-supported transitions.
- support to participate in society; mobility and transport support, how to find out about social and community activities, and opportunities for engagement in local decision-making. This includes support to develop and maintain friendships and relationships.
- post-16 options **must** be included as part of the review from Year 9 (age 13-14). The local authority **must** ensure these reviews take place, schools and colleges **must** co-operate with the local authority in these reviews. If a young person wants to attend a different school (sixth form) or a college, then that school or college **must** co-operate, so that it can help to shape the EHC plan, help define the outcomes and start developing a post-16 study programme tailored to their needs.
- from Year 8 until Year 13 Schools & colleges (including Academies, 16-19 academies, and free schools) **must** provide independent careers guidance – their duty applies for all students up to and including age 18 and will apply to 19- to 25-year-olds with EHC plans.

The local authority must continue to review the EHC plans of 19 -25 yr. olds at least annually. The plan must contain outcomes, which enable the young person to complete their education and training successfully, and move on to the next stage of their lives.

Students with an EHC plan may continue on a study programme up to 25yrs old. The programmes should always include English and maths, but at an appropriate level. Some students with SEND may be on a study programme to help them achieve academic qualifications -working towards GCSE's; others will benefit from high-quality work experience and non-qualification programmes to help them prepare for employment and adult life. Young people with an EHC plan can undertake Supported Internships or Traineeships to prepare them for employment or apprenticeships.

Having the right education & training outcomes specified in an EHC plan is very important at this stage. This is because the decision whether a young person aged 19-25 still needs an EHC plan will depend on whether they have achieved their education and training outcomes – and if they haven't, whether remaining in education/training will help them to achieve them.

Young people with SEND are not automatically entitled to keep their EHC plans after they turn 19. Most young people with EHC plans will have completed their further education by the age of 19, but the Government recognises that some need longer to complete and consolidate their education and training. The length of time will vary according to each individual up to the age of 25.

Local authorities **must not** cease the EHC plan simply because they are 19yrs or over.

Ending an EHC plan

One of the reasons for not maintaining an EHC plan is that the young person no longer requires the special education or training provision specified in the plan. When making this decision about a young person aged 19 or over the local authority must take account of whether the education or training outcomes specified in the EHC plan have been achieved.

When a young person is close to finishing their education and training, the local authority should use the final annual review to agree the support needed to engage with adult services.

TRAINING

Supported Internship

Supported internships are structured study programmes based primarily at an employer. They are designed to enable young people with SEND to achieve sustainable, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work through learning in the workplace. Internships normally last for a year and include unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. For more information, see <https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/downloads/supported-internships/answering-some-frequently-asked-questions-about-supported-internships.htm>

EHC Plans may continue (up to 25) whilst a young person accesses learning through an internship or traineeship.

Traineeship

A traineeship is an education and training programme with work experience that prepares a young person for their future career by helping them to become 'work ready'. Designed to help young people aged 16 to 24 who don't yet have the appropriate skills or experience, traineeships provide the essential work preparation training, English, maths and work experience needed to secure an apprenticeship or employment.

Work Grants:

An Access to Work grant can cover the additional support your child may need for the in-work element of a supported internship or traineeship. To get an Access to Work grant, your child must be 16 or over and have a disability, health condition or mental health condition that affects their ability to work. One of the following must also apply to them:

- have a paid job (you cannot get a grant for voluntary work)
- are self-employed
- have a job interview
- About to start a job or work trial
- starting work experience

Please note: Your child may not be eligible if they are claiming Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support

The amount your child gets will depend on their circumstances, & can be used for things

like:

- Adaptations to the equipment they use
- Special equipment
- Fares to work if they cannot use public transport
- A support worker or job coach to help them in the workplace
- A support service if they have a mental health condition
- Disability awareness training for colleagues
- A communicator at a job interview

For more information, see www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview

TIP It is much easier to open a bank account for your child before they turn 18.

