

Preparing for Adulthood: Transition review

A guide for parents/carers of young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans.

If you need help with this information, please telephone Stockport Interpreting Unit on 0161 477 9000, or email eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk

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Information accurate as of January 2018

Introduction:

All young people face big changes when they leave school so they need to make plans for their future. The purpose of planning is to help your son or daughter to work towards positive outcomes for their future.

If your son or daughter has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, planning should start by Year 9 (age 13/14).

Staff in school, careers advisors, health or other professionals may hold discussions with you from time to time to think about the progress your son/daughter is making.

The Year 9 review of the EHC Plan is a very important meeting as it is a meeting to start thinking about preparing for adulthood. This meeting creates the transition plan. Future reviews of the plan are called annual reviews and should happen once a year. The plan is reviewed to ensure that it reflects your son or daughter's aspirations and identifies their support needs. It influences outcomes in the EHC Plan.

Preparing for Adulthood (PFA):

Preparing for adulthood means preparing for the future; When young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are asked, "What do you want your world to look like when you are an adult?" They say they want the same things in life as their friends:

- To be able to find employment and/or go into higher education
- To be able to live independently, with support if necessary
- To have friends, positive relationships and be part of the community
- To be as healthy as possible

Good preparation for adult life needs to start early and requires services to work together. High aspirations are crucial to success and discussions about long-term goals should start early.

The focus must be on the young person's strengths, capabilities, and the outcomes they want to achieve. Schools and other professionals should start having discussions with young people about long-term outcomes, ideally, before they reach the age of 14.

Parents/carers, of course, need to be included in those discussions. They should include how best to prepare for the move into post-16 learning, and most of all, the transition from post-16 education into adult life. As children get older and become young adults, it is important that they are provided with opportunities to take more control over their lives and become directly involved with choices and they should be supported to make decisions for themselves, wherever possible.

Young people's hopes and dreams for the future as well as their needs are likely to change over time. There should be clear and defined planning and support for how teenagers will prepare for adulthood. Discussions about their future should focus on what they want to achieve and the best way to support that.

Why do I need to attend the annual review?

It is important for you as a parent or carer to be at the review because it is the first formal step in planning for your son's or daughter's adult life. If the date of the meeting makes it difficult for you to attend, contact the school and ask for it to be rearranged for a time you can manage. If you have particular problems, such as childcare or transport, explain this to the school and see if they can help.

You can ask to talk to your son/daughter's Education and Careers Advice worker who will help you to plan and prepare for what will happen at the review meeting.

How can I prepare for and get the most out of review meetings?

Before the review, it is important to help your son or daughter to think about what they like and their hopes for the future. This will help them to get the most out of the meeting. Some young people will need more support to do this. It may also be helpful to ask others who know them well what they think.

It is important that you talk about your own ideas, hopes and concerns for your son's or daughter's future so that their transition plan can include the help you need to support your son or daughter as they move to the next stage of their life.

Remember that you are not expected to make definite decisions on longer term plans at this review. Like your son or daughter, you may change your mind as they grow up or as things at home change. You may also need more information and time to think about what you have heard.

What happens after the review?

The EHC Plan may be updated after the annual review if there have been significant changes in your son/daughter's level of needs. If this is the case, there will be contributions from the relevant professional agencies and a copy of the revised plan will be sent to you for comment. The Education and Careers Advice worker will offer your son/daughter ongoing guidance on their post-16 options as part of Preparing for Adulthood.

How will the EHC Plan be updated?

The EHC Plan will be reviewed each year until your son or daughter leaves school. This will happen as part of their annual review. This review will explore whether the plan is working and whether any changes need to be made. This may be because your son's or daughter's aspirations for the future and educational needs might have changed.

When your son or daughter is 18, they may be eligible for adult services. You will need to make sure that they have an appropriate assessment of their strengths and needs and it will be important that a Transition Social Worker is involved. If they have been unable to attend the review meeting, this can be written into the transition plan with confirmation about who is going to contact them. They will then make contact with you and arrange an appropriate time to discuss the transition assessment.

- SEN Assessment & Review Officer – up to and including Year 9
- School Nurse
- Representative from social services; this is likely to be a Children's worker if Children's Social Care are involved and from Year 11, might include a Transition Social Worker from Adult Social Care
- Anybody else who works with your son or daughter, including therapists and others who provide medical help.
- The school should tell you who they have invited and you can say if there are other people you would like to attend. Not all of these people may attend but if not (and they are already involved with your son/daughter) they should provide written reports that you should see beforehand.

What happens at the review?

A member of the school/college will chair the meeting and everyone will be asked to introduce themselves and explain what they do. Do ask if you are not sure who anyone is, or why they are there.

The review should provide opportunities for your son or daughter to discuss their hopes and dreams for the future and expected outcomes of the EHC Plan. Some young people may wish to present ideas that they have been working on in school or at home. This is their review and their opportunity to talk about what is important to them.

Everyone will want to know what your son or daughter is interested in, what they enjoy doing and whether they have any ideas about what they want to do when they leave school. These ideas may be about going to college, getting a job or other things to do during the day, but the review should also consider wider topics such as leisure activities and where they might want to live when they are older.

During the review you may hear things that surprise you about your son or daughter. People may know some things about your child that you haven't heard before. There will be other things that only you know about your son or daughter, such as their interests, dreams or fears, or about things they do at home.

It will be helpful if you say what you know so that planning can build on your knowledge as well as everybody else's.

Planning the future for your son or daughter should be helped by a process called 'Person Centred Planning'.

This is about making sure the plans are based on what your son or daughter likes to do, their strengths and what is important to them, now and in the future. Plans need to address what is important to them and give them choice and control to realise their goals and aspirations, access to opportunities and the support they will need to achieve those hopes and dreams. Please remember if you feel that your son's or daughter's transition reviews are not person centred, they and you have the right to speak up and ensure that they are at the centre of all discussions.

It is also important that your son or daughter and you choose who is going to be involved in the development of their transition plan. A good plan will reflect a teenager's needs, and will help local services and all those involved in supporting them, plan to work together over time to ensure that your son's or daughter's individual needs are met.

It should also describe the support they will need to move from childhood to adulthood. At the Year 9 review, you and your son or daughter will need to start thinking about and discussing what they would like to do after Year 11 and the choices they have. This provides a basis for the transition plan but is by no means 'set in stone'.

Your son or daughter will have a discussion with an Education and Careers Advice Worker who will explore options with them. Some of these options can be found in the 'Education and Training Opportunities for SEND students' booklet and a copy should be made available to you.

It is a good idea to think about the review beforehand and to write down any thoughts you and your teenager have and questions you want to ask. It is important that all aspects of a young person's life are considered, not just the immediate concerns around schooling. Talk to your son or daughter in their own time about their ideas for the future.

Write down what you know about what they like doing at school.

Think about any help you feel they may need when they leave school.

On the next page are some of the things you may want to think about.

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| Accessing higher education and/or employment | Developing independence |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging ideas about work in the future Favourite subjects Particular interests Opportunities to explore the world of work and work experience Agree who will help to develop a vocational plan Discuss apprenticeships and other 'learning while working' courses Review post 18 courses and locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start talking about what skills are needed for independence Think about skills that can be developed in school; travel training, money/budgeting, Where they might want to live in the future? What benefits might they be entitled to as an adult? What are the changes in levels of Local Authority support between children's and adults services? |

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| Good health | Friends, relationships and being part of the community |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage a healthy lifestyle – diet, exercise, sexual health Ask at GP surgery about an annual health check (Available for those with a learning disability from age 14) Ensure health professionals share information How will adult health services be set up? Think about personal health budgets, if applicable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support your son/daughter to develop and keep friendships Think about close friends and other key people in their network (circle of support) Think about out of school activities Are there volunteering opportunities? |

Write down anything else that is of concern to you or your son or daughter, either now or in the future. You should have the chance to discuss these points at the review and to ensure your comments are included in the transition plan. Make sure you prioritise the most important questions and topics at the review. It is a good idea to tell the person who is organising the meeting beforehand what these are. If you don't cover everything essential, you can ask for the review meeting to continue at a later date.

The 'Local Offer' has a wide range of ideas about options and support for planning the future. This can be found at www.stockport.fsd.org.uk

How will my son or daughter prepare for the review?

All young people should have the chance to prepare for their transition review meeting. They should receive a young person's version of this leaflet to help them prepare. Schools should provide impartial information advice and guidance to young people.

Some young people will need specific help to express their thoughts and ideas and will have been helped to create a person centred plan, using a variety of media, that they can take to their review meeting to support them.

The Education and Careers Advice Worker will offer support in Year 9 and beyond for those with an EHC Plan to help them contribute fully to the review and the plan. It is the young person's hopes and dreams for the future and how they may be supported to achieve them that should be at the heart of the transition plan.

Remember this is just the start of the PfA planning process and transition plans should be updated and developed in their final transition year.

Who can I expect to be at the review?

The school should invite:

- You – you may also have a friend or advocate
- Your son or daughter - they may want to have a friend or advocate with them
- School staff who work with your son or daughter
- Education and Careers Advice worker – from Year 9 until your son/daughter's final year