SOCIAL CARE

The Care Act 2014 includes important legal duties on local authorities about what **must** happen when a child makes the transition from children's to adult services. If your child is likely to need support from adult social care, the local authority **must** complete a transition assessment before they reach the age of 18. This duty also applies if your child is not currently receiving children's social services but may need services as an adult, e.g. if they have a degenerative condition or a mental health problem.

You or your child can ask for an assessment at any age that you feel that their needs, as an adult would be identifiable.

The Care Act does not say that the child has to be a certain age to ask for an assessment, rather that 'local authorities must consider, in all cases, whether there would be a 'significant benefit' to the individual in doing an assessment. Guidance suggests that assessments should take place when it is easier to understand what the needs of the child will be beyond the age of 18. When an assessment is carried out, information about whether your child is likely to have eligible needs for care and support when they turn 18 should be given and an indication of the sort of support they can expect.

When a local authority assesses a child who is already receiving support from children's social care, the Care Act requires them to continue providing support through the assessment process until adult services are in place to take over – or until it is clear after the assessment that adult care and support will not be provided.

There should be no gap in services.

If the local authority decides not to carry out an assessment, it must explain in writing why it has reached that decision and provide information and advice about what can be done to

prevent or delay the development of care and support needs.

Where young people aged 18 or over continue to have EHC plans and receive support from adult social care, this will be provided under the Care Act 2014. The EHC plan should be the overarching plan that ensures young people receive the support they need to help them achieve agreed educational outcomes. The statutory adult care and support plan should form the 'care' element of the young person's EHC plan.

Care and support costs:

People over the age of 18 who have eligible care and support needs may have to contribute towards the cost of their care and support. The local authority will carry out a financial assessment to check how much your child can afford to contribute towards their care and support.

The care and support your child may have to pay towards includes:

- Home care (day and night)
- Day activities and respite care
- Supported living
- Support provided by a Personal Assistant (PA)

Carer's Assessments:

The Care Act gives local authorities a responsibility to assess your needs for support as a carer. This assessment should consider:

- The impact of caring, on you
- What you want from life:
 - Are you able or willing to carry on caring?
 - Do you work or want to work?
 - Do you want to study or do more socially?

When the assessment is complete, the local authority must decide whether your needs are 'eligible' for support. If they are, a support plan will be agreed, setting out how your needs will be met, e.g. help with housework, respite care etc.

HEALTH

Moving from child health services to adult health services may mean seeing a different team at the same hospital or health department, or going to a different hospital or department. This can be a scary time for young people as the teams they may know and be used to working with change. It is important everyone involved understands the process, feels supported and prepared to try to make the transition as smooth as possible. There should be a detailed exchange of information between the two teams and the child should not be discharged from a children's health team until they have been transferred to adult health team.

Annual Health Checks

Young people from **14 yrs.** who have been assessed as having moderate, severe or profound learning disabilities, or have a mild learning disability alongside other complex health needs, are entitled to a free annual health check from their GP practise.

During the health check, the GP or practice nurse should carry out the following:

- a physical examination - weight, heart rate, blood pressure, blood and urine tests
- assess behaviors' by asking questions about their lifestyle and mental health
- check for epilepsy
- check on any prescribed medicines currently taking
- check whether any chronic illnesses, i.e. asthma or diabetes, are well managed
- review arrangements with other health professionals i.e. physiotherapists/ speech therapists

If the person's learning disability has a specific cause, the GP or practice nurse will often do extra tests for particular health risks i.e. for people with Down's syndrome they may do a test to see whether their thyroid is working properly.

The Annual Health Check may also be a good opportunity to review any transitional arrangements that need to be in place for when they turn 18.

Adult Continuing Health Care Assessment

If your child's main SEND need is related to their health, they should be referred for an Adult Continuing Health Care Assessment, which should be done well before their 18th birthday, to allow enough time to complete the assessment & have discussions regarding the care they are entitled to. If there is no equivalent adult health service to transition to, their health needs will be managed by their GP. For more information

www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/nhs-continuing-care

For further help & support around this or other areas of SEND, please contact

